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she/her/hers
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AN INTRO TO PRONOUNS & GENDER DIVERSITY

WHO AM I?

- Counseling psychologist
- Currently a lecturer at Boston University
- Specialize in therapy for LGBTQ+ individuals
- Identify as a white, cisgender, queer woman

she / her





AGENDA

- Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Terminology
- Sexuality and Gender on a Spectrum: Gender Unicorn
- Gender Neutral Pronouns- What and Why?
 - *TW: Suicide*
- Questions

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS FOR CREATING A SAFE LEARNING SPACE

- Respect for others
- Openness to new ideas/opinions
- Assuming good intention with questions (while recognizing that what we say has an impact on others)
- Practice imagining what it is like for others

IF YOU HAVE COME HERE TO HELP
ME, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME.
BUT IF YOU HAVE COME BECAUSE
YOUR LIBERATION IS BOUND UP WITH
MINE, THEN LET US WORK TOGETHER.

Attributed to **Lilla Watson**; Collective belief Aboriginal activists in Australia

Reflect on your earliest memories of gender...

- What do you recall?
- How do your memories vary across age?
- What messages about gender did you receive from others or society?
- How did this impact your understanding of gender?

THOUGHT
EXERCISE



TERMINOLOGY 101

The background features a dark, almost black, space filled with dynamic, flowing shapes. On the left side, there are vibrant red, curved forms that resemble liquid or smoke. On the right side, there are bright blue and cyan waves that also appear to be in motion, creating a sense of depth and energy. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

SEX V. GENDER

- **Sex**– identified by visual observation of genitals at birth and designated 'male,' 'female,' or 'intersex'
- **Gender**– identified internally by self-knowledge and understanding and falling somewhere in the spectrum including masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and other terms



GENDER IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Gender is...



a spectrum



a range of expression



how you relate to yourself

HELLO
my name is

Me!

a personal identity

Gender is not..



just male or female



defined by body parts



sexual orientation



determined by chromosomes

- Gender is what we **do**, not who we **are**
- Society is structured around a gender binary, and has been so for so long, and so completely that this binary appears natural

Major Queer Theorists: Judith Butler, David Halperin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Kate Bornstein

SEXUAL ORIENTATION TERMS 101

GAY/HOMOSEXUAL

- Someone who is romantically/sexually attracted to the same sex. It is often used to refer to men who are attracted to men, but sometimes used to describe women who are attracted to women.
- **Homosexual is considered a derogatory/medicalized term by some, especially older gay men.**

LESBIAN

- A woman who is romantically/sexually attracted to women. "Same gender loving woman" (SGL) is sometimes used in the African-American community.

STRAIGHT/HETEROSEXUAL

- Refers to women who are romantically/sexually attracted to men, and men who are attracted to women.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION TERMS 101 (CONT.)

QUEER

- Historically a derogatory term for gay individuals, this word is now used positively by many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and allies. It is sometimes used to describe an open, fluid sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression

BISEXUAL

- A person who is romantically/sexually attracted to multiple genders—sometimes, though not necessarily, at the same time.
- **Bisexuals are often mislabeled as confused, or not 'gay' enough; people who identify as bi have often been stigmatized. **

PANSEXUAL

- A person who is attracted to people across the range of genders. Often used by those who identify as transgender or genderqueer or who are attracted to people who are transgender or genderqueer.

ASEXUAL

- A person who does not experience sexual attraction ever, or for a period of time; "ace"

GENDER DIVERSITY TERMS 101

Assigned Sex at Birth

- The sex classification a child is given at birth, usually based upon external anatomy. Individuals are usually Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB) or Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB).

Male-to-Female (MtF)/Female-to-Male (FtM)

- These terms were common self-descriptors for binary transgender individuals (i.e. MtF is a transgender woman transitioning from her assigned sex of 'male' to her identified gender of 'female').
- Today these terms have fallen out of favor as individuals move towards an understanding of gender that is less pathologized and centered around medical transition, however these terms are still in use by some.

GENDER DIVERSITY TERMS 101

TRANSGENDER

- An umbrella term referring to people whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not fit their sex assigned at birth. Groups often included under the transgender umbrella are individuals who identify as genderqueer, androgynous, and people who identify as more than one gender.
- Often shortened to trans*

GENDER NONCONFORMING

- A person whose gender expression is neither clearly feminine nor clearly masculine, or does not conform to mainstream society's expectations of gender roles
- Similar terms: Non-binary, gender fluid

GENDERQUEER

- A person who blurs, rejects or otherwise transgresses traditional gender norms; also used as a term for someone who rejects the binary two-gender system.

