

Words matter: Considerations for creating an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ participants

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Funding Statement

- The contents of this presentation were developed with support from the the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) a grant funded funded by the US Department of Education via Cooperative Agreement #H326E20003. The ideas, opinions, and conclusions expressed, however, are those of the authors and do not represent recommendations, endorsements, or policies of the US Department of Education.

Bio: DJ Ralston – Pronouns: they/them/theirs

- Non-Binary/TransMasc, Queer, Geriatric Millennial, Foodie and Muppet Enthusiast
- Professional Background
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Public Workforce Development
 - Technical Assistance – Disability and Employment
- Education
 - Certified (Partner) Work Incentive Coordinator
 - Masters Degree – Rehabilitation Counseling
 - Doctoral Candidate – Human and Organizational Learning
- Areas of Expertise
 - Supporting LGBTQIA+ Populations including LGBTQIA+ Students & Youth
 - Social Security Work Incentives and Financial Empowerment
 - Relationship Building, Partnership Development, and Training Development



Bringing Intention to the Space

- Grace
- Kindness
- Assume Positive Intent
- Willingness to Engage
- Listening to understand/learn



Session Objectives

- Increased understanding and ability to use common language around LGBTQ+ Identity including the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity
- Increased understanding of the importance and strategies for creating an inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ Youth
- Increased understanding of transition as it relates to gender identity including the social, legal, and medical aspects of transition.
- Increased understanding of the nuances associated with being Transgender and/or Non-Binary and applying for work.

Of the 34,000 LGBTQ Youth (Ages 13-24) Surveyed Across the United States...

- 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth.
 - 43 % of white youth seriously considered suicide last year compared to 49% of Black youth, 46% of Latinx youth, 47% of Middle Eastern/North African youth and 55% of Native/Indigenous youth
- 14% of LGBTQ Youth attempted suicide in the past year
 - 12 % of white youth attempted suicide in 2022 compared to 19% of Black youth, 16% of Latinx youth, 20% of Middle Eastern/North African youth and 21% Native/Indigenous youth
- 60% of LGBTQ Youth who wanted mental health care in the past year but were not able to get it
- 36% of LGBTQ Youth reported they have been physically threatened or harmed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Of the 34,000 LGBTQ Youth (Ages 13-24) Surveyed Across the United States... (continued)

- LGBTQ youth who felt high social support from their family reported attempting suicide at **less than half the rate** of those who felt low or moderate social support.
- LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported **significantly lower rates of attempting suicide** than those who do not.

Your Support Matters.

