Trans Inclusivity: Tips, Tricks & Terms

Kansas School Nurse Conference
Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

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An Sasala
they, them, theirs
Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies
The University of Kansas, Lawrence
Gender vs. Sex

**Gender:** “A set of cultural identities, expressions and roles—codified as feminine or masculine—that are assigned to people based upon the interpretation of their bodies, and more specifically, their sexual and reproductive anatomy” (GLSEN, Pronouns).

*An individual may reject, modify, or identify with the gender assigned at birth.*

**Sex:** the scientific and medical way of classifying bodies at the time of birth based on physiology—genitalia and secondary sex characteristics. Typically, medical professionals assign male and female, but intersex, a multifaceted third category exists too.

*An individual may reject, modify, or identify with their sex assigned at birth.*

In the past, MTF (male-to-female) and FTM (female-to-male) were used to describe individuals using gender confirmation surgery to transition. These terms are quickly being replaced with:

- A,M,A,B, or assigned male at birth
- A,F,A,B, or assigned female at birth

Keep in mind, there is a long history of doctors, psychologists, and other medical professionals marginalizing trans folks through pathologization, serving as gatekeepers, and denying trans folks their desired care. As such, avoid overtly and unnecessarily medical language when talking about and with trans individuals.

Gender Identity vs. Gender Expression

**Gender Identity:** an individual’s internal sense and understanding of their gender. This is a self-identification which may or may not align with the gender assigned at birth.

**Gender Expression:** The ways in which an individual chooses to communicate their gender identity, often through clothing, makeup, haircuts, posture and body movements, voice pitch and tone, behavior, etc.
**Trans Inclusivity: Tips, Tricks, and Terms**

**Trans**
An abbreviation of transgender, trans serves as the umbrella term for all gender identities and expressions outside of the traditional binary, including transgender, agender, genderfluid, etc.

**Transgender**
Refers to a discrepancy between an individual's gender identity and the gender assigned at birth. Transgender is often used to describe folks who transition from one side of the binary to the other, however term can be used more expansively.

**Nonbinary**
Nonbinary is an umbrella term used to describe all individuals who identify outside of the traditional gender binary. Nonbinary is also a personal gender identity and a gender expression.

**Gender Creative/Expansive**
Often used by younger children and teenagers, gender creative/expansive can be a gender identity and/or a gender expression, both of which allow for flexibility, variance, and creativity. Also: gender explosive, exploratory, artistic.

**Gender Non-Conforming**
Typically, gender non-conforming refers to gender expressions which do not adhere to binary standards. Cisgender individuals who do not present as traditionally masculine or feminine may consider themselves non-conforming but not trans or transgender.

**Gender Questioning**
Term used by individuals who are questioning their gender identity and/or expression. This phrase often shortens to "questioning." Questioning individuals often explore through clothing and hairstyles, make-up, pronoun sets, and a variety of gender identities.

**Two-Spirit/Two Spirit**
Two-spirit is an English-language umbrella term specific to North American First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, and Native Americans. The term reclaim a colonized identity and refers to individuals who house two spirits—traditionally masculine and feminine—and experience the world through these two lenses. Roles, terms, and traditions vary between Nations/tribe; please ask for cultural context and clarification.

**Cisgender**
Cisgender describes individuals who experience no discrepancy between their personal gender identification and their gender assigned at birth. Cisgender arose as a means of differentiating between cis people and trans people. Within younger generations, cisgender is increasingly claimed as a gender identity.

**Cis**
The abbreviation of cisgender, cis functions as an adjective. Cis emphasizes the unmarked naturalness of "man" and "woman" and the common assumption that everyone identifies as female/woman and male/man. Using cis creates trans woman, trans man, and trans person as equal categories to cis woman, cis man, and cis person.

