

Positive Space Training

Staff and Faculty - Sept. 29th, 2020

Training Content

P1

- Land Acknowledgement
- Introductions
- Community Agreement
- Important Terms and Concepts
- Applying Concepts

BREAK

P2

- "Quick Fixes"
- Allyship
- Anti-Opressive Strategies
- Handling Mistakes
- Questions?

END

Land Acknowledgement

Decolonizing PST

I acknowledge that StFX is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

The way that we conceptualize assigned sex, gender, and sexual and romantic orientation in so-called Canada was established by colonizers and continues to be used as a tool to police, criminalize, and oppress those who do not conform to colonialist views of gender and sexuality.

The words and concepts we are using today to describe gender and sexual fluidity and diversity are influenced by these colonial ways of knowing and will never be able to fully encompass or describe the vast array of individual lived experiences within the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community.

Gender and sexual fluidity and diversity is nothing new and, in fact, can be found globally across many cultures since time immemorial. To ignore this fact is to be complicit in the continued oppression of Indigenous communities and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Introductions

NAME

Most people are given a name at birth by their caregiver(s) - we call this someone's legal or "given" name.

For some people, their given name isn't one that is affirming for them and their gender, so they choose a name that better affirms those aspects. We call this someone's "chosen" name, "affirmed" name, or simply someone's "name in use".

We do not call someone's name their "preferred" name.

In some cases, choosing not to use someone's affirmed name is called "dead-naming".

PRONOUNS

Pronouns are what we use in the English language to refer to someone else without using their name!

Common pronouns include; she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, and he/him/his. Common neopronouns include; xe/xem/xyr, ze/hir/hirs, and ey/em/eir.

Pronouns, like names, are not "preferred" - in fact, they are non-negotiable.

Pronouns help people feel respected and affirmed in the gender. The appropriate ones should be used, even if the person isn't in the room with you - choosing not to use someone's pronouns is often called "misgendering".

POSITION

What is your position at the school?

What is your social position?

Throughout this training, think about ways you can apply today's content to the way you move about campus as well as society more broadly.

Consider why it is important that those in positions like yours attend training like this.

Community Agreement

- Speak from your own experiences
- What's shared in this room, stays in this room
- Keep names and identities out of it
- Do not make generalizations
- Do not "step on anyone's language"
- Seek to understand rather than judge
- We are here to be challenged

Important Terms and Concepts



Disclaimer

Understand that terminology is both crucial and meaningless (terms paradox). Finding out what terms a person uses (e.g. to describe their gender, what pronouns they use, to describe body parts, to describe relationships) and reflecting these terms conveys respect and openness, as does using gender neutral terminology.

BUT

Terms tell you almost nothing regarding what you need to know to provide appropriate services or have meaningful interactions because;

1. there is no consensus on any transgender- or queer-related term (gender and sexuality are deeply personal, individualized experiences)
2. the information you need to provide appropriate services and have meaningful interactions comes from asking specific questions related to the person's needs, concerns, and experiences.

Sex Assigned at Birth

The word "assigned" is used because doctors will usually determine a baby to be either male or female at birth.

Doctors will assign sex based on characteristics such as genitals, chromosomes, and hormonal profiles.

The ways that these sex characteristics manifest in individuals' bodies is diverse, and is not definite or binary as the categories of M or F suggest.

Therefore, sex is not only assigned, but the binary sex categories of M and F are socially constructed.

Terms

Gender Identity

Someone's Gender Identity is their internal sense of "man-ness" or "woman-ness" - but gender is not limited to two; it is not binary!

An internal sense of awareness that ALL people have.

Examples of Gender Identities include, but are not limited to;

- Woman
- Non Binary
- Agender
- Man

Terms

Question 1

“How
do I support those who do
not identify as male or
female in a class that
includes
a lot of XX vs. XY?”

Terms

Gender Expression



Terms

How a person outwardly presents their gender.

Can include behaviour and outward appearance (how someone dresses, wears their hair, uses make-up, body language, voice).

It is important to note that some people do not feel safe or ready to express their gender in a certain way.

Someone's Gender Expression does not always tell you what you need to know about the Gender Identity of a certain individual - so it's best to ask what pronouns someone uses instead of assuming based on how they look!

Sexual Orientation

Terms

Refers to a person's emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction, and/or sexual attraction to others.

Sexuality is complex and attraction can manifest very differently for different people.

Categories like "gay", "lesbian", "bisexual", "straight", etc. are commonly used to understand our attractions, though they are by no means inclusive of the vast array of expressions that make up human sexuality.

These categories also assume that people can be "purely straight" or "purely gay" when, in reality, we know that sexuality is not something that can be effectively dichotomized.

Sexual Expression

Refers to the variety of ways a person expresses their sexuality, including the kinds of sexual activities they enjoy participating in.

