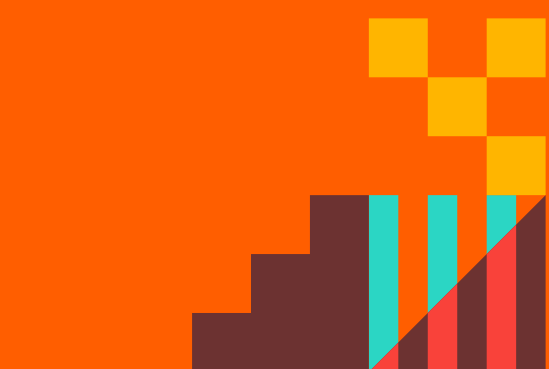# Module 1: Gender Diversity Basics

Gender diversity: Professional workshops

Published 2025

Grow Waitaha

Introduction to the workshops

Acknowledgements

Kia ora, and thank you for participating in this workshop which is part of our **Equity and Inclusion** pou.

Our dedicated rōpū has been collaborating since 2021 to discuss inclusivity for gender-diverse ākonga, and creating resources for schools which largely target governance.

We acknowledge the contributions of **Jordan Mayes** (he/him), **Grae Meek** (she/her), and **Gabrielle Wall** (she/her) for writing and filming these workshops. We also acknowledge the efforts of **Ari Dewar** (they/them), **Rose Cook** (she/they), **Janelle Riki-Waaka** (she/her), and **Chris Jansen** (he/him) for their support, wisdom, and leadership in creating these workshops.

How to use these modules

These modules are intended to be used for short professional learning sessions.

These can be self-directed and completed at your own pace or led by a member of staff. Each module should take about **30-45 minutes**.
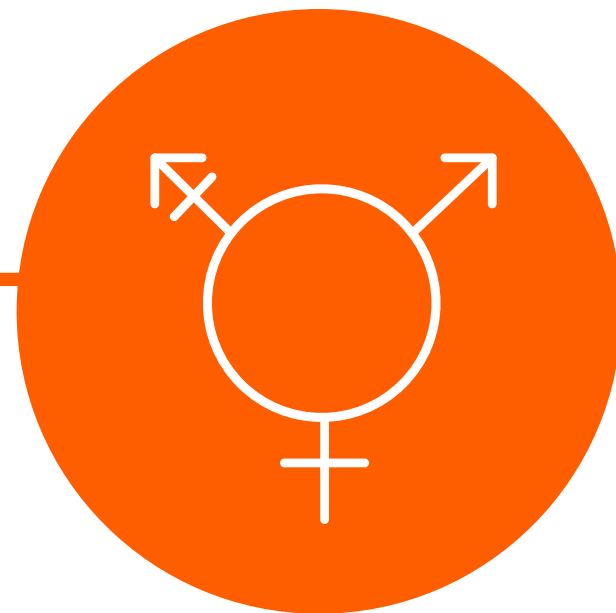
Module 1: Gender Diversity Basics is the first of three modules.

It builds foundational knowledge on key terms and concepts, provides a nuanced perspective of gender and diversity, and provides tips for respectful interactions.

Te Rātaka

This session will cover:

Defining and contextualising gender diversity

Transgender and other gender identities

Guidelines on inclusive language

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Define gender diversity and its conceptual background

- Differentiate between gender identities

- Distinguish between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and attraction

- Understand and use respectful language

> ## E koekoe te kōkō, e ketekete te kākā, e kūkū te kererū
>
> ## The parson bird chatters, the parrot gabbles, the pigeon coos

Before you begin, ensure that you are in a safe space to share ideas, ask questions, and speak openly.

Defining and contextualising gender diversity

What is gender diversity?

Gender diversity describes identities that are beyond the binary framework (female and male).

+ There are many ways people identify and express their gender beyond the sex they were assigned at birth.

+ For some, the binary (male and female) can be constraining, particularly due to societal gender norms placed on them.

