

MAKING YOUR CLUB INCLUSIVE OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONCONFORMING STUDENTS

Being inclusive means that your student club and its members commit to an ongoing process of education. Your club will need to make an effort to ensure that its activities and advocacy efforts are inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people and issues.

USE GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Some transgender and gender nonconforming people may prefer what are traditionally thought of as female or male pronouns, like “she” or “he”, but others use gender neutral pronouns. Respecting people’s pronouns is an important way to be supportive of everyone’s identity.

- “Zie” (pronounced “z”) is subjective and is used instead of “she” or “he.”
- “Hir” (pronounced “here”) is both objective and possessive and is used instead of “him,” “his,” “her,” and “hers.”
- “They,” “them,” and “their” are also gender-neutral and can be used as singular gender-neutral pronouns.

Using “it” to refer to people is offensive and dehumanizing, so make sure to stick with gender-neutral pronouns when appropriate!

PRACTICE GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Plan an activity to allow people to become more fluent with these pronouns. For example, break the group into pairs, have each person get to know the other, and then have each member introduce their partner to the group using only gender-neutral pronouns. Remember to gently correct people if they make a mistake.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

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. Since gender is a social construct, it is possible to reject or modify the assignment made, and develop something that feels truer and just to oneself.

Gender Identity

How an individual identifies in terms of their gender. Gender identities may include “male,” “female,” “androgynous,” “transgender,” “genderqueer” and many others, or a combination thereof.

Gender Expression

The multiple ways (e.g., behaviors, dress) in which a person may choose to communicate gender to oneself and/or to others.

Cisgender

a person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the gender they were assigned at birth or by society.

Transgender

An umbrella term describing people whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth or by society.

Gender Nonconforming or Gender Variant

A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not conform to the gender they were assigned at birth or by society. People who identify as “gender nonconforming” may or may not also identify as “transgender.”