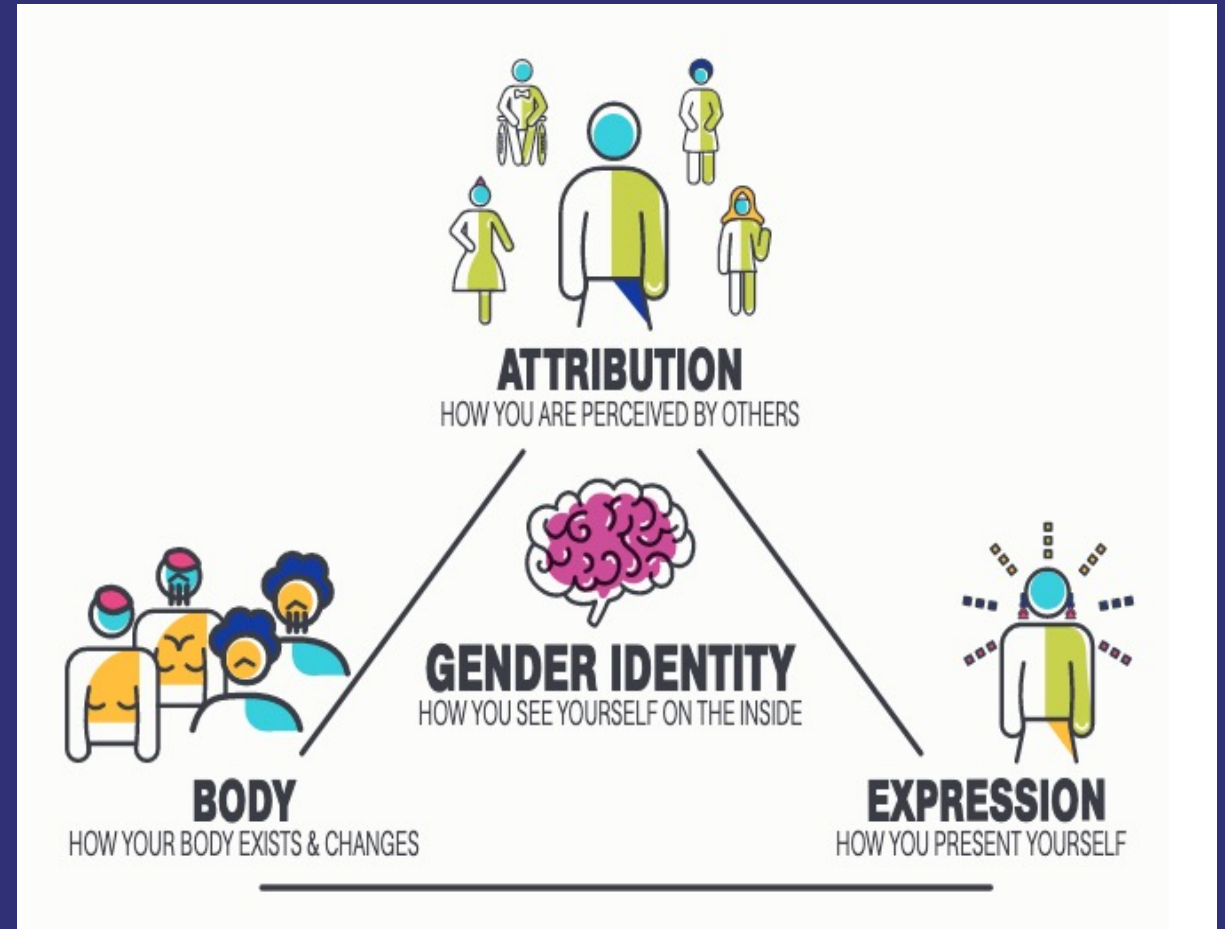
Language Matters



- Language contributes to identity and helps LGBTQ+ people create and find community
- Nuance and differences in beliefs
 - LGBTQ People are not a monolith
 - If you have met one trans person, you've met one trans person
- Constantly Changing Landscape
- People (especially youth) will determine quickly if you are a safe person.
- Person first language vs. Identity first language
- Utilizing language clients use talking about multiple identities
- What is informing your language?

Gender Identity

- **Expression**
 - How you present yourself
 - Feminine, Masculine, Androgenous
- **Attribution**
 - How you are perceived by others
 - Others often assume gender based on certain bodily characteristics because our society often conflates the configuration of our bodies with gender.
- **Body**
 - How your body exists and changes
 - Bodies are complex and are composed of many elements that including chromosomes, hormones, internal/external anatomy and secondary sex characteristics



[Image Credit: From GLESEN](#)

GLESEN in Partnership with InterACT developed the Gender Triangle as an educational Tool to help others understand the main elements that relate to gender identity

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Sexual/Affectual Orientation

- An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Homosexual
 - Bisexual
 - Pansexual

Gender Identity

- One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
 - Transgender
 - Non-Binary
 - Genderqueer
 - Gender-Fluid
 - Gender Expansive
 - Gender Non-Conforming

American Psychological Association: Defining Transgender Terms

- **Cisgender:** Used to describe an individual whose gender identity and gender expression align with the sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender binary:** The classification of gender into two discrete categories of male and female.
- **Gender dysphoria:** Discomfort or distress related to an incongruence between an individual's gender identity and the gender assigned at birth.
- **Gender expression:** Clothing, physical appearance and other external presentations and behaviors that express aspects of gender identity or role.
- **Gender identity:** An internal sense of being male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to an individual's sex assigned at birth or sex characteristics.