What is gender diversity?

Understanding our gender identity is a very personal journey.

+   Many people deconstruct and reconstruct their identity as they experience the world.
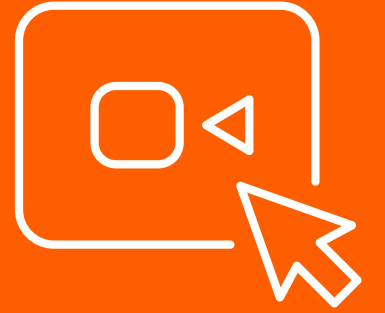
Gender identity develops very early.

+   Between 3 and 5 years old, children develop a sense of selfhood and actively seek information about how they *should* behave based on the language and behaviours of others.

Diamond, L. M. (2020). Gender fluidity and nonbinary gender identities among children and adolescents. Child Development Perspectives, 14(2), 110-115.

Short video

Watch this video, Understanding gender identity, in which Grae Meek and Ari Dewar respond to these questions:

1. How did you come to learn about your gender identity?

2. How has your understanding of your gender identity developed over time?

https://youtu.be/_NXkUduI3o4?si=1TDBJ9YVi5lrEls2

VIEW →

Reflective questions

How have you come to understand your gender identity?

+ What does (fe)maleness mean to you?

+ Is it internal (a feeling) or external (e.g. clothing)?

+ How would you explain your gender to someone else?

+ Could others have different ways of describing their gender?

**When you were little, how did you figure out what gender you were?**

+ Did you play with traditional girl/boy toys?

+ Were there consequences for not complying with gender norms?
For example, playing with the wrong toys or wearing the wrong clothes.

+ How did your family influence how you viewed the roles of girls and boys?

Gender and social organisation

Gender is the social, psychological, cultural, and behavioural aspects of being a woman, man, or other gender identity.

+ Gender is central to social organisation. The binary framework is an easy and convenient way to organise people into groups.

+ A rigid gender binary (male and female) is largely a western concept.
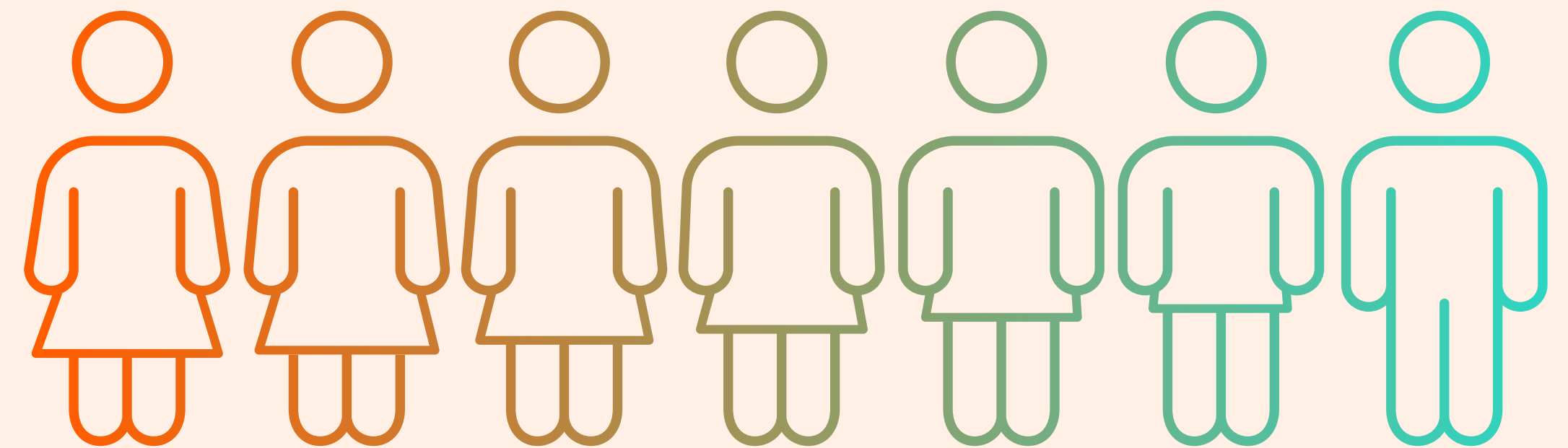
The Genderbread Person

+ Gender is not the same as sex assigned at birth.