Not the same as Sexual Orientation.

e.g. Someone may identify as heterosexual/"straight" and express their sexuality in ways interpreted by others as queer..

Terms

Romantic Orientation

Refers to the ways that people can experience romantic and emotional attractions.

These attractions may be separate from, or connected to, sexual and/or physical attraction.

Sexual Orientation and Romantic Orientation are not necessarily distinct identities; they are interrelated.

Distinguishing between Sexual Orientation and Romantic Orientation helps us better understand and conceptualize the Ace Spectrum (Asexual, Aromantic, Demi-Sexual, Demi-Romantic, Gray Ace, etc.)

Terms

2SLGBTQIA+

An acronym that stands for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, Intersex, Agender/Asexual/Aromantic, PLUS many other identities.

Instead of saying the acronym every time you want to refer to this community, you can also say "The Queer and Trans Community".

Let's expand more on this...

Terms

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Two Spirit

A term coined in 1990 at the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations Gay and Lesbian Conference in Winnipeg. This term is used by some Indigenous people to self-i.d. It is an Indigenous-specific term that can only be used by Indigenous people to identify themselves.

The term can be used to refer to someone's gender identity and/or sexuality - in any case, the term Two Spirit allows for the Indigenous person to talk about their identity in the context of their cultural identity, and to resist the colonial definitions of sexuality and gender.

2SLGBTQIA+



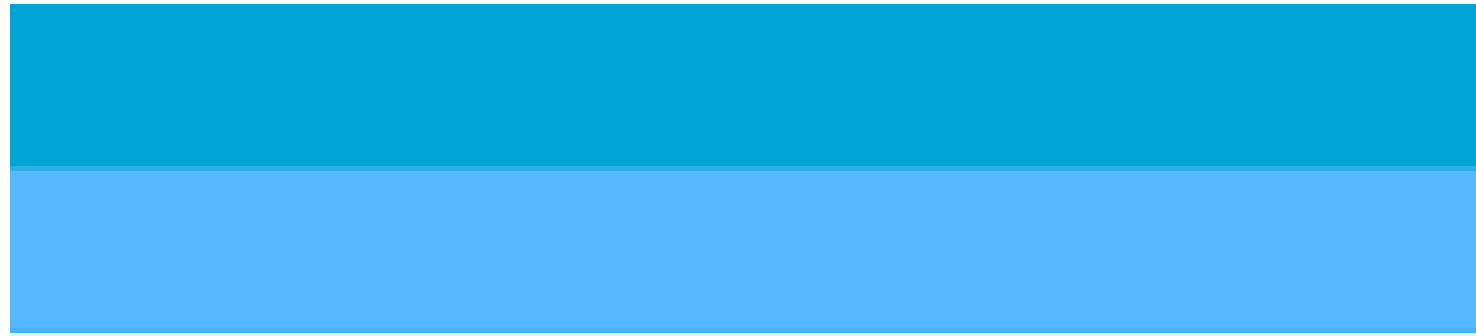
Terms

Lesbian

A person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender.

Most often used for women who are attracted to other women, but can also be used by non-binary people, trans folks, and literally anyone else who identifies with the term!

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Gay

A person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender.

Although this term can be and is used by any gender, it is most often used for men who are attracted to men

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

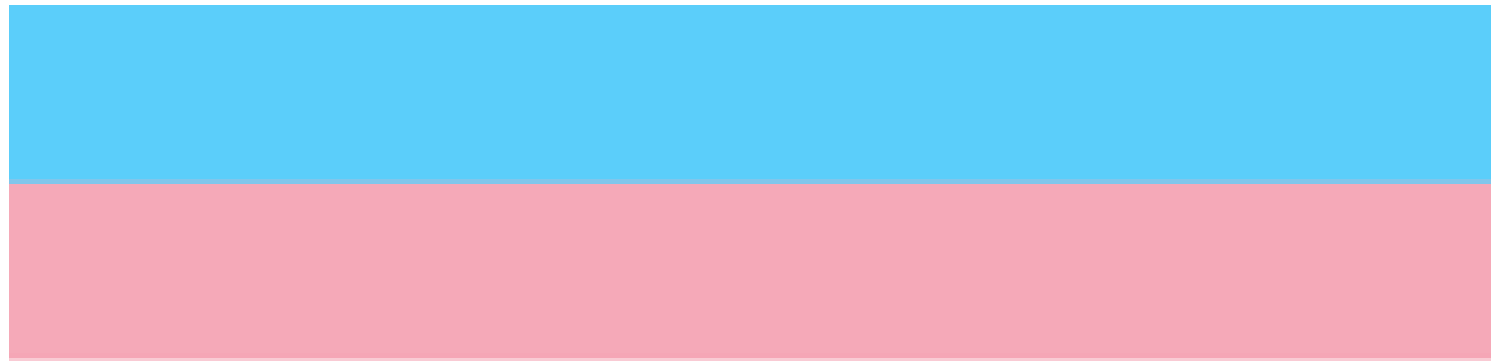
Bisexual/Bi

A person who is attracted to more than one gender.

