Supporting
Gender Identity
In the Classroom

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Why it matters

Reflect:

Think of a professor that you enjoyed learning from.

How did they treat their students?

How did they model learning and integrating new information?

Why it matters

Navigating gender identity skillfully and with sensitivity communicates to students that they can be their authentic selves in the classroom.

- If a trans or gender-nonconforming student doesn't perceive that they are in a safe, supportive space, they may conceal their gender identity.

- Gender concealment is a known stressor in gender-nonconforming individuals.

Rood, B.A., Puckett, J.A., Maroney, M.R., Berman, A.K.(2017). Identity concealment in transgender adults: A qualitative assessment of minority stress and gender affirmation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 87(6), 704-713.* https://doi.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fort0000303

Why it matters

Referring to someone by the wrong pronoun or by their deadname (the name they were assigned at birth that they no longer use) can:

- Make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed or alienated.

- Trigger gender dysphoria, a feeling of unwellness caused by internal tension between an individual's assigned sex at birth and their gender identity.

Medina, M. Preferred gender pronouns: for faculty (or, how to take important steps in becoming a trans ally). https://oie.duke.edu/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Diversity%20-PreferredGenderPronounsForFaculty.pdf. (Accessed on August 25, 2021).

Why it matters

You are communicating to all students in the class that there is an expectation that they treat each other with respect.

- This may be the first time some students have interacted with someone who is trans or has a non-conforming gender identity, and it is an important learning opportunity.

- The expectation of respect carries over to all members of the class.

Why it matters

Consistently misgendering someone can be considered a form of sexual harassment under Title IX.

From the *Federal Register Notice of Interpretation: Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 with Respect to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Light of Bostock v. Clayton County* (June 16, 2021):

"The Department issues this Notice of Interpretation to make clear that the Department interprets Title IX's prohibition on sex discrimination to encompass discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity..."
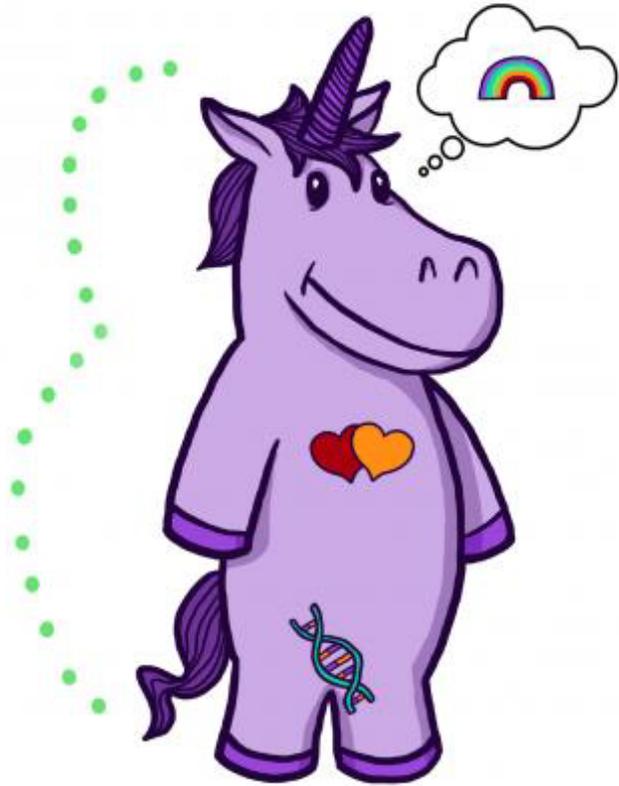
Why it matters

We are living into the College's Community Standard:

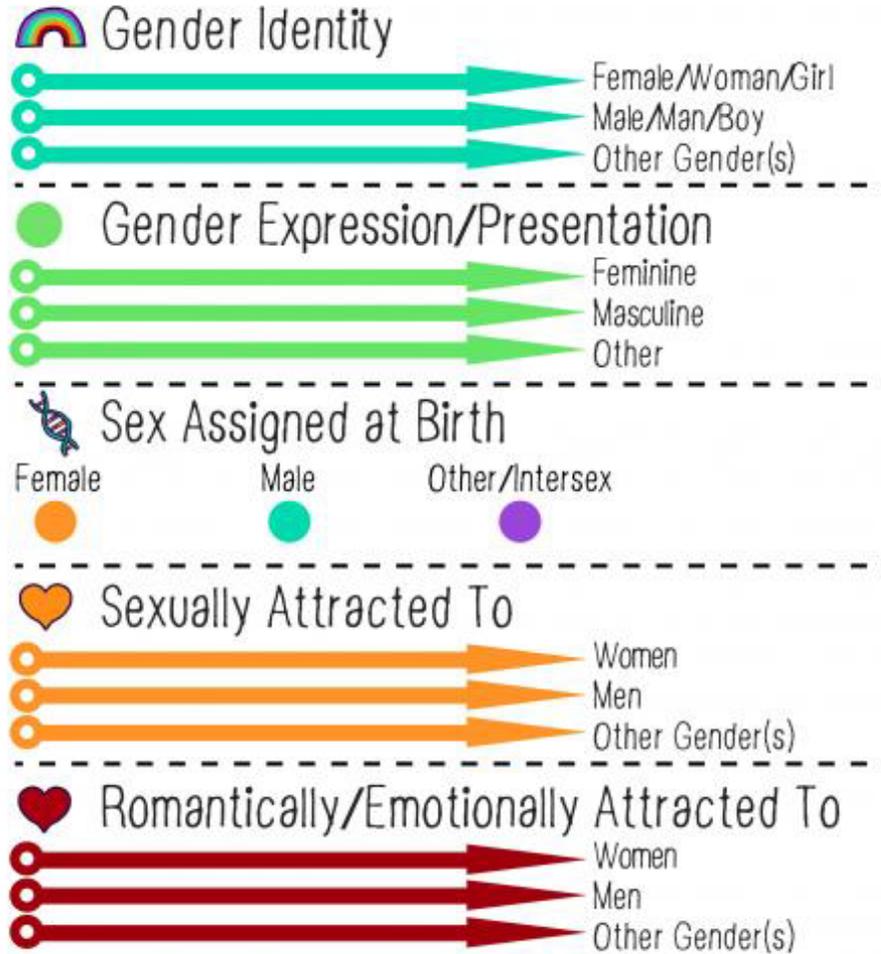"We strive to create an environment where everyone is supported and valued."