+ People identify and express themselves in various ways.

+ The Genderbread Person is a very simple diagram to consider the different components of sex and gender.

+ Your gender identity, expression, and sex are related but distinct factors.

The Genderbread Person – https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/10/the-genderbread-person-v4/

"
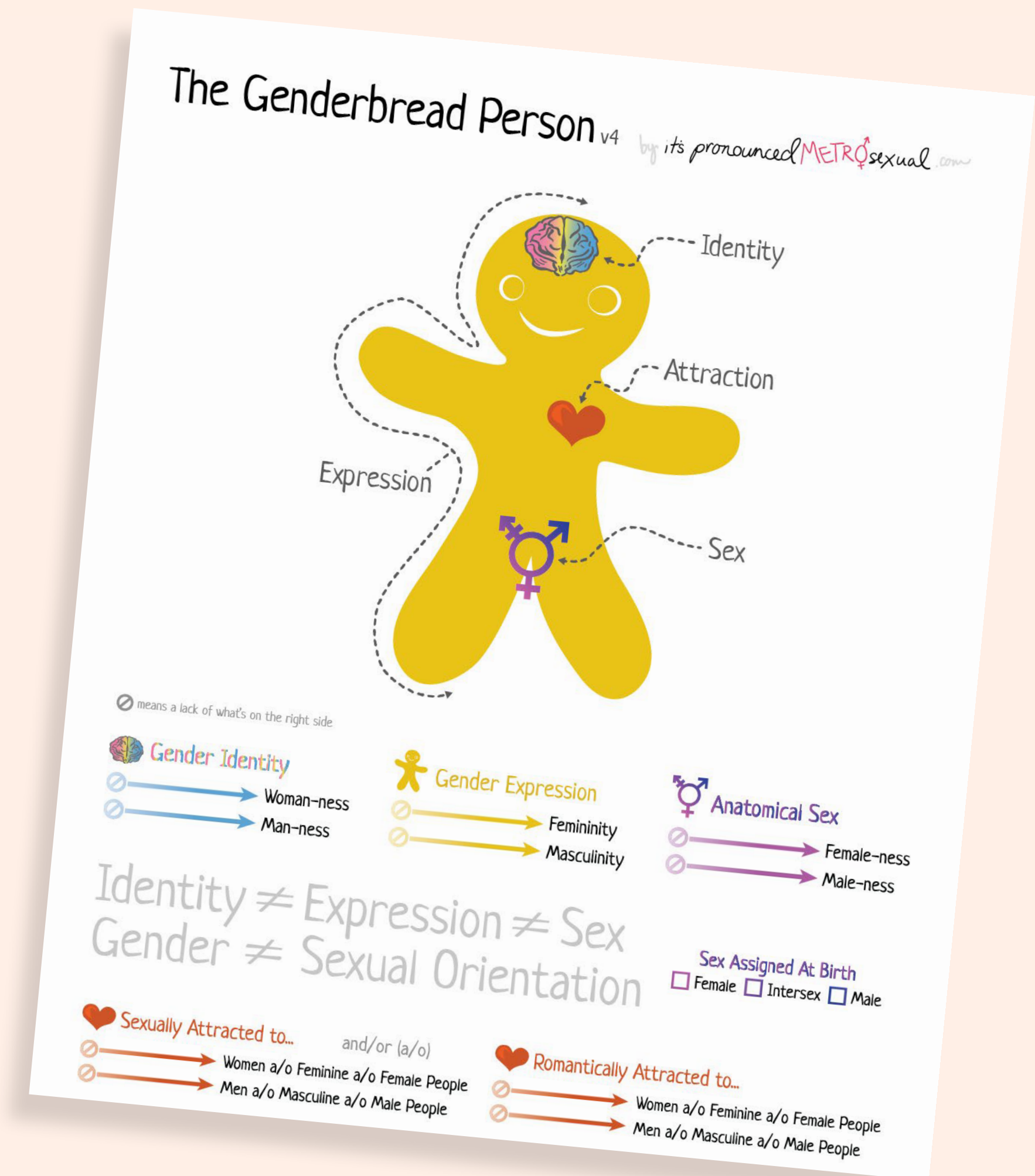
Gender identities such as transgender
do not challenge a biological reality.