American Psychological Association: Defining Transgender Terms (continued)

- **Gender nonconforming:** Describes an individual whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the gender norms associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Genderqueer:** Describes an individual whose gender identity doesn't align with a binary understanding of gender, including those who think of themselves as both male and female, neither, moving between genders, a third gender or outside of gender altogether.
- **Non-Binary** - a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.
- **Trans-affirmative:** Being aware of, respectful and supportive of the needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term encompassing those whose gender identities or gender roles differ from those typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Words Matter: Defining Terms (continued)

- **Trans Man:** Someone who is transgender and identifies as a man.
- **Trans Woman:** Someone who is transgender and identifies as a woman.
- **Someone who is Trans and Non-Binary:** Someone who is transgender and identifies as non-binary.
- **Pansexual:** Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.
- **Someone who is “Out”:** Someone who is living openly in terms of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, where and when it feels appropriate to them.
- **Outing:** Exposing someone’s LGBTQ+ identity without their permission; can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

Pronouns 101

Type	Name	Example
Feminine	She, her, her	She went to the store. I spoke to her. It was her apple.
Masculine	He, him, his	He went to the store. I spoke to him. It was his apple.
Gender Neutral	They, them, their	They went to the store. I spoke to them. It was their apple.
Gender Neutral	Ze, hir, hirs	Ze went to the store. I spoke to hir. It was hirs apple.



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

PRONOUNS

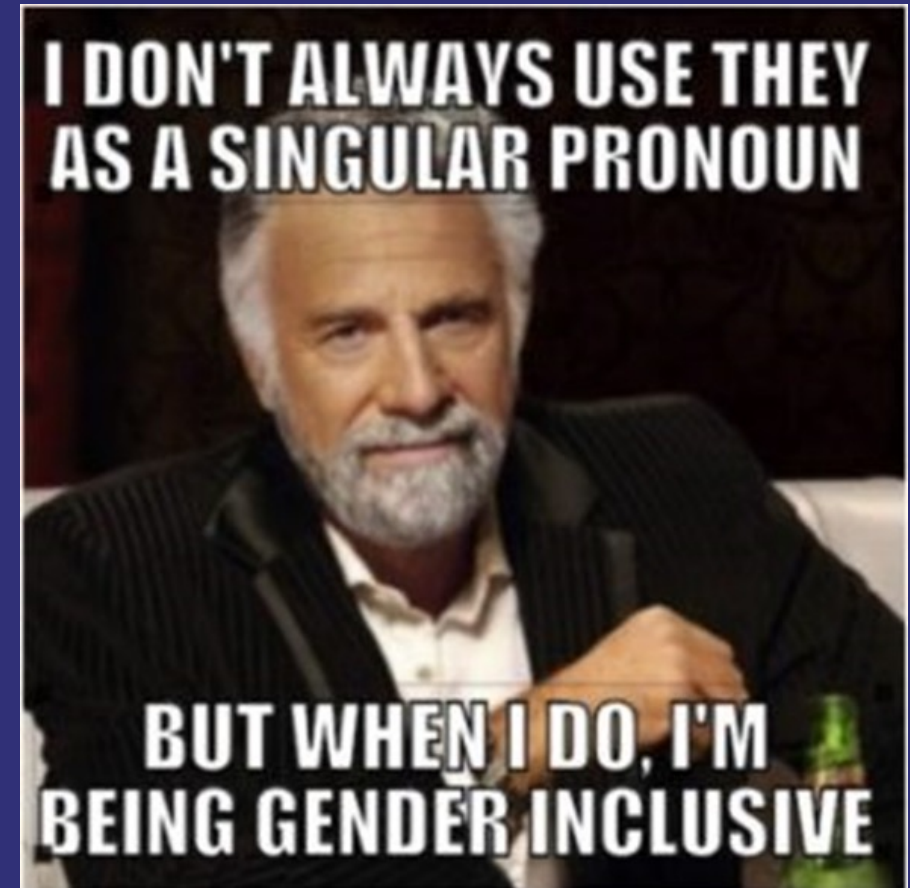
I'm seeing Jeremy this weekend. They're going to take me skateboarding. Then I'm going to go with them to the movies.