CISGENDER

- Identifying with the gender assigned to you at birth (aka non-transgender)

ADDITIONAL TRANS* TERMINOLOGY

BEING READ

- How one's gender is perceived socially by those around you based on factors such as primary & secondary sex characteristics, dress, mannerisms, etc.

PASSING

- Accurate recognition of and reflection of one's gender expression by others

STEALTH

- Choice not to disclose one's medical history including sex assigned at birth and gender affirmation treatments

DEADNAMING

- The practice of uttering or publishing the name that a trans person used prior to transition

Cisgender

Cisgender

Trans Umbrella

Can encompass any individual who crosses over or challenges their society's traditional gender roles and/or expression

male to female (mtf)

female-to-male (ftm)

drag
queen king

intersex

two spirit

agender

genderqueer

third gender

non-binary

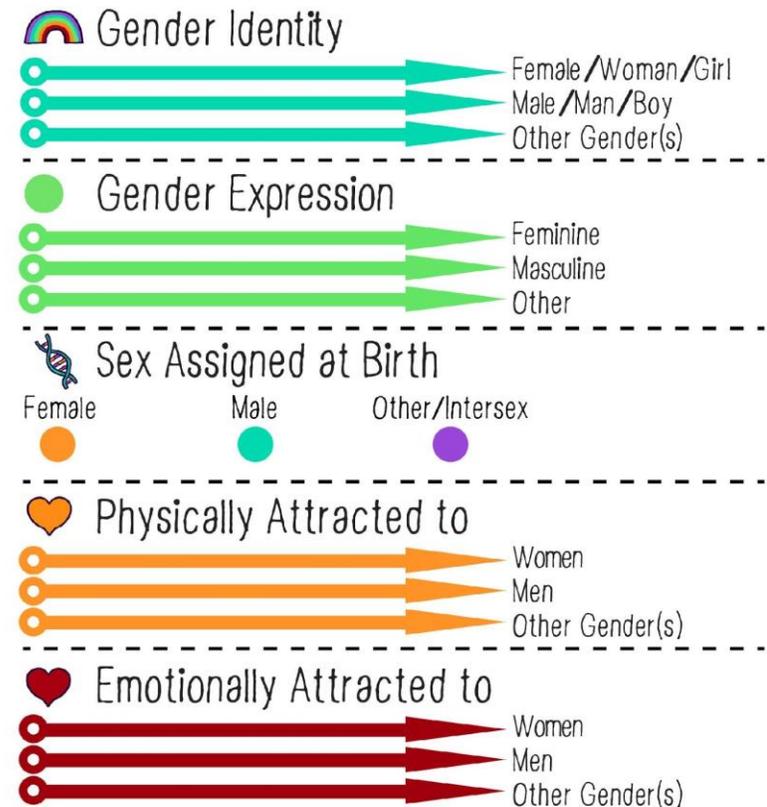
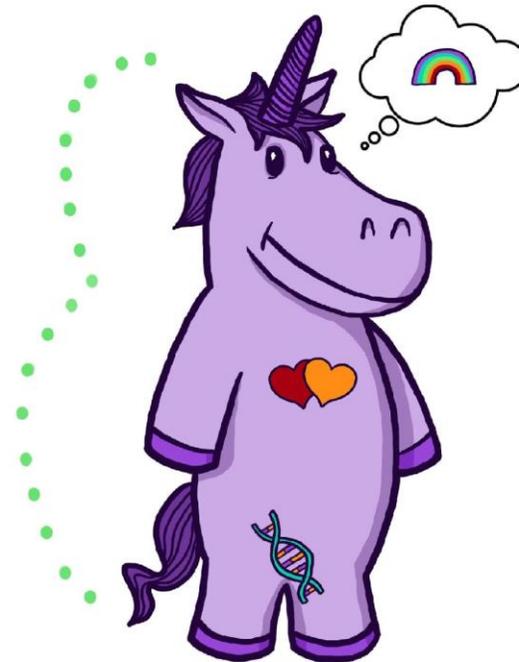
androgynous

SEXUAL ORIENTATION V. GENDER IDENTITY

- Many people confuse sexual orientation with gender identity.
- Gender identity is about who we are, while sexual orientation is about who we are attracted to.
- Your gender identity DOES NOT predict your sexual orientation.
 - Being cisgender or transgender does not, for example, predict whether a woman will be straight, bisexual, or lesbian.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