Often misdefined by media and uninformed sources as being attracted to "both men and women". Wrongfully reinforcing the notion that there are only two genders that someone could be attracted to.

This misunderstanding can be quickly reasoned through by understanding that someone who is bisexual is simply someone who is not monosexual (i.e. they are not gay, lesbian, or "straight").

2SLGBTQIA+



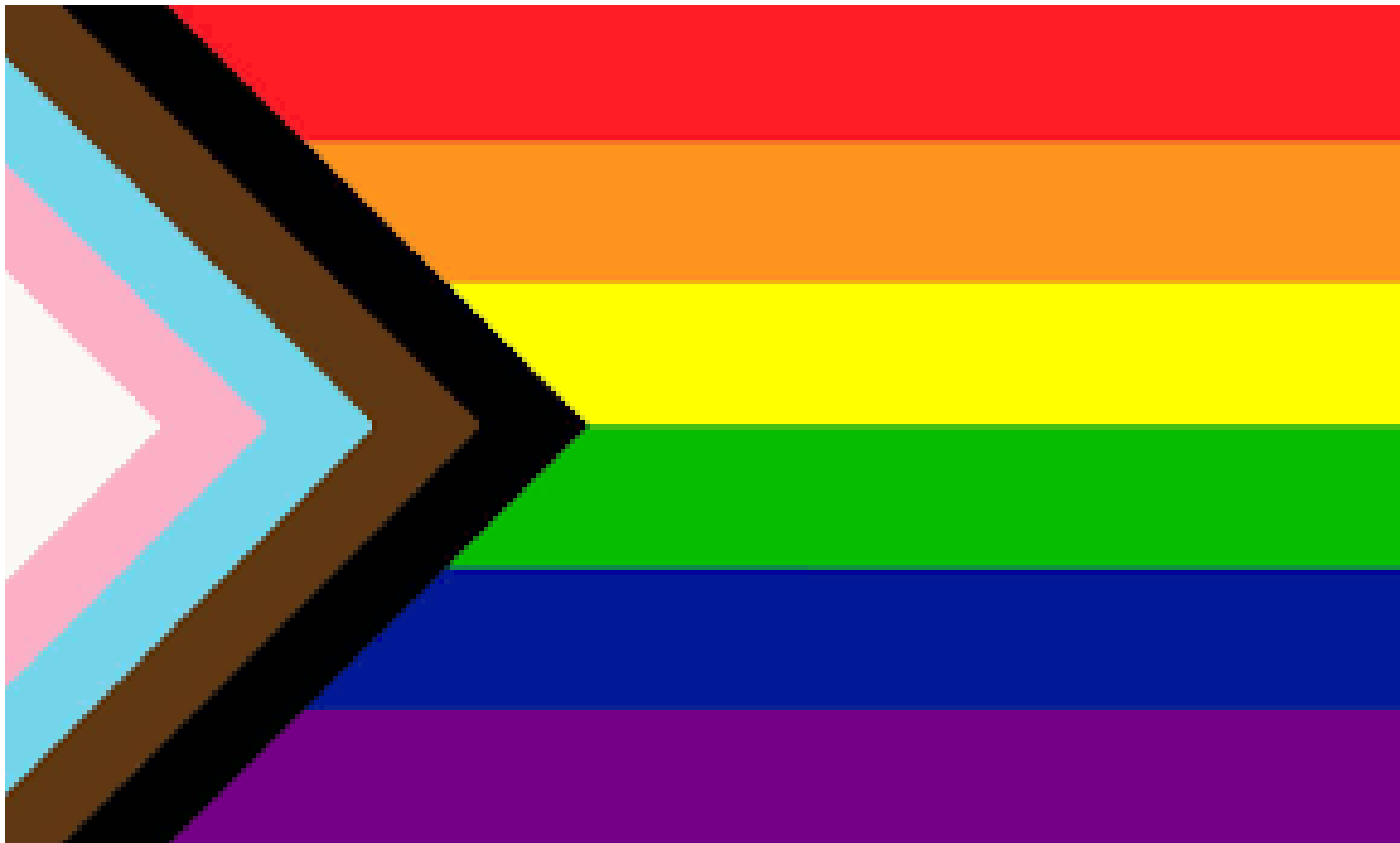
Terms

Transgender/Trans*

A transgender person is someone whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are different. Transgender, like all other gender identities, is internal and not something you can tell or determine in others.

Trans* is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are different. It can be used for a variety of identities and experiences; every community and individual may define trans differently. Trans is a term that someone chooses to describe their gender identity. It is not something you can tell or determine in others.

