

# APPROPRIATE DO'S AND DON'TS

## When Speaking with Transgender, Non Binary & Two-Spirit Individuals

### DO

- Introduce yourself with your pronouns “Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_\_ I go by \_\_\_\_\_ pronouns”
- Ask politely someones name & what pronouns they go by “It’s nice to meet you, what are your pronouns?”
- Respect the autonomy of transgender, nonbinary & two-spirit people to define themselves.
- Respect every individual’s name, pronouns, and identity
- Educate yourself & others on issues that are of importance to transgender individuals and communities. -google is your friend- allyship is a verb
- Interrupt misinformation about transgender, nonbinary & two-spirit people & challenge gender assumptions and transphobia whenever possible.
- Take transgender, nonbinary & two-spirit individuals concerns seriously, even if you do not understand their concern or why it is so important to them.
- Be open to discussions about gender and how it affects situations in your life and in the lives of those around you.
- Focus on accommodating the situation to the person, rather than the person to the situation (for example, not “what should we do with you on this hall” but “what kind of hall situation would give you the same quality of life and positive atmosphere that all students should have?”).
- View transgender as a positive identity rather than a tragic or confused situation.
- Afford transgender people the same credibility, privacy, respect and courtesy that you would desire.
- Ask questions respectfully; recognize that it may take a lot of energy and courage for transgender people to hear and answer your questions and they are justified in not answering any questions that make them uncomfortable.
- Be supportive and a good listener.
- Be an outward ally by using neutral or inclusive language “listen up everyone”, “attention people”, “good evening community”, “hey ya’ll”, etc.
- Prepare yourself, your organization, school, etc to address the concerns of transgender individuals, including questions about resources, facilities, policies, etc.

# *DON'T*

- **Assume an individual's sex or gender identity based upon their appearance.**
- **Ask about an individual's reproductive organs**
- **Ask about personal procedures and or medical history**
- **Talk/Refer to someone as their previous gender status and/or previous name (dead name) or put their chosen name, chosen pronouns, or self-identification in quotation marks; this conveys a belief that the individuals chosen name, pronoun or identity is ultimately invalid or false.**
- **Insist someone must choose to identify as either man or woman**
- **Harmful or disrespectful comments like:**
  - **But you look like a.....**
  - **I have always known you as a.....**
  - **But you made such an attractive....**
  - **I think you are confused because...**
- **Be afraid to have healthy respectful conversations to better inform yourself**
- **"Out" a transgender person without their express permission.**
- **Refer to a transgender person as "it" or as a "he-she" or "she-he," or "tranny" unless the individual has specifically asked you to refer to them in such a manner.**
- **Explain for someone to someone else why they go by certain pronouns. Use: "I don't know why \_\_\_\_ goes by xyz, they have asked me to call them xyz & I do to be respectful"**
- **Assume that, because you cannot visually identify anyone in a room as transgender, there are no transgender people present.**

## *When in Doubt*

- **Use "they/their" instead of guessing**
- **Use "crossdresser" instead of "transvestite"**
- **Use "intersex" instead of "hermaphrodite"**
- **Use "two-spirit" instead of "berdache"**
- **Mind your own business**