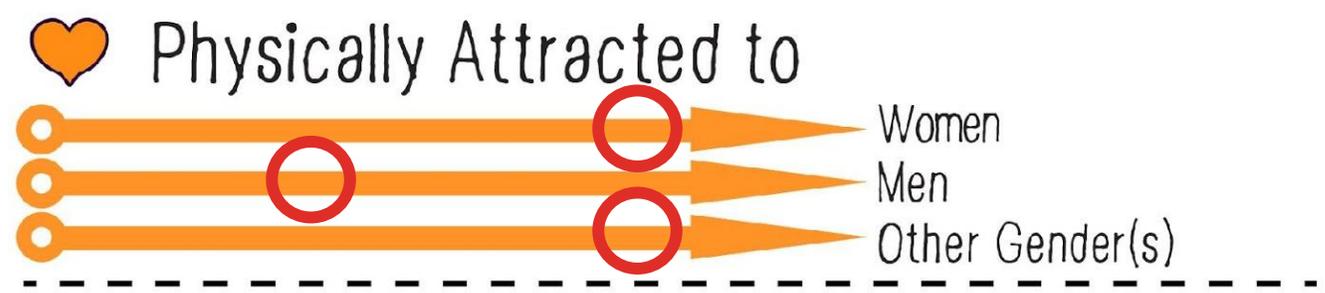
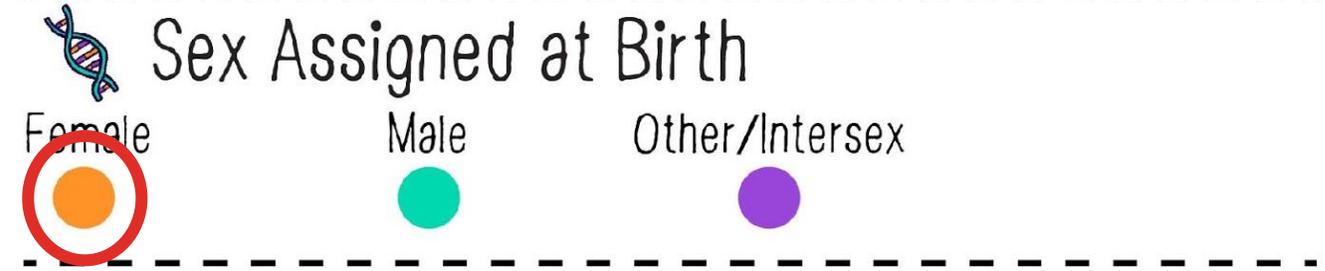
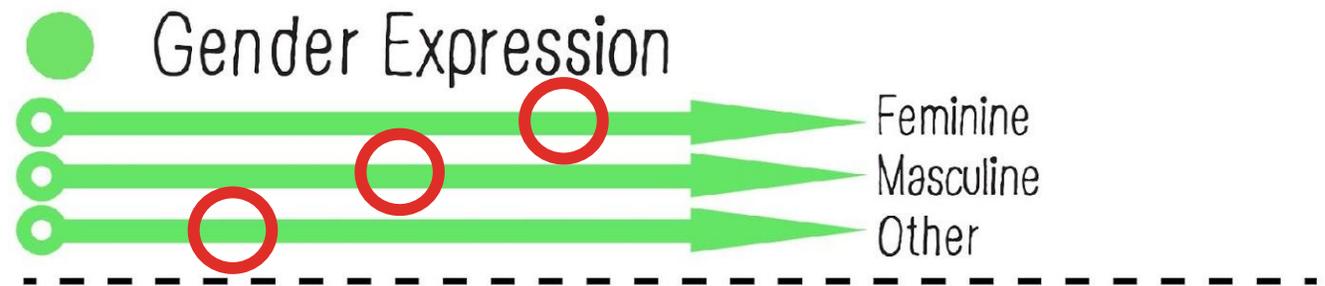