https://www.shoreline.edu/about-shoreline/community-standard-statement.aspx

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: TSER — Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression/Presentation
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Sexually Attracted To
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan

8

Terms and Definitions

Gender Identity:
Personal sense of gender

Cisgender:
Describes a person whose sense of gender matches their assigned gender based on sex

Transgender:
Describes a person whose sense of gender varies from their assigned gender based on sex

Nonbinary:
Describes a person whose gender is outside of the male/female binary.

Agender:
Describes a person that is genderless or without a sense of gender.

Two-Spirit:
Describes a Native American person who is gender-variant in identity or role; of a third-gender.

Terms and Definitions

Genderfluid:
Describes a person whose gender identity is not-fixed

Deadname:
To refer to someone by a name they no longer use

Describes a name that a person no longer uses

Gender Non-Conforming:
Describes a person whose gender identity or expression challenges social norms around gender.

Genderqueer:
Describes a person whose gender diverts from conventional categorization; queering gender

Cisnormativity:
The belief or assumption that all people are cisgender.

Cissexism:
The belief that cisgender people are more natural and easier to accept than transgender and nonbinary people

Talking about Names

"I appreciate you sharing. Is it ok if I start to use that name instead? "

"Is there anyone I shouldn't use this name with?"

"Thanks for letting me know. I can use that name moving forward -"

"I will try to remember that and catch myself if I mess up-"

Things to Avoid:

"Sorry I am going to have too much trouble remembering that-"

"Can I just call you...?"

Pronouns vs. Preferred Pronouns

- Personal pronouns are pronouns that are used for an individual when that person is being referred to, often meant to correlate with that person's gender identity.

- We don't always know someone's gender identity or their pronouns just by looking at them. It's useful to ask, to know which pronouns are correct.

- When asking for pronouns avoid using 'preferred', 'preference' or 'prefer to go by'. This language is common and used to be best practice but in the last decade advocates have asked allies to not treat pronouns as just preference or choice.

12

Pronoun Examples

They/them/their(s)

They gave their favorite book to Ann, because she promised to discuss it with them later

Zie(Or Ze)/zir/zirs

"I was talking to Vex last week, zie called me because zir cat went missing. Zirs cat is super important to them."

Other Pronouns

Ve/ver/vis | Xe/xem/xyr(s) | She/her/hers | He/him/his

Per/per/pers | e(ey)/em/eirs

Pro Tip:

If you feel uncomfortable using pronouns other than "she/her" and "he/him" try reading aloud from a novel or magazine article and switching the pronouns to "they/them," "ze/hir" or one of the other pronoun examples, OR try substituting proper names in place of pronouns.

SETTING UP A SAFE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

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Before Classes Begin

- Be open with your personal pronouns!

- Invite students to tell you their names/pronouns before the first day of class.

- Include your pronouns on the syllabus.

- Include a statement on the syllabus regarding classroom expectations around respect.

Options for Day One of Class
In Person or Virtual

- Introduce your name and pronouns
- In person: If you take roll on day one, use last names or index cards until you learn their names
- Have students introduce themselves (and take notes)
- Virtually: Have students set their first and last names, and pronouns (if they choose) on Zoom (and use that to take roll)
- Address students that use this as a joke in the moment, this can quickly get out of hand.

Privacy and Identity

Gender identity is very personal. Not everyone wants to share their gender identity, or they may choose to share it with their instructor, but not with the rest of the class.

Privacy and Identity

<u>Strategies for protecting students' privacy</u>

- Don't require students to share their pronouns publicly

- Invite students to share their pronouns with you privately if they wish to do so.

- If a student shares their pronouns or other information about their gender identity with you, ask them if they prefer to keep the information private.

- If you misgender a student by mistake, quickly correct yourself and move on, don't draw unnecessary attention.

SCENARIOS

Time for Breakout Rooms!

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20

Scenario 1:

A student, Cody, approaches you privately at the start of the quarter to tell you that he prefers he/him pronouns. When Cody was a student in your class last quarter he used "she/her" pronouns.

The next week during a class discussion, you accidentally refer to Cody as "she." What do you do?

Scenario 2:

You assign students to small groups to collaborate on a project. One of the students, Jay, approaches you after class to tell you that another student assigned to their group has insisted throughout the quarter on using their deadname and referring to them by the wrong pronouns. How do you address this situation?

Questions?

Thank You!

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Resources

- "Preferred Gender Pronouns for Faculty"
- https://oie.duke.edu/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Diversity%20-PreferredGenderPronounsForFaculty.pdf
- Practice your pronouns! https://pronouns.minus18.org.au/
- https://www.mypronouns.org/
- (Incomplete) Glossary of basic terms
- https://lgbtq.smcgov.org/lgbtq-glossary
- Gender Equity Center
- SCC Counseling Center
- CARE Team - Report concerns about a student
- Title IX Office