



IMAZINE No.1

Published by: the BHE Gender Support Team

What is IMAZINE !?

Have you heard about the BHE Gender Support Team at the University of Tsukuba? In recent years, there has been increasing awareness around SOGI (sexual orientations and gender identities), which are aspects of human identity that many can relate to, though some may find themselves confused or struggling.

BHE stands for the Bureau of Human Empowerment, and the Gender Support Team aims to assist individuals on campus facing challenges related to SOGI, while also promoting knowledge and understanding of these issues. The major focus of the Gender Support Team includes organizing the "kite kite" safer space, where female and sexual minority students can safely engage in discussions several times a month, as well as hosting exhibitions in the library and participating in events like the Tokyo Rainbow Parade.

The IMAZINE is a newsletter published by the student staff of the Gender Support Team. This newsletter is designed to amplify the voices of University of Tsukuba students, covering topics related to sexuality both within and outside the university, updates on Gender Support Team events, and various gender and sexuality-related subjects.

The name "IMAZINE" is inspired by the University of Tsukuba's slogan, "IMAGINE THE FUTURE." Through the magazine, the Gender Support Team endeavors to empower everyone to embrace their identity proudly and unapologetically. We hope you find it empowering too!

After a year in the BHE Gender Support Team - Dr. Hiroshi Yasui

We interviewed Professor Hiroshi Yasui, who served as an Assistant Professor at BHE from February 2023 to March 2024 and is currently a Research Fellow at Doshisha University, to reflect on his year at BHE. Dr. Yasui specializes in feminist queer theory and critical animal studies in Israel/Palestine. He submitted his PhD thesis, titled 'Politics and Nationalism over Rights in Contemporary Israel: a comparative analysis of Sexual Minority Rights and Animal Rights,' in March of last year. In addition to his regular duties in the Gender Support Team, last year he collaborated with peer staff on planning meetings and administration. Dr. Yasui is approachable and affable, making the interview a pleasant experience. In the following, we'll highlight the interview's focus on the implementation of the University of Tsukuba's Safer Space, 'Kitekite,' and Dr. Yasui's initiatives since joining BHE.

Dr. Yasui's introduction to BHE was serendipitous. While researching his future career path during his doctoral studies, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that the University of Tsukuba had established a department to support SOGI diversity and was recruiting researchers specializing in sexuality studies. He expressed his joy at being employed there. He also emphasized the importance of gender education in Japan, noting the scarcity of opportunities for such education in elementary, junior high, and high schools. Dr. Yasui's efforts to address gender issues span both research and education domains.

After Professor Yasui assumed his position, one of the things he wanted to do was to establish a Safer Space. With the collaboration of Professor Yasui, Tsukuba University's Safer Space, "KiteKite," was realized last year. Drawing from his experience of belonging to a LGBTQ peer support group during his student days, he felt the necessity of creating a space for sexual minorities. He also felt concerned about students who couldn't come to university because their gender and sexuality weren't respected, thinking, "The university should not be irresponsible about providing an environment where all members can study comfortably." During that time, he found significance in a piece by Akiko Shimizu on feminism and queer studies titled "Can Universities Protect 'the University'? - Sexual Minorities in Universities" (published in 2016 in Sekai, volume 888, by Iwanami Shoten), realizing, "This is a problem that universities must address." Many universities in the United States and some in Japan, particularly in Tokyo, already have Safer Spaces. Based on this context, discussions were held among peer staff, including Dr. Yasui, and other faculty members to initiate efforts at Tsukuba University. Eventually, the Safer Space was established last year.

Dr. Yasui mentioned, "LGBTQ individuals often feel isolated. When they are born 'different,' they usually grow up in families where both parents are heterosexual and cisgender, so they often end up feeling alone. Then, during adolescence, their great journey of self-discovery begins, which is not as common for other minorities. Therefore, it is important to have relationships and collaborations among students that are not about supporting or being supported but about equality." He conveyed this message to the students. Although he moved away this fiscal year, he emphasized the importance of students continuing to make various proposals. This interview serves as encouragement for peer staff to continue their activities.

Thank you for the past year!



Dr. Hiroshi Yasui
(Date of taken
2023/03/27)

Actions toward the realization of same-sex marriage at Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024.

The public interest corporation Marriage For All Japan, aiming for marriage equality (legalization of same-sex marriage) under the motto 'Marriage Freedom for Everyone,' conducted various collaborative projects at Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024. These included symposiums on same-sex marriage, participation in the parade, installation of an AR camera experience space to visualize candidates supporting same-sex marriage, and a corner for delivering messages to members of parliament urging the legalization of same-sex marriage, where approximately 330 letters were collected. The parade saw the participation of appellants and legal teams fighting for 'Marriage Freedom for Everyone,' as well as supporters and stakeholders from across the nation. Yuki Kawada and Akiyoshi Tanaka, the appellants of the Kansai lawsuit, which was the only case to be deemed 'constitutional' in the lawsuit, stated, 'It's strange that the statement from the national leader is that 'society will turn for the worse' with the recognition of same-sex marriage, even though the purpose of politics should be to increase the happiness of society.' (excerpt from the statement).

[Citation] <https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000056.000054117.html> PRTIMES 2024/05/02 10:00

Book
Recommendation!

What does "Ally" mean?

An ally is someone who, regardless of whether they are LGBTQ+ individuals or not, respects the rights and way of life of sexual minorities (the LGBTQ+ community), and endeavors to understand and support them, while supporting activities and actions aimed at rectifying injustices.

The T-ACT Tsukuba Action Project conducts a program called 'LGBTQ+ = ALLIES Salon,' where LGBTQ+ individuals and non-LGBTQ+ allies come together to share concerns, study, and plan and execute actions that demonstrate citizenship. The goal is to create a space where both LGBTQ+ individuals and allies can work together to address issues and take action.



The ABCs of LGBTQ+ [Ashley Mardell]

Title as it is, it's a book about LGBTQ+ in an easy-to-understand manner, even for someone who is completely unfamiliar with LGBTQ+ topics at the age of 13! It portrays the real voices of about 40 LGBTQ+ individuals who continue to confront the question of "who am I?" in society, depicting various experiences. It teaches us that humans are diverse, and labels are merely means to understand oneself and others and to convey oneself. It's okay not to fit into labels, and it's okay to be oneself.

HANASO!



Do you have any questions or concerns about gender and sexuality? Want to know more about the related knowledge? Or anything you'd like to ask the gender support team? Scan the QR code next to this passage and help us collect questions and concerns from readers about various aspects of gender and sexuality and the Gender Support Team, and we answer them responsibly. So, please feel free to ask us anything you might not feel comfortable asking others!

feel comfortable asking others!

*The questions and concerns you submit will be published in IMAGINE.
*Please understand that if there are many submissions, it may be difficult to include all of them.



Information

The BHE Gender Support Team is involved in planning and organizing seasonal events such as International Women's Day in March, Tokyo Rainbow Pride in April, and Pride Month in June, as well as organizing and operating the SaferSpace KiteKite and movie screenings. We also participate in booth exhibitions at the Souhou Festival, all aimed at building LGBTQ+ communities and organizing gender and sexuality-related events. We've compiled our upcoming activity schedule for those who are interested. Please feel free to join us!

6/3(Mon)~6/21(Fri)
Pride at Tsukuba ~Petit Library~
Venue : Central Library

6/5(Wed), 6/26(Wed)
Safer Space: Kitekite
Venue : the human science building A 110
Time : 11:30~13:30

If you are interested in BHE Gender Support Team, please use the QR code on the right. This is the Official website! Please take a look!



Official BP
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ヒューマンサイエンス研究所
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