

# TIPS FOR CREATING A TRANS-INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

## WHAT IS TRANS?

**Trans** a gender identity based on self-definition, not biological or physical markers (**cis-gender** refers to a person whose gender identity matches the gender that was assigned to them at birth).

A variety of identities fit under the designation of trans. It is worth reading up on transgender terminology to be conversant with current terms, such as transgender, transmasculine, transfeminine, cisgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, gender nonconforming, and gender creative. Note, for example, that many in the trans community avoid past-to-present distinctions (such as male to female or "MTF"), references to surgery (pre-op transsexual), and terms with bio or biological in them ("biological sex").

Although there are some alternative pronouns in use by trans people and their allies, most adopt she/her or he/him/his. Some people use gender neutral terms, such as they/them/theirs. Using **plural pronouns** to reference an individual takes some practice!

Keep in mind that it shows respect when you make an effort to acknowledge someone's pronouns, even when you make mistakes or feel uncomfortable doing so.

### Monmouth University GSET

Dr. Lisa Dinella  
Dr. Johanna Foster  
Dr. Nancy Mezey  
Dr. Marie Mele  
Prof. Brooke Nappi  
Dr. Deanna Shoemaker  
Dr. Corey L. Wrenn

### MORE SUPPORT

*National Center for Transgender Equality*  
<http://www.transequality.org/>

*Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation*  
<http://www.glaad.org/transgender/resources>

*Monmouth University Office for Equity and Diversity*  
<http://www.monmouth.edu/university/equity-and-diversity.aspx>

## TITLE IX CLASSROOM PRINCIPLES

- Treat students consistent with their current gender identity, even if their education records or identification documents indicate a different sex
- Use pronouns and names consistent with a transgender student's gender identity
- Take reasonable steps to protect students' privacy related to their transgender status, including their legal name or sex assigned at birth



## INCLUSIVITY TIPS

1. **INFORM STUDENTS** that they are welcome to use preferred names  
**COLLECT INFORMATION** from all students about names and pronouns they use.

If students fill out cards with major, etc., have them add preferred name and pronouns. Model how to share your name and pronouns with your own introduction: "My name is Toby Jones, please call me Professor Jones, and my pronouns are she/her/hers." Alternatively, email students before semester starts to provide them an opportunity to inform you before class starts.

2. **USE LAST NAMES** if necessary to take attendance verbally before you know students' preferred names and pronouns.

Avoid titles such as "Mr.," "Mrs.," and "Ms."

3. **ADOPT INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**, avoiding binaries such as "men and women" and "ladies and gentlemen"

4. **CHECK YOUR ASSUMPTIONS**. Gender identity and pronouns are not always obvious. When in doubt, ask.

5. **CORRECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS** when someone is misgendered (called by incorrect pronouns).

Be kind about misunderstandings. What seems like a learning opportunity for some students may be disturbing for trans students. Minimize hurtful and derogatory speech in your classroom.

6. **BE RESPECTFUL AND NONJUDGMENTAL** if students share information with you about their trans identities.

Focus on providing educational support. Resist sharing opinions and advice that don't pertain to their education.

7. **ADDRESS BULLYING AND HARASSMENT** of trans (or any other) students when it arises. Refer ongoing behavior to The Office of Equity and Diversity.

8. **RECOGNIZE TRANS DIVERSITY**. Not all trans students openly share their experience or embrace the label "trans." Some deliberately reject the categories "male" and "female."

Transitioning, fluid or questioning people may identify differently over time and in different contexts. Transitions may occur during or between semesters. Some trans students will disclose to a professor but may not disclose to their peers. When in doubt about a student's public identity, ask privately.

9. **DON'T ASSUME** transgender people are mentally unstable due to gender identity or expression.

DO make referrals to Counseling Services if you observe signs of emotional or psychological distress.

10. **TAKE STEPS** to make online learning inclusive. Discussion on e-Campus may not display preferred name. Speak with student as to how best to accommodate in such a situation.

