

## Personal narrative as powerful testimonies: LGBTQI+ role models

Becoming more inclusive for sport organizations requires willingness, motivation, and more than anything else: a plan! We did it. You can do it too.

L: Lesbian

G: Gay

B: Bisexual

T: Transgender

Q: Queer / Questioning

I: Intersex

+: Gender diverse, Non-binary, and all others who identify in the community

Sarah Townsend, EGLSF co-president and member of ENGSO EWS Committee: "What we've seen from a recent survey is that something like 82% of the respondents of the survey say that they have witnessed transphobic or homophobic language abuse. That goes even further when we look at actual participation in sport where 1 in 5 respondents have said that they have actually dropped out at some point because of the homophobic atmosphere and not feeling welcome in sporting arena (Menzel, T., Braumüller, B. & Hartmann-Tews, I. 2019. *The relevance of sexual orientation and gender identity in sport in Europe*. Findings from the Outsport survey. Cologne: German Sport University Cologne, Institute of Sociology and Gender Studies)."

Celio Dias, Portuguese judoka and role model: "Hello. My name is Célio Dias. I am an Olympic Judo athlete from Portugal and also gay and through sport I find its inclusive dimension."

Poem from Celio Dias:

"Her eyes are soft and calm as my enslaved doubts.

A dimmed light dies upon my table where the sun of my plantation grows sugar and gold for Europe.

God was in the room when I open for you...

My face wears ships but ships do not have your name."

Personal narratives serve as powerful testimonies and role models can help pave the road for others to experience the benefits of sport.

We did it. You can do it too. For more information, feel free to reach out to ENGSO, the European Sport NGO, its Equality Within Sport (EWS) committee, and the EQUIP partners, and visit the project webpage.