

HOW TO BE A TRANS & NON-BINARY ALLY

considerations & best practices

Creating an affirming environment for trans & non-binary folx allows them to better learn, grow, explore and collaborate. Trans & non-binary folx have shared that repeated discrimination and even unintentional exclusion places an additional mental and emotional burden on them. Over time these incidents can sabotage hard work and undermine feelings of belonging on campus.

PRONOUNS & WHY THEY MATTER

No matter how someone may look or act, we do not know their identities or pronouns until they tell us themselves. Use a person's name or default to "they/them" when you do not know how to refer to someone. Introducing yourself and including your appropriate pronouns can create an inclusive space, encouraging others to share their pronouns as well. It is important and powerful to share your pronouns even if you do not identify as trans or non-binary; doing so can facilitate norm setting and foster an environment that acknowledges diverse identities.

A NOTE ON ALLYSHIP

Allyship is a great place to start in your journey of changing systems so that folx of all gender identities can live without limitations. Allyship includes learning about gender oppression, changing beliefs and language, and scaffolding change in our communities. Allyship also means caring about intersecting issues like race, class, etc. This is ongoing work, and we are never done. We never "arrive" at full allyship. This is not meant to discourage, but the opposite. Since it's a "marathon not a sprint", give yourself permission to be humble, learn from others, and know that there will always be more to learn (and unlearn).

MISGENDERING & ITS IMPACT

Misgendering occurs when we intentionally or unintentionally refer to a person using names, pronouns, or other gender markers that do not align with their gender identity. It is important to take the time to learn how to refer to people, similarly to how we learn someone's name. By respecting pronouns and other gender markers, we acknowledge the existence and importance of their identity.

USING GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

In much the same way that academics a century ago used words like "men" and "mankind" to describe all people, many of us today use terms like "men and women," "boys and girls" and "ladies and gentlemen" to describe people of all genders. Going a little further by replacing these binary labels with inclusive phrases like "people of all genders," "folks," "students" and "esteemed guests" into vocabulary can indicate to trans and non-binary folx that they are included.

want more info?

Check out weiland.stanford.edu for more psychoeducational materials & resources to learn more inclusive language & identity terms

ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

The best way to meet the needs of folx across the gender spectrum is to ask them yourself. Asking questions like “how can I support you in this space” or “how can I help you succeed this year” gives trans and non-binary people a chance to communicate their individual needs and wants to you, and for you to work with them to craft solutions that work for everyone. Every person’s needs will differ in some way, and some will feel more or less comfortable in any given space. Some will need more support, and some will need less. As an ally, you can provide trans and non-binary folx with the support and reassurance they need, and help them thrive at Stanford and beyond.

LEVERAGING PRIVILEGE

There are multiple ways to use privilege in order to be a good ally to folx all along the gender spectrum. One way is to decenter yourself and center the voices and experiences of others with less privilege, for example in conversation and creation of systems. Another is to fight for all-gender bathrooms. Another is to challenge others when they make binaried assumptions or jokes. Another is to use your vote to fight for legislation that protects trans and non-binary people in workplaces, healthcare, and legal systems. All of these actions help in allyship, as long as you are making sure not to position yourself as an expert, especially above trans and non-binary folx.

UPDATE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Intake forms, surveys, syllabi and other materials used to collect and share information often cause gender expansive folx unnecessary stress. Questions asking respondents to check one of two gender boxes, language that implies a binary of only men and women, and resources relying on gender stereotypes all contribute to making trans and non-binary people feel invisible on campus. These stereotypes additionally harm cisgender people by prescribing how “men” and “women” should look and act. Most references to gender, unless specifically needed for data collection or another compelling reason, can easily be omitted without detriment to source material.

ONGOING EDUCATION

As discussed in the note on allyship, the journey towards inclusion and equity is a lifetime pursuit. A big part of this journey is continuing to learn from trans and non-binary people, engaging in trainings, and never thinking you're done learning and unlearning. Weiland offers training on a variety of topics, including but not limited to: Queer 101, Gender Inclusivity and Pronoun Practice, LGBTQ+ Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Assault, LGBTQ+ Reproductive Issues, Queer Mental Health, Making Your Workplace More LGBTQ+ Friendly, and More. Email weilandhealth@stanford.edu to schedule a training.

RESOURCES



Weiland Health Initiative (brochure author):
<https://weiland.stanford.edu/>
weiland@stanford.edu



Queer Student Resources
<https://queer.stanford.edu/>
QueerStudentResources@stanford.edu



Gender Expansive Support
<https://equity.stanford.edu/transgender-support>



Office for Inclusion, Belonging, & Intergroup Communication
Provides gender diversity training
<https://diversityandfirstgen.stanford.edu/inclusion-diversity-education-office>
ibic-office@stanford.edu