Pronouns

Organizations that have recognized the singular use of “they”:

- Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary (2019 Word of the Year)
- Associated Press Stylebook
- Chicago Manual of Style
- American Psychological Association Manual



When people call you the correct pronouns

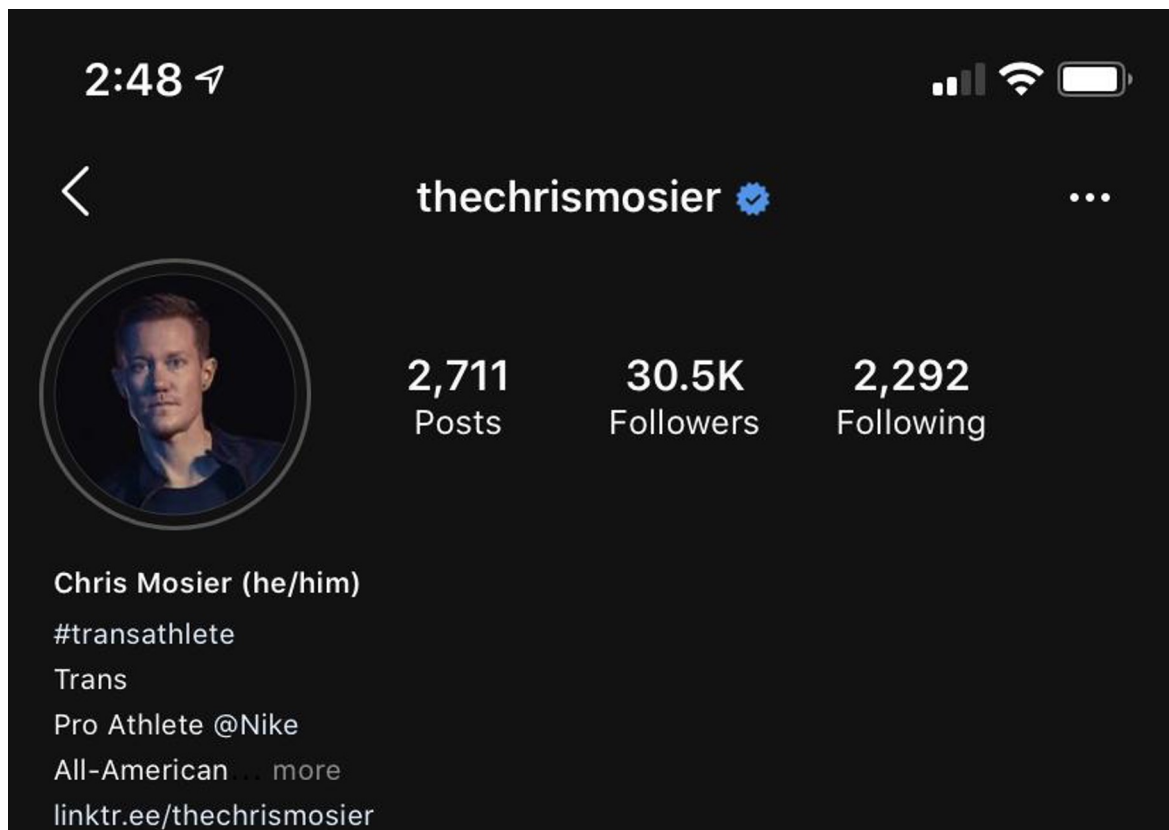


Transition 101

The American Psychological Association defines transition as:

The process of shifting toward a gender role different from that assigned at birth, which can include social transition, such as new names, pronouns and clothing, and medical transition, such as hormone therapy or surgery.

