

# PRIDE MONTH: FREEDOM TO BE ONESELF

While Pride Month is celebrated around most of the world, Israel can be especially proud to be a favorite international destination for its Pride Parades in Tel Aviv and other cities.

LGBTQ+ rights are still a work in progress in Israel. In recent years, LGBTQ+ advocates have succeeded in bringing legal changes that accept and accommodate the needs of the community. These advancements have led to greater representation of the community in the media and in leadership. Still, there's more work to be done in the areas of civil marriage, adoption, and parental rights. In many families and communities, acceptance of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals is no longer an issue. However, this is not the case when it comes to transgender people. The process of transitioning involves long medical therapies and procedures, a gradual change of appearance, and even changing their names and adjusting the language to reflect this change. This may contribute to societal challenges.

The first Israeli celebrity to really increase public awareness of transgender people in Israel was Dana International. She represented Israel and won the 1998 Eurovision Song Contest with the song “[Diva](#)”—an apt title for her! More recently, in April 2021, an Israeli soccer referee came out as transgender. In a field dominated by males, Sapir Berma came out in a news conference, supported by her colleagues: “We have a new referee, Sapir Berman,” the Israel Football Association tweeted. “We are so proud.”

These resources can help introduce the topic of gender identity and its challenges.



*Since many LGBTQ+ people identify as such when they are teens, it is paramount that their families, peers, educators, and camp counselors are supportive by creating an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment.*

## Pride Month: Freedom to Be Oneself (continued)

### 1. SPECTRUMS

An Israeli documentary series that follows the social, political, and spiritual world of ten members in Israel's transgender community.\*

“*Spectrums* has a very clear and long overdue message: we are all worthy of the freedom to live our lives without society dictating our identity. Each of the series’ ten episodes follows a single character, who, by way of their personal stories, shed light on the trans experience, and challenge societal gender “norms.” The subjects are raw and honest, and viewers may be surprised to see their own lives and internal struggles reflected on the screen. This powerful docu-series lives up to its name: proving that self-identity is never black or white, but a glorious rainbow-coloured spectrum.”

*\*Educators are advised to see full episodes in order to determine if language and content are appropriate for their learners.*

### 2. MULTI-GENDER HEBREW LETTERS

Hebrew is a strictly gender-binary language. When you talk about yourself, address someone in front of you, or talk about anyone in the singular or plural, you identify yourself and them as either female or male. In addition, when addressing a group, the masculine form is the default conjugation, even if the majority is women. Many attempts have been made to remedy the sense of inequality in both written and spoken language, but one that caught many eyes is the new multi-gender Hebrew letters. Their Facebook page describes it as “... a new set of Hebrew letters facilitating multi-gender reading and writing. The Multi-Gender Hebrew makes women present in the Hebrew language and forms a linguistic space for non-binary identities.”

The new font, created by Michal Shomer, is a brilliant invention created as a final project in the department of Visual Communications Design at HIT (Holon Institute of Technology). The immediate popularity and usage of this font is an indication that it met a need. Many schools, public buildings, and even the Knesset adopted it as “Welcome” signs. Not surprisingly, there were some opposing voices, raising accusations of harming Jewish culture and tradition, or of violating the Hebrew language.



*Spectrums:* [Watch here](#)



#### Resources:

- *Interview with designer of Multi-Gender Hebrew (in English):* [View here](#)
- *Download the multi gender font:* [Here](#)