"

The complexity of gender identity

Female-ness ———————— Male-ness
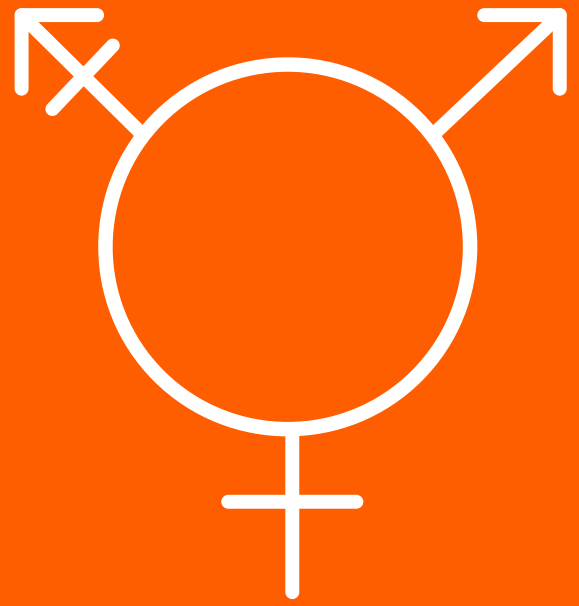
The Genderbread Person (previous slides) views sex, identity, expression, and attraction on a two-dimensional scale for each. This is somewhat reductive.
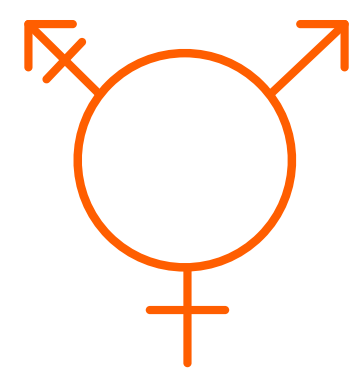

Perhaps, it is better to think of gender in terms of a colour wheel. The ways that all aspects of our gender interact are complex and not necessarily captured on two ends of a spectrum.

Transgender and other gender identities
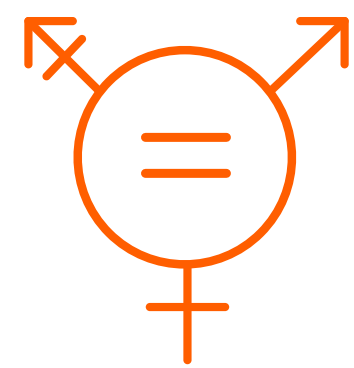
Transgender identity

Transgender (trans) refers to someone whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

+ It is an umbrella term and includes trans men, trans women, as well as non-binary and other people.

+ Trans means 'on the other side of'. Consider 'transgender' as being on the other side of the default gender binary.
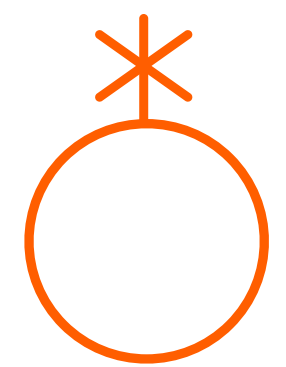
Cisgender

Cisgender describes someone whose gender identity does align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

+ Cisgender is not a derogatory term or insult. It simply describes those whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth, so they have lived their entire life as a man or woman.

