



Hello!

Thank you for your recent participation in the HiTOPS Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) workshop. I know we covered a lot of material in a short amount of time, and that you may still have questions and/or want additional resources to help you be an affirming person. This guide provides an overview of the workshop topics, as well as resources.

Below is a brief review of the identity constructs presented at the SOGIE training.

Sexual orientation: A person's sexual, emotional, physical, and psychological attraction to other people. Sexual orientation does NOT revolve solely around sexual relationships. Examples include same gender attraction (e.g., lesbian, gay), opposite-gender attraction (e.g., straight), and attraction to other genders (e.g., pansexual, bisexual).

Gender identity: A person's sense of their gender, or how a person feels on the inside, regardless of what their body looks like. Examples include transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, cisgender male, and cisgender female.

Gender expression: The ways in which people communicate their gender to others. This may include, for example, clothing choice, hairstyle, vocal pitch, and walking gait.

WHAT CAN I DO?

The good news is that there are small changes you can make that have a BIG impact. Here are some ideas:

Normalize sharing pronouns: Include your pronouns in your email signature, your business card, name tags, in online meetings, and at the beginning of in-person meetings or classes. You may consider wearing a pronoun pin. You can even change your name in Zoom calls to show your pronouns. Normalizing pronouns is an important example of modeling inclusivity!

Learn others' pronouns: Begin by disclosing your pronouns first in each conversation/encounter. When you disclose your pronouns consistently, you are opening the space for others to share their own: "Hi, I'm x and I use x/x pronouns." If you are not sure of someone's pronouns, it is best to use "they" until the person indicates otherwise. Many meetings, workshops, and classes will begin with introductions – try asking people to state their names and which pronouns they use. If a person introduces themselves using different pronouns than you expected, trust that those are the pronouns they wish to use in the context of the group. You may want to follow up with a discreet conversation that clarifies things for you – we

don't want to accidentally "out" anyone. Remember, mistakes happen; correct yourself, apologize, and move on: "Thank you for correcting me. I apologize and will make every effort to use your correct pronouns from now on."

Honor personal histories: It is not recommended to use or inquire about a transgender person's previous name, often called a "dead" name, even when you've known them an extended time and/or they are telling a story about their pre-transition. Many transgender people have strong, negative associations with their previous names and have worked hard to put those names behind them. If you accidentally use the wrong name, as with pronouns, apologize, correct yourself, and move forward.

Try to use gender neutral language whenever possible: Pay attention to when and how gendered language is used; "ladies and gentlemen" can easily change to "team," "you all," or "friends." Many stories, role plays, and examples use unnecessarily gendered language and can be easily altered with "they" or gender-neutral names. If someone asks to clarify what an example's gender is, use this as an opportunity to explore why they were curious or what difference it would make. In order to understand the use of gendered language around you, spend a few days listening and observing the gendered language people are using; from there, you can determine how you will introduce gender-neutral terms into conversation.

When a friend comes out: The best reaction you could have to a friend who comes out to you and shares their identity with you is that of gratitude. Thank your friend for sharing this information with you and ask how you can be supportive of them. Recognize that your friend likely had some anxiety leading up to sharing their feelings with you. Remember that your friend is the same person they've always been - now you just know a bit more about them! Ask them – with whom is this information safe to share? This identity they've shared with you doesn't change who they are and isn't even necessarily the most important characteristic about them, it's simply another piece of them that you've been trusted with.

Cultivate a safe space: Show off your knowledge and support of all people by hanging pride flags, posters, and safe space stickers. This is an excellent way to communicate that you are affirming and will support LGBTQ+ people. Commitment to being supportive involves care and concern for all people and a willingness for ongoing learning.

RESOURCES

Terminology:

<https://transstudent.org/about/definitions/> Trans Student Educational Resources

[Asexual and Aromantic Resource Guide](#) from Arizona State University

Language-related:

[Gender-neutral pronouns](#)

[Gender-neutral family terms](#)

Visuals:

[The Gender Unicorn](#) by Trans Student Educational Resources

[Universe Model](#) from Liat Wexler

[The Gender Galaxy](#) from Action Canada

Books to enhance your understanding:

[My Gender Workbook: How to Become a Real Man, a Real Woman, the Real You, or Something Else Entirely](#) by Kate Bornstein

[The Gender Book](#) by Mel Reiff Hill

General:

[HiTOPS](#) – Check out our support groups!

[The Trevor Project](#) guide to being an ally

[Intersex information](#) from interACT

[The 2019 National School Climate Survey](#)

[Safe space kits from GLSEN](#)

Video:

[Indeed | A New Beginning](#)

[LGBT Experiences at School](#)

[Intersectionality 101](#)

You are not alone on this journey! Please feel free to reach out at any point with questions, comments and concerns!

It was a pleasure meeting you during the first workshop and I look forward to our continued collaboration and conversation 😊

Sincerely,

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