

# Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment for Trans Students

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**Clearinghouse**



# Supportive Terminology: Late 1980s

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Lesbian

Gay

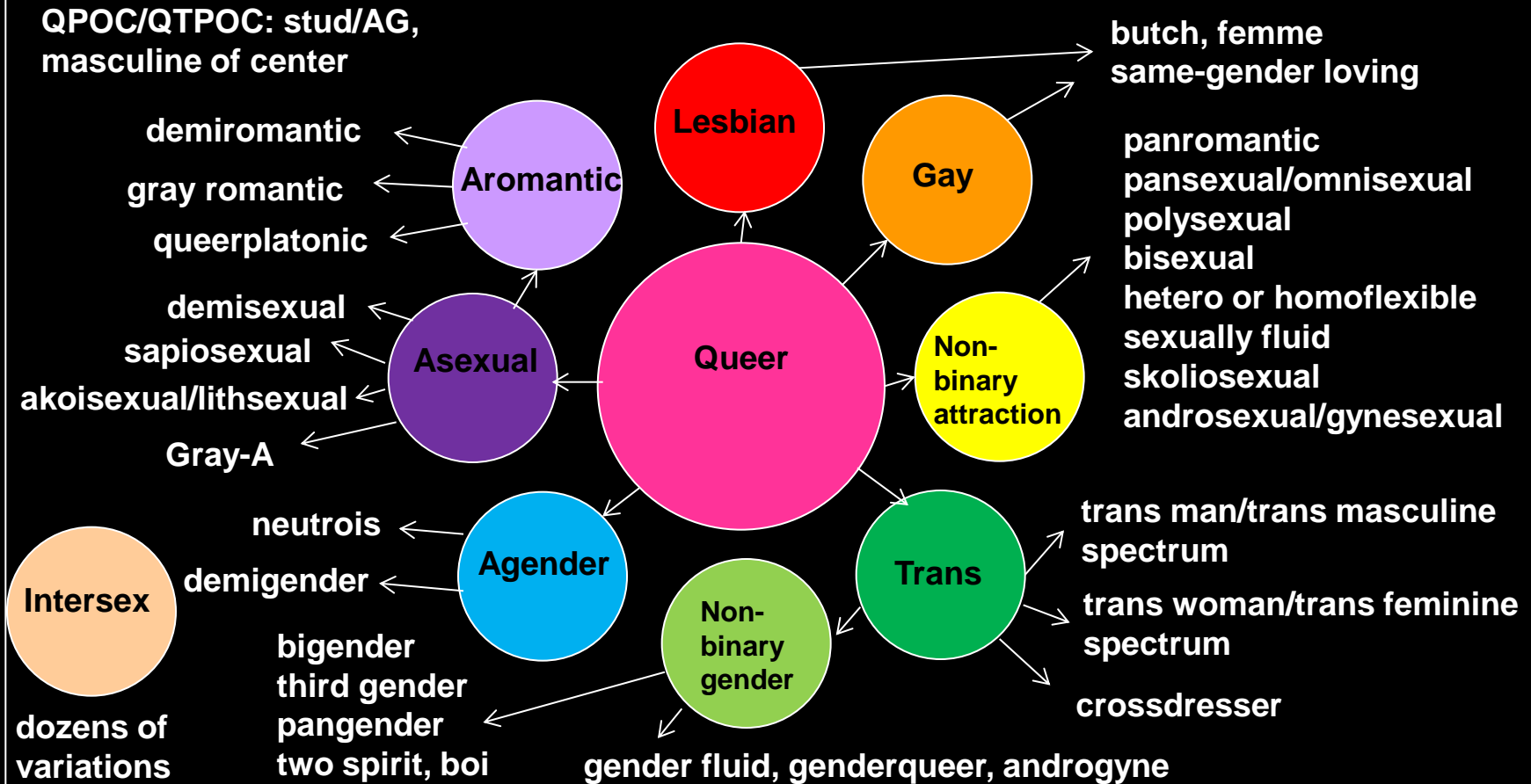
Bisexual

Trans

transsexual:  
FTM or MTF

crossdresser

# Supportive Terminology: Today



# Key Terms

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- **Gender Identity:** An individual's internal sense of their gender, which may be different from the person's sex and gender assigned at birth.
- **Sex Assignment at Birth:** Sex designation given at birth based on one's biology; most times, sex assignment determines the gender assigned at birth.
- **Trans or Transgender People:** Umbrella terms for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth (not "transgendered" or "transgenders"). There are hundreds of different gender identities: demonstrates the ridiculousness of asking "sex: M/F."

