

SCENARIO A: MEMBER

CHARACTER SKETCH: "I need out."

Name: Cory

Age: 20

Hometown: Urban City, in close proximity to the college

Sexual Orientation: Queer

Gender Identification: Transgender Male

Race/Ethnic Identity: Asian American

Religious Background: Buddhist

Background:

You're a sophomore student studying urban planning and are interested in addressing environmental racism in urban communities. You ride your bicycle EVERYWHERE, are involved with bikes not bombs and are into growing your own food. You're the oldest in your family and the first to go to college. You like living in co-ops because it feeds your creativity to be around people that are invested in putting a collective mind-set into reality and it keeps you grounded from the stuffy-ness you feel in your urban planning and business classes.

Situation:

Queer identified and out in your co-op. You had been contemplating your gender identity over the past year and over the summer break you made the decision to begin presenting your gender identity as male. In general you felt supported by your activist community, and the few people you were close with at your co-op. People had generally been okay with the queer thing, but you were nervous about how things would go over around trans stuff since it wasn't anything anyone else really talked about in the house. People loved to go out and see the drag shows, but that was the extent of it.

Thinking ahead, you had saved up enough seniority points, and put a bid out for a new space at another co-op further out from campus. You thought it would be best to start fresh. It is important to you to have a nurturing living environment and you wanted to make it as easy on yourself as possible. There were very few people close to you in your old co-op anyways.

It has been three weeks since the term started. Things are not going as well as you hoped. While on the surface people appear to act nice, it seems like everyone is being distant. People are really short with you and whenever you show up in a communal space, people find excuses to move or leave. You have one really close friend in the house that notices it as well, especially at dinnertime. There also seems to be this group of people in the last week who constantly, and you suspect purposefully, use the incorrect pronouns or crack jokes about what makes a "real man" real when they are in shared spaces with you and have an audience. You consider yourself a pretty resourceful person, and have tried emailing, facebooking them to talk one-on-one, but have been blown off and ignored.

Earlier this morning you found your bicycle vandalized. Your tires were slashed, your seat stolen and replaced with a sign that said, "faggot." You suspect who did it, but don't think you can prove it. You have never been targeted/threatened like this before. Things have escalated and you want out of your contract. You go to your staff member's office to report what happened. Your new staff member knows you're queer, but doesn't necessarily know you identify as trans.

Explore with your cluster:

How are you feeling while you are waiting for the staff member to see you?

Since you've never really worked with this staff member before, how much do you trust them?

How ready are you to come out as trans to them? Why or why not?

What kind of reaction do you expect from the staff member?

What are you most worried about or fearful of?

What do you want at minimum from the conversation and what would be your ideal?

What other types of support could the staff member offer you that would be helpful?

How would you feel/know if the conversation went well and you felt valued? Not well?

SCENARIO A: STAFF

YOUR DAY THUS FAR:

You've been sitting in traffic all morning because of an accident and just walked into the office. There's a note that is left from one of the co-op members, Cory saying they need to talk to you ASAP. You give Cory a call on his cell; he says he'll be right over.

WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS STUDENT:

Background on the student in front of you:

Cory is this funky queer-identified student who you know who recently joined the co-op. You don't know a whole lot about him since it's only been about a month since he's gotten there.