+ So while trans means 'on the other side of', cis means 'on the same side of'. So cisgender is on the same side of the gender binary.

Non-binary and other identities

Non-binary: Someone whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary. Can be used as an umbrella term for other genders outside of the gender binary, such as:

+ **Gender fluid:** Non-binary gender identity that shifts between different genders and presentations.

+ **Agender:** Someone who lacks gender or has little experience of gender.

+ **Genderqueer:** A 'queer' or non-normative way of expressing gender.

https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/09/ce-corner-glossary

Are some of these words new to you, or your team?

We acknowledge that these terms might be very new to many people.
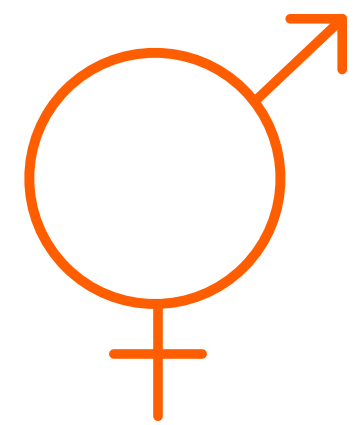
Intersex

Intersex is a general term used to describe individuals born with one or more sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

+ These characteristics include chromosome patterns, gonads, genitals, or hormones.

+ Binary sex often assumes there is a single, universally correct developmental pathway and outcome for sex. But as many as 2% of births are intersex.

Guidelines on inclusive language

"

How can you label all the multiplicities
of the human experience?

"

Labels

Labels are important to the individual.

A label, such as trans or non-binary, is helpful for:

+ Self-identification

+ Building community

+ Self-concept and
  understanding oneself

+ Coming out to others

+ Avoiding explanations

+ Providing a starting point
  for discussions

Pronouns

Pronouns are a means of identifying gender identity in language. Everyone has them!

They are important to individuals as they are the way others refer to us and acknowledge our gender.

Even if you are not trans, it would be offensive for someone to purposefully refer to you using incorrect pronouns.

He/Him

She/Her

They/Them

"

Pronouns create safety.
Sharing my pronouns with others lets
them know that I am a safe person.

"

Names and deadnames

Trans people may change their names to align more with their gender identity.

When someone socially transitions (begins to live as their identified gender), they may go by another name to ease their transition.

Deadnaming means referring to someone with the name they had before they transitioned. That name is no longer in use.

Deadnaming can be distressing. It can be accidental or intentional. Intentionally deadnaming or doing it without regard is very rude. When it happens by accident, make a quick apology and move on.
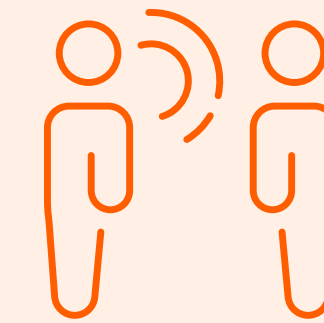
Changing my name is not about erasing my past, but embracing my future!

Reflective questions

In what ways can we show respect to people's personal pronouns?

+ How could you ask?

+ How would you introduce yourself?

+ How else could you incorporate pronouns in your everyday life?

What do we do if we make an error?

+ What do you think someone would want you to do if you made an error?

+ How would you correct someone else?

+ What would you want someone to say to you if you were in their shoes?

Tips for respectful communication

✓ Find out people's pronouns and use them correctly.

✓ If in doubt, use gender neutral pronouns (they/them/their).

✓ If you make a mistake, make a quick apology and move on. Mistakes happen.

✓ Normalise pronoun usage. Start with how you introduce yourself to others, how you sign off emails, and asking other people.

✓ If someone has a preferred name or changes their name, respect it.

✓ Avoid deadnaming. It can happen by mistake, in which case, apologise and move on.

Tēnā koutou
Thank you
Fa'afetai lava

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