# Key Terms

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- **Trans Women/Men:** Individuals who identify as female who were assigned male and vice-versa.
- **Gender Transition:** The social and medical process that some trans individuals undertake to have their gender presentation match their gender identity.
  - They may undergo medical procedures, such as hormone treatment and surgeries.
  - They may start dressing in differently gendered ways.
  - They may change their first name and pronouns.
  - Some trans individuals, particularly nonbinary individuals, transition socially but not medically.

# Key Terms

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- **Nonbinary People:** Individuals who do not fit into traditional “male” and “female” gender categories, such as agender, bigender, gender fluid, and genderqueer individuals.
- **Gender-Nonconforming People:** Individuals who do not to adhere to the traditional gender expectations for appearance and behavior of people of their assigned gender. Some identify as transgender, but others do not.
- **Cis or Cisgender People:** Individuals who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth (i.e., people who are not transgender).



Work by Yulonda Rios

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***Campus Queer: The  
Experiences and  
Needs of LGBTQ+  
College Students***

**Genny Beemyn**

**Johns Hopkins  
University Press**

# College Students with Non-Binary Sexual and/or Gender Identities

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- 208 students, ages 17-25, were interviewed from 84 different colleges; 27% identified as people of color
- 111 identified outside of a gender binary, including genderqueer, agender, gender fluid, non-binary trans, demigender, and androgynous students
- 102 also identified outside of a sexual binary
- Average age at which they began using their current gender identity label: 19 years old
- 91 of the 111 use gender-inclusive pronouns for themselves; most (91%) use “they/them/their”



# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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- 51% of the non-binary gender students were out or mostly out to at least one parent (58% of the students of color).
- 70% of the cis students were out or mostly out about their non-binary sexual identity to at least one parent (48% of the students of color).
- Of the 99 students who identified outside of both sexual and gender binaries and who discussed their family:
  - Half were out or mostly out to at least one parent about both
  - A third were out about their sexual identity but not their gender
  - Only 2 people were out about their gender but not their sexuality

# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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- ❑ In cases where there was a difference in parental acceptance for the student's sexual and gender identities, sexual identity was almost always more accepted.
- Why the students were not out to a parent(s):
  - ❑ a parent(s) holds anti-LGBTQA+ attitudes
  - ❑ a parent(s) has conservative religious beliefs
  - ❑ a parent(s) comes from a culture that is intolerant toward LGBTQA+ people
  - ❑ believe that a parent(s) would not get or not take their identity seriously
  - ❑ think that a parent(s) would be uncomfortable with their identity

# Being Out to a Parent(s)

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153 respondents were out to at least one parent about their sexual identity and/or gender identity.

How they characterized their parents' level of support:

- 44% are supportive or very supportive
- 14% do not completely get or are uncomfortable
- 12% are unsupportive or completely intolerant
- 9% are OK but not great
- 3% ignore the issue and will not discuss it

(8% of respondents reported a difference in support for their gender and sexual identities, and 8% reported a difference in support between a mother and father)

# Learning about Their Identities

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- Where they first learned about their gender and/or sexual identity (could provide more than one answer):
  - a website(s): 58%; a friend(s): 24%; met a person/people who identifies that way or who educated them: 24%
- Individuals with less visible non-binary identities, like asexual, agender, and demigender, were much more likely to learn the terms online, typically on Tumblr.
- The students who had adopted terminology that, at least as of now, is not widely known even among trans people (e.g. condigirl) invariably learned it online.