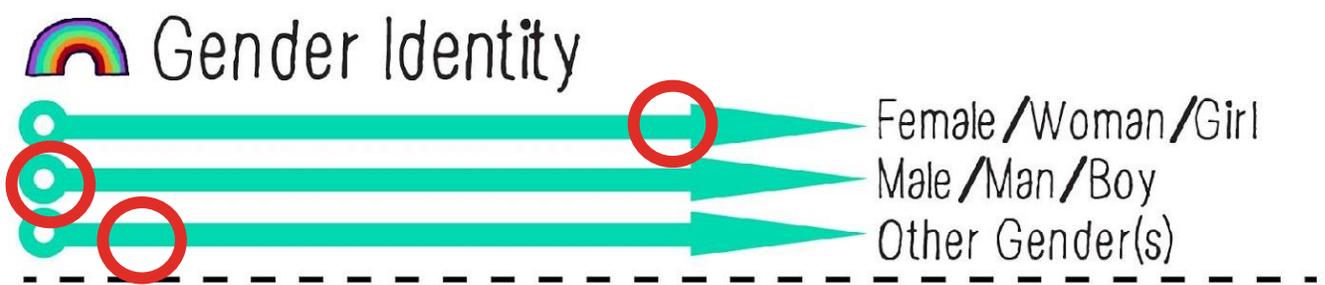
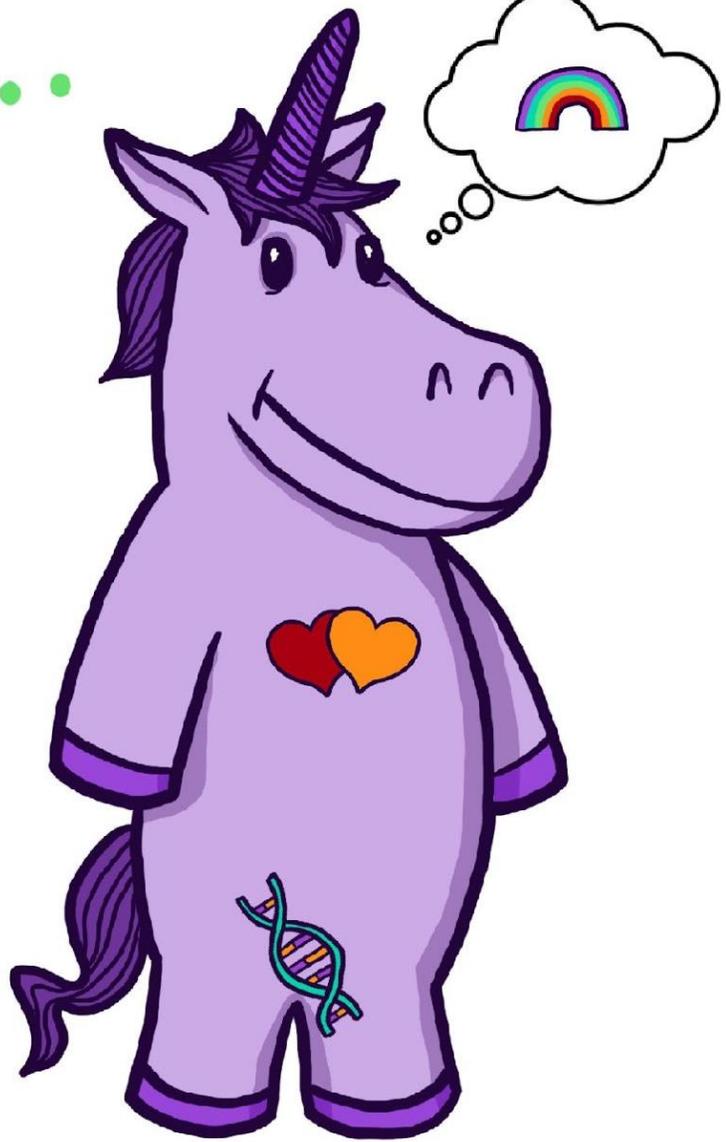