**Gender Grammar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Correction</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;transgendered&quot;</td>
<td>transgender</td>
<td>Only adjectives that are derived from nouns and/or verbs (unlike transgender) end in &quot;ed.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;intersexed&quot;</td>
<td>intersex</td>
<td>Only adjectives that are derived from nouns and/or verbs (unlike intersex) end in &quot;ed.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(adjective)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;transgendered&quot;</td>
<td>transition</td>
<td>Only verbs can have &quot;ed&quot; added onto the end of the word to become a participle. Transgender is an adjective, not a verb. One does not &quot;transgender,&quot; they transition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(verb)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;a transgender&quot;</td>
<td>a transgender person</td>
<td>Transgender is not a noun. &quot;Jake is a transgender&quot; is not only grammatically incorrect, but can be offensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;transgenders&quot;</td>
<td>transgender people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;sex change,&quot;</td>
<td>gender affirming surgery, genital reassignment surgery</td>
<td>Surgery does not change one's sex or gender, only genitalia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;sex reassignment surgery,&quot;</td>
<td>gender reassignment surgery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, go to transstudent.org/graphics
# Trans Inclusivity: Tips, Tricks, and Terms

## Pronouns & Their Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>hers</td>
<td>There she goes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is her book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is hers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>There he goes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is his book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is his.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>theirs</td>
<td>There they go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is their book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ze/zie</td>
<td>zir/hir</td>
<td>zirs/hirs</td>
<td>There ze/zie/xe/xi/xy goes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xe/xa/xy</td>
<td>xir/xyr</td>
<td>xirs/xyrs</td>
<td>That is zir/hir/xir/xyr book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That is zirs/hirs/xirs/xyrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart contains the five most common pronoun sets, examples sentences, spelling variations.

If you are unsure, always ask. Gender is personal and means something different to everyone. Asking demonstrates your desire to understand and be respectful—it goes a long way!

### Questions to Ask:

- What pronouns do you use?
- What pronouns may I use?
- With/Around whom may I use these pronouns?
  - Are you comfortable with me using these pronouns with your teachers and parents?
  - Where can I use these pronouns?
  - Do you use different pronouns in public versus private?
  - What pronouns do you want me to use in my notes?

### Do:

- Ask!
- With whom? When? Where?

### Pronouns

Assume or use them in inappropriate spaces or ways.

### Don’t!

### Other Popular Pronoun Sets:

- Per/per/pers/perself
- Thon/thon/thons/thonself
- Co/co/cos/coself
- Tey/tem/ter/tey- or ter-self
- Na/nan/nas/naself
- Ey/em/eir or eirs/emself
- Hu/hu/hume or humes/humself
- Fae/faer/faer or faers/faerself
- Ae/aer/aer or aers/aerself

### Want to Practice?

**DO:**

- Make them.
- Apologize.
- Do better.

**MISTAKES**

Everyone makes mistakes. You will accidentally misgender students, use incorrect names & pronouns, and occasionally say the wrong thing. Making the occasional mistake is understandable, but intentionally or frequently messing up negatively affects trans folks’ mental & physical health & creates unsafe and/or hostile, environments.

While well-meaning, many allies overdo the apology, refuse to acknowledge their mistake, and/or act defensively, reminding their trans friend how they almost never mess up.

What you can do is correct yourself, apologize, and most importantly, do better moving forward. You can also educate and correct others, which takes some of the stress away from trans folks.

**DON’T!**

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**DO:**

- Challenge the binary.
- Get creative & have fun.

**LANGUAGE**

Reinforce the binary!

**DON’T!**

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**Inclusive Language Suggestions**

- **Ok, guys! Ok girls!**
- **Boy(s), Girl(s)**
- **Mother, Father**
- **Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs.**
- **Pronouns**
- **Boyfriend Girlfriend**
- **Preferred Name**

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**Note:** For trans folks, names are **NEVER** preferred. Names are thoughtfully and intentionally chosen & that should be respected.

*If needed for an official document or form, ask for name and legal name.*
Statewide & Regional Resources

Local Resources:

National Resources