# Support for Their Identities

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- Where respondents received support for their gender and sexual identities (could provide more than one answer):
  - a friend(s): 79%
  - an LGBTQ+ student group(s): 39%
  - a website(s): 28% (11% of the students of color)
  - a campus LGBTQ+ center/office: 27%
  - a partner/former partner: 20%
  - a family member(s): 17%
  - a faculty member: 7%
  - their therapist or a campus counseling center: 4%
  - a staff member (other than LGBTQ+ center staff): 2%

# How Colleges Fail Nonbinary Trans Students

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- All but one of the 111 students with nonbinary gender identities said that their college was failing them as trans people.
- Some of their concerns revolved around faculty members:
  - Students did not feel comfortable going to their instructors for support about harassment they had experienced.
  - Instructors assumed their gender and did not ask their pronouns, and assumed the name on the roster was the name they used, so students were misnamed, misgendered, and invalidated all semester unless they corrected the instructor, which few felt comfortable doing.
  - Textbooks and lectures treated gender as a binary, making the students feel invisible.

# Examples of Harassment Against Trans People

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- Purposely referring to a trans person by their dead name (birth name) or wrong pronouns.
- Asking invasive questions about a trans person's body or gender transition.
- Disclosing a trans person's birth name and gender assignment to others.
- Challenging a trans person's right to use bathrooms and locker rooms that are in keeping with their gender identity/expression.

# Sexual Harassment

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*Report on the AAU  
Campus Climate  
Survey on  
Sexual Assault  
and Sexual  
Misconduct*

**2015**

- 75.2% of TGQN\* undergrads had experienced sexual harassment, as compared to 61.9% of cis female undergrads.
- Only 15% of TGQN students reported an incident of sexual harassment to campus authorities. TGQN students were the least optimistic about a report of sexual harassment being taken seriously, and they were the most likely to say that retaliation would occur if they reported.



# Addressing Sexual Harassment

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- Even though the presidential administration is no longer interpreting Title IX as protecting the rights of trans students, that does not mean that Title IX no longer applies or that colleges cannot include trans students under Title IX procedures.
- WNEU needs to change its campus Title IX website and printed materials to make it clear that trans students can report incidents of harassment and discrimination, to indicate how they can report such complaints, and to list support resources for trans students who experience harassment and assault.

# Addressing Sexual Harassment

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- Require all staff and faculty to attend a workshop on Title IX and trans students, similar to what many colleges do to address sexual harassment, to make sure that staff and faculty do not engage in harassment against trans students and to help them support trans students who have experienced harassment.
- Train Title IX case managers and crisis intervention staff on the specific experiences of trans people and how best to support them (e.g., sexual assault as denying gender identity, trans people not wanting to have a physical exam, not referring to body parts in the same way).

# Names & Pronouns

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- ▶ As part of treating trans students with respect, faculty and staff should use the first names and pronouns desired by students, even if legal documents still use their birth name (dead name).
- Give students the ability to have a chosen name (not “preferred name”) on all non-legal campus records and documents.
- Give students the ability to change the gender marker on their campus records upon request (i.e., without a letter from a therapist or doctor and without the need to change other documents first).
- Give students the ability to indicate their pronouns through the college’s Student Information System that would then appear on course rosters and advisee lists.

# Gender Pronouns

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Always ask someone for their pronouns.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/ Zirself	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.

 [transstudent.tumblr.com](https://transstudent.tumblr.com)  
 [facebook.com/transstudent](https://facebook.com/transstudent)  
 [twitter.com/transstudent](https://twitter.com/transstudent)

Design by Landyn Pan

For more information,  
go to [transstudent.org/graphics](https://transstudent.org/graphics)

**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources

# Pronoun Dos and Don'ts

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## *Do!*

- Recognize that everyone has pronouns--not just trans people--and that asking pronouns is very important, both so someone is not misgendered and so that trans people are not the only ones who will feel the need to share their pronouns.
- Ask people the pronouns they use for themselves whenever you ask people their name, such as when you meet someone for the first time or when you do go-arounds at meetings. Keep in mind that people may change the pronouns they go by, so it is necessary to ask pronouns in go-arounds regularly.

# Pronoun Dos and Don'ts

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## *Don'ts!*

- Refer to pronouns such as “they/them/their” or “ze/hir/hir” as “gender-neutral pronouns.” While some trans people identify as gender-neutral, many see themselves as gendered, but as gender nonconforming. Better language is “nonbinary pronouns.”
- Describe the pronouns someone uses as “preferred pronouns.” It is not a preference. The pronouns that a person uses are their pronouns and the only ones that should be used for them.