SEX, GENDER, & SEXUALITY:

- Different yet interrelated
- Culturally dependent
- Contextually dependent

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

YOU CAN COMPLETE YOUR OWN GENDER UNICORN!

- After this training, I encourage you all to explore your own identities by completing the Gender Unicorn
 - Mark where you identify on each of the categories
- You can reflect on...
 - What did you observe about yourself?
 - Psychologically, how did you know these things about yourself? What part of yourself did you access?
 - How does this help you understand gender?

Hello

Address me as

Please Use: **They, Them, Theirs**

Please Use: **He, Him, His**

Please Use:

Please Use: **She, Her, Hers**

Please Use: **Ze, Hir, Hirs**

Please Use: **Xe, Xem, Xyrs**

PRONOUNS

Gender neutral (or gender inclusive) pronoun:

- A pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed

Ms.

Mr.

Mrs.

Mx.

Pronouns-- A How To Guide

Subject: 1 laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

Object: They tried to convince 2 that asexuality does not exist.

Possessive: 3 favorite color is unknown.

Possessive Pronoun: The pronoun card is 4.

Reflexive: 1 thinks highly of 5.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list. It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

© 2011 UW-Milwaukee LGBT Resource Center

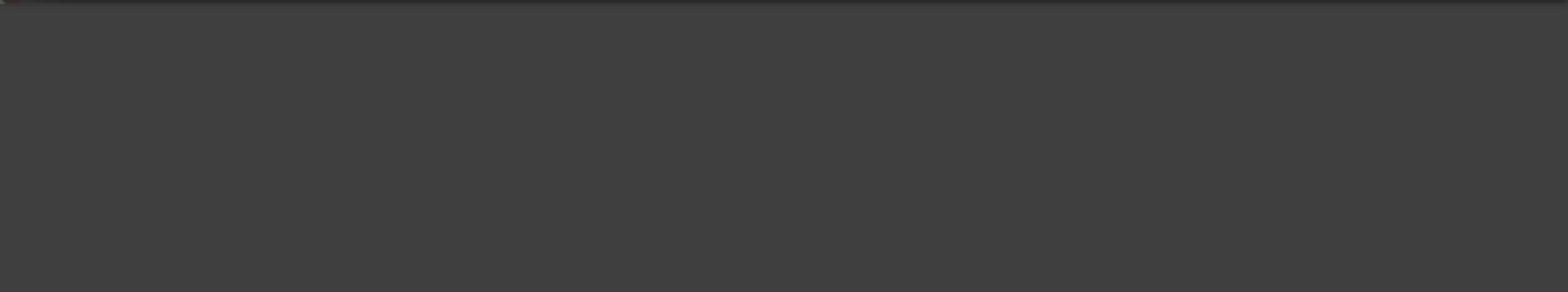
1	2	3	4	5
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
[name]	[name]	[name]'s	[name]'s	[name]'s self
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
sie	sir	hir	hirs	hirself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vers	verself
zie	zim	zir	zirs	zirself

FUTURE PRONOUN PRACTICE

- Spend some time “people watching” (pick a stranger on the street/at a park/in a coffee shop or restaurant)
- First, notice the assumptions you make about their gender
- In your thoughts, practice talking about them using “they/them” pronouns (or pronouns that are different from what you assume is their gender)

The background of the top two-thirds of the image is a solid, vibrant red. On the left and right sides, there are abstract, overlapping, semi-transparent red shapes that resemble petals or flowing fabric, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within this red area.

DEBUNKING TRANSGENDER MYTHS



MYTH 1

MYTH:

It's easy to tell when someone is transgender

FACT:

Just like all people, transgender individuals look and express themselves in many different ways.

You CANNOT tell if a person is transgender by how they look.

MYTH 2

MYTH:

Everyone who is transgender undergoes a physical transition

FACT:

- A 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey found about 2/3 of TGNC respondents medically transitioned and 1/3 surgically transitioned. About 14% of trans women and 72% of trans men say they never want full genital construction surgery
- You DO NOT need to physically transition to be transgender

MYTH 3

MYTH:

Being transgender is relatively new

FACT:

- Transgender individuals are documented in many indigenous, Western, and Eastern cultures since antiquity.

MYTH 4

MYTH:

People in
Massachusetts are
generally not
transphobic

FACT: From the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, Massachusetts State Report, transgender respondents reported in the last year...

- 23% reported being mistreated in their workplace due to their gender identity
- 73% of students K-12 who were perceived as transgender experienced mistreatment
- 20% experienced homelessness (20% of those individuals avoided staying in a shelter due to fears of being mistreated as a transgender person)
- 33% limited how much they ate/drank to avoid using the restroom
- 52% who interacted with police reported being mistreated based on their gender identity
- 31% reported at least one negative experience with a healthcare provider

THE URGENCY OF AFFIRMATION



Mean age of awareness that one is trans = 13.4*

Family rejection or non-affirmation of trans child associated with increased rates of:

- Suicidality, attempt and self-harm
- Depression & Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Substance use disorders & tobacco use
- Unprotected sex and rates of HIV transmission
- Homelessness, placement in foster care system
- Involvement in juvenile justice system

RATES OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

- Over 50% of transgender male teens
- 30% of transgender female teens
- 42% of non-binary youth

USING SOMEONE'S PREFERRED NAME AND PRONOUNS IS SUICIDE PREVENTION

HOW TO AVOID ANY TERMS THAT WOULD INDICATE GENDER

- “How may I help you, miss?” → “How may I help you?”
- “Alright boys and girls, it’s story time!” → “Alright everyone, it’s story time!”
- “He is here to meet with Meghan” → “Meghan’s 3pm meeting is here”



RESOURCES

- Fenway Health: <https://fenwayhealth.org/>
<https://www.lgbtqiאהaltheducation.org/>
- Human Rights Campaign:
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender>
- American Psychological Association:
<https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq>

QUESTIONS?

