**Terminology**

**Sex (assigned at birth)**
Based on genitals: male, female, intersex

**Gender norms**
A set of time and location-dependent social rules and expectations for individuals based on their sex.

**Gender**
A person’s sense of how well their experience of gender aligns with current gender norms.
**Terminology continued**

**Nontrans/Cisgender**
Someone whose gender identity aligns with their sex.

**Trans/Transgender**
An umbrella term applied to those whose gender identity does not align with the sex assigned at birth.
A little more vocab

• **Nonbinary** – a gender that is not man or woman.

• **Heteronormativity** – the assumption that heterosexuality is superior to other sexual orientations and relationship structures (e.g., monogamy, marriage for life).

• **Cisnormativity** – the assumption that being nontrans is superior and something is wrong with trans people.
Gender expression
Physical manifestation of gender: e.g., appearance and behavior.

Transition
The process of altering one’s body and/or gender expression to match their gender identity.
What is an ally?

An ally is someone who engages in ongoing acts of resistance and support that center the needs and voices of a targeted individual or group.

Self-advocacy is allyship!
How allies to trans people can function as ecosystem engineers

Fostering environments within which trans and nonbinary people can **thrive**, not just survive.

Examples:

- Establishing gender-inclusive policies at work
- Correcting someone when they misgender a trans person
- Spreading awareness about trans issues through casual conversation
- Informed voting/contacting legislators/politics
- Volunteering for organizations that bolster and protect trans people
- Financially supporting trans advocacy organizations
Example of how anti-trans attitudes harm EVERYONE

• Anti-trans attitudes are not an indication that something is wrong with trans people. They are a reflection of bias.
• Anti-trans bias is rooted in patriarchy and supremacist ideology

Assumptions (imagine how these hurt non-trans people, too)
  1. There is a correct way to “do” a gender.
  2. Everyone must assimilate to the correct way.
Trans visibility via non-trans people

Examples:

• A parent of a trans child talks openly and without shame about their child being trans
• Correcting someone when they misgender a trans person
• Sharing social media posts by trans people
How to cultivate allyship

1. Know yourself
   • Understand your values, motivation, limits and limitations
   • Understand the power and impact of your identities/privileges on yourself and others
   • Identify your gifts, talents, skills, abilities, and assets
   • Identify where you have control and influence and focus on that

2. Learn
   • Become familiar with common microaggressions and bystander intervention techniques
   • Become versed in the issues facing trans people
   • Learn about trans lives past and present
   • Develop media literacy and consume media strategically
How to cultivate allyship

3. Grow and seek feedback
   • Decolonize your mind – critically question everything
   • Develop skills to help you communicate (especially listening and naming emotions/behaviors)
   • Learn about your biases and how to mitigate them

4. Engage in consistent self-care
   • Thriving is an act of resistance. Discover what makes you thrive.
   • Look for glimmers daily
Bias can thwart allyship, causing unintended harm

• Allyship centers the needs and wellbeing of the vulnerable group/person, not social norms established by the dominant culture
• Everyone has biases, even allies
• Everyone deserves grace and a lot of it
Two common examples of how ally bias can cause harm

Common examples:

1. Surgeons who tell trans patients seeking top surgery they are fat and need to lose weight to get “better” results.
   • Biased assumption: being fat is unattractive

2. Someone refusing to use gender-affirming language such as neopronouns or singular they/them providing the justification that it’s too difficult or “improper” grammar.
   • Biased assumptions: there is only one “correct” grammar; language and grammar are static

This is why the label “ally” is not self-designated – it’s granted by the targeted individual/group (can use “aspiring ally”)

Questions