# Pronoun Dos and Don'ts

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## *Don'ts!*

- Say “male pronouns” and “female pronouns.” Pronouns are not necessary tied to someone’s gender identity: some trans people use “he/him/his” or “she/her/her,” but do not identify as male or female, respectively.
- Indicate that you “don’t care what pronouns are used for me,” if you are a cisgender person. Such a statement reinforces the privilege that many cis people have in not needing to worry about the pronouns that people use for them--that they are not going to be misgendered. It also invalidates the experiences of trans people, many of whom struggle with getting people to use their correct pronouns.

# Addressing Names & Pronouns

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- Instructors can include a name and pronoun policy on syllabi to create a climate of respect for trans students. A sample policy:

**“Names and Pronouns:** Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, including the use of nonbinary pronouns. Class rosters have a student’s legal first name and do not indicate a student’s pronouns, so students will be asked to indicate the pronouns that they use for themselves whenever they indicate their names. A student’s chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.”



# Addressing Names & Pronouns

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Instructors in small-sized classes who call the roll on the first day can:

- have students introduce themselves, giving the name and pronouns they use for themselves
- give each student a sheet of cardstock to create a placard with their name and pronouns on it that they would then set in front of them

Instructors who teach a large-sized class (where students would not introduce themselves) can avoid referring to students by assumed gender.

# Addressing Names & Pronouns

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- Do not assume the gender of students and that every student identifies as cisgender.
  - Do not use gendered forms of address (Mr./Ms., sir/ma'am), gendered pronouns, or “man”/“woman” unless you know that is how the student identifies.
  - We would never refer to someone based on assumptions about other aspects of identity.
- Respect students' gender identity and expression by using the names and pronouns that they use.
  - Need to ask the chosen names and pronouns of students.
  - But students should not be required to indicate pronouns.

# Addressing Names & Pronouns

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- Students need to be given the ability to indicate their pronouns, if they want, outside of classes too.
- Pronouns should be asked (but not required to be provided) along with names in meetings of academic departments, Student Affairs offices, and student groups, so that gender is not assumed.
- Faculty and staff can include their pronouns on name tags and in email signatures, if they feel comfortable doing so.

# Resources on Chosen Name

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- **Institutions that Enable Students to Use Chosen First Names on Campus Records:** [www.campuspride.org/tpc/records](http://www.campuspride.org/tpc/records)
- **Examples of a college name policies and FAQ:**
  - UC Riverside: [registrar.ucr.edu/docs/preferred-name-faq.pdf](http://registrar.ucr.edu/docs/preferred-name-faq.pdf)
  - Univ. of Michigan: [documentation.its.umich.edu/node/248](http://documentation.its.umich.edu/node/248)
  - Augsburg College:  
<http://www.augsburg.edu/lgbtqia/resources/preferred-first-name-policy>
- **Genny Beemyn and Dot Brauer, “Trans-Inclusive College Records: Meeting the Needs of an Increasingly Diverse U.S. Student Population,”** *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2 (2015): 478-487.

# Resources on Pronouns

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- “Resources on Personal Pronouns”: [www.mypronouns.org](http://www.mypronouns.org)
- “Practice with Pronouns”: [www.practicewithpronouns.com](http://www.practicewithpronouns.com)
- Colleges with Pronoun Websites:
  - Hampshire College: [www.hampshire.edu/central-records/preferred-first-name-and-pronoun-policy](http://www.hampshire.edu/central-records/preferred-first-name-and-pronoun-policy)
  - Ohio University: [www.ohio.edu/lgbt/pronouns.cfm](http://www.ohio.edu/lgbt/pronouns.cfm)
  - UMass Amherst: [www.umass.edu/stonewall/pronouns](http://www.umass.edu/stonewall/pronouns)
  - University of Vermont: [www.uvm.edu/~rgweb](http://www.uvm.edu/~rgweb)
- University of Iowa video tutorial:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8y5KQi7B1M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8y5KQi7B1M)

# Further Questions?

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