

The Riddle Scale Adapted for Transphobia

- **Repulsion:** Being trans is seen as a “crime against nature.” Trans people are considered sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, behavior therapy, electroshock therapy, etc.
- **Pity:** Represents gender binary chauvinism. The gender binary is considered more mature and certainly to be preferred. It is believed that any possibility of “becoming straight” should be reinforced, and those who seem to be born “that way” should be pitied as less fortunate (“the poor dears”).
- **Tolerance:** Being trans is viewed as a phase of childhood development that many people go through and most people “grow out of.” Thus, trans people are less mature than “straights” and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with children who are still maturing. It is believed that trans people should not be given positions of authority because they are still working through their early childhood behavior.
- **Acceptance:** Still implies that there is something to accept; the existing climate of discrimination is ignored. Characterized by such statements as “You’re not trans to me, you’re a person!” or “What you have between your legs is your own business” or “That’s fine with me as long as you don’t flaunt it!”
- **Support:** People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the transphobic climate and the irrational unfairness, and work to safeguard the rights of trans people.
- **Admiration:** It is acknowledged that being trans in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their transphobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- **Appreciation:** The diversity of people is considered valuable, and trans people are seen as a valid part of that diversity. People on this level are willing to combat transphobia in themselves and others.
- **Nurturance:** Assumes that trans people are indispensable in our society. People on this level view trans people with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be their allies and advocates.

Adapted June 28, 2011 by Margaret Drewlo with permission of the author.

Riddle, D. *The Riddle Scale. Alone no more: Developing a school support system for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.* St Paul: Minnesota State Department, 1994.