Chris Mosier (he/him)



@thechrismosier

<https://www.thechrismosier.com/>

#transathlete

Transgender

Pro-Athlete @Nike

All-American Athlete, 2X National
Champion and 6X Team USA Athlete
and Professional Speaker - Instagram
post 07/20/20

Instagram Post 1-2: @thechrismosier



Instagram Post 3-4: @thechrismosier



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Instagram Post 7-8: @thechrismosier

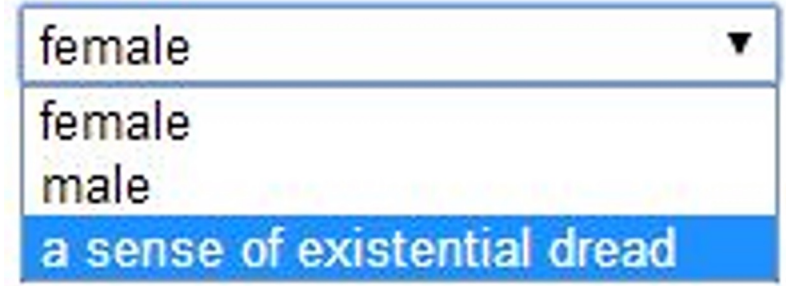


Instagram Post 9-10: @thechrismosier



Supporting Gender Expansive & Transgender Individuals

- Familiarize yourself with the legalities of Transition
 - Adult? Minor?
 - Government ID (Name & Gender)
 - Birth Certificate (Possible? Surgery Needed?)
 - Name Change (Costs/Fee Waivers)
 - Gender Marker Change
- Familiarize yourself with Federal, State, Local Anti-Discrimination Laws



A screenshot of a dropdown menu. The menu is open, showing four options: "female", "female", "male", and "a sense of existential dread". The "a sense of existential dread" option is highlighted in blue. A small black triangle icon is visible in the top right corner of the dropdown box.

Creating Safe Spaces for Those Who Feel Marginalized

- Inherent Power in the Helping Relationship
- Who decides it's a safe space?
 - Safety looks different for everyone
 - Further impacted by intersectional identities
 - Can be knowledgeable on one, and/or but not all
- How do you show up in the space?
 - Authentically, open-mindedly, accountably, with humor and forgiveness, and the rest of who you are
- Challenging our own worldviews and increasing cultural responsiveness



From Safe Spaces to Actively Affirming Ones...

- Consider your application and intake process.
 - Ask about preferred name/name you go by
 - Include your own pronouns when introducing yourself
 - Ask about pronouns
- Understand and use language of LGBTQ+ community
- Research memes and cultural references

When somebody calls you by your birthname



Power and Privilege: Working with Youth/Students

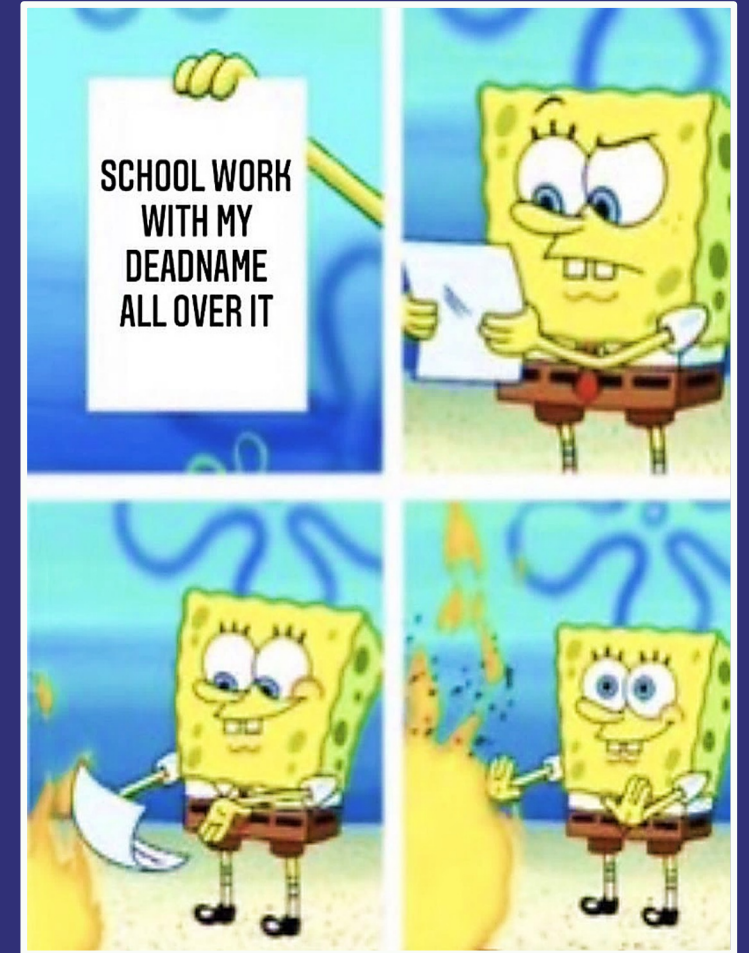
If a youth/student you are working with discloses their LGBTQ identity:

- Ask the youth/student if they are Out to family/friends?
- Does student/youth currently feel safe with friends, family and community?
- Ask youth/student if there is anything in particular they need related to their LGBTQ identity.
- If youth/student expresses concern about their safety share local resources.
- Offer to connect them to local resources/support who specialize in LGBTQ related issues.
- Strategize with and listen to youth



What Can I Do to Actively Support LGBTQ+ Youth?

- **Model** correct gender pronouns and name
- **Do not say, “what’s your real name?”** because you suspect the student/youth provided their chosen name. You can clarify their legal name if different for paperwork.
- **Correct other people** as needed
- Provide resources
- Get involved and **build relationships/partnerships with local LGBTQ+ organizations** and resources
- **Assist in educating others** (partners, families, employers)
- **Create open and affirming office spaces** (flyers, stickers, intake forms, all gender restrooms, training, etc.)
- **Do your best** to create conditions for students/youth to disclose their identity and tell you their stories w/o judgment



What Can I Do to Actively Support LGBTQ+ Youth (Continued)?

- When working with students and youth in group settings ensure you have **established comprehensive and clear anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that are inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.**
 - Policy should include a way for students/youth to report harassment or bullying confidentially.
 - Policy should include harassment and discrimination response strategies like the youth restorative justice framework and/or positive behavioral interventions and supports (as opposed to zero tolerance policies which research shows disproportionately affect already marginalized populations).
- Ensure **dress codes and/or dress expectations are gender inclusive.**



Final Concepts

- Gender identity encompasses an inner sense of being.
- Gender identity is often understood before sexual orientation.
- Transsexual is an outdated term.
- Trans/Transgender is an adjective not a noun.
 - **Do:** A transgender person, a trans man, a trans woman, a non-binary person, a genderqueer individual etc.
 - **Don't:** transgendered, a trans, “I would have never known you were trans” etc.
- You are not expected to be an expert, but you should be familiar with resources and legitimate organizations and have connections to ensure support.

National Resources for More Information

- GLAAD - LGBTQ Resource List: <https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist>
- The Trevor Project - Resources: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/>
- Human Rights Campaign - Resources: <https://www.hrc.org/resources>
- PFLAG: <https://pflag.org/>

Find us:

transitionTA.org | ntact-collab@uncc.edu



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant (H326E200003) from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.