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Queer

An umbrella term to describe many different kinds of sexual orientations.

Queer was historically used as a derogatory term for people who either were or were perceived to be 2SLGBTQIA+. In recent years, it has been reclaimed by some people within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as a way of self-identifying and as a political statement against the oppression to which they have and continue to be subjected to.

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Intersex

An umbrella term used to describe people who have chromosomes, hormonal profiles, or genitals that do not typically fit into binary medical or social constructions of male and female.

Biological sex, like gender, is not binary.

Approximately the same amount of people who are born with red hair or blue eyes are born intersex. Many people do not know they are intersex until later in their lives!

It's important to note that not everyone with intersex traits identifies as intersex.

2SLGBTQIA+



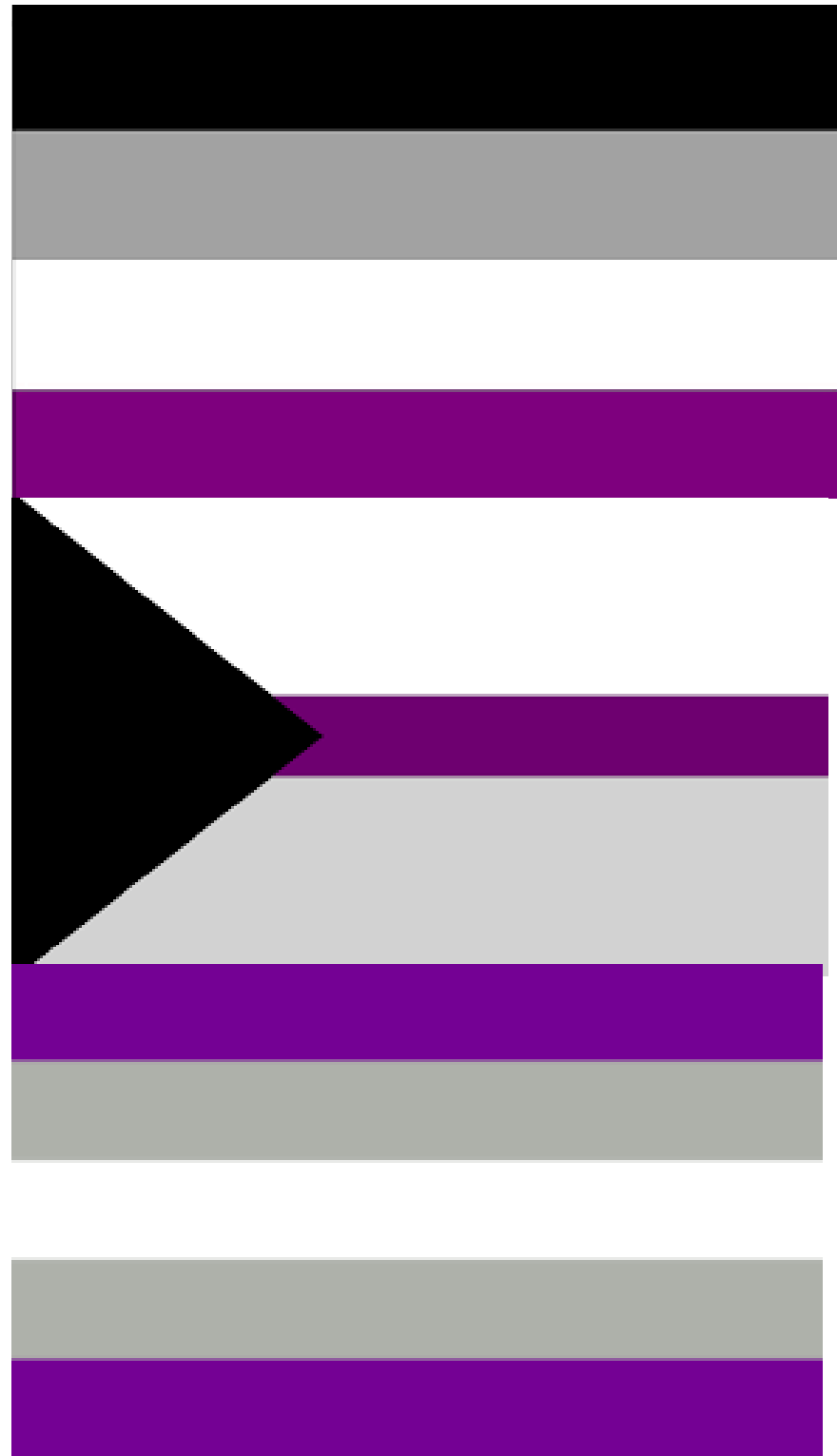
Terms

Agender

People who do not have a gender or who are genderless.

They can exist outside of the gender binary, be gender non-conforming, or identify as trans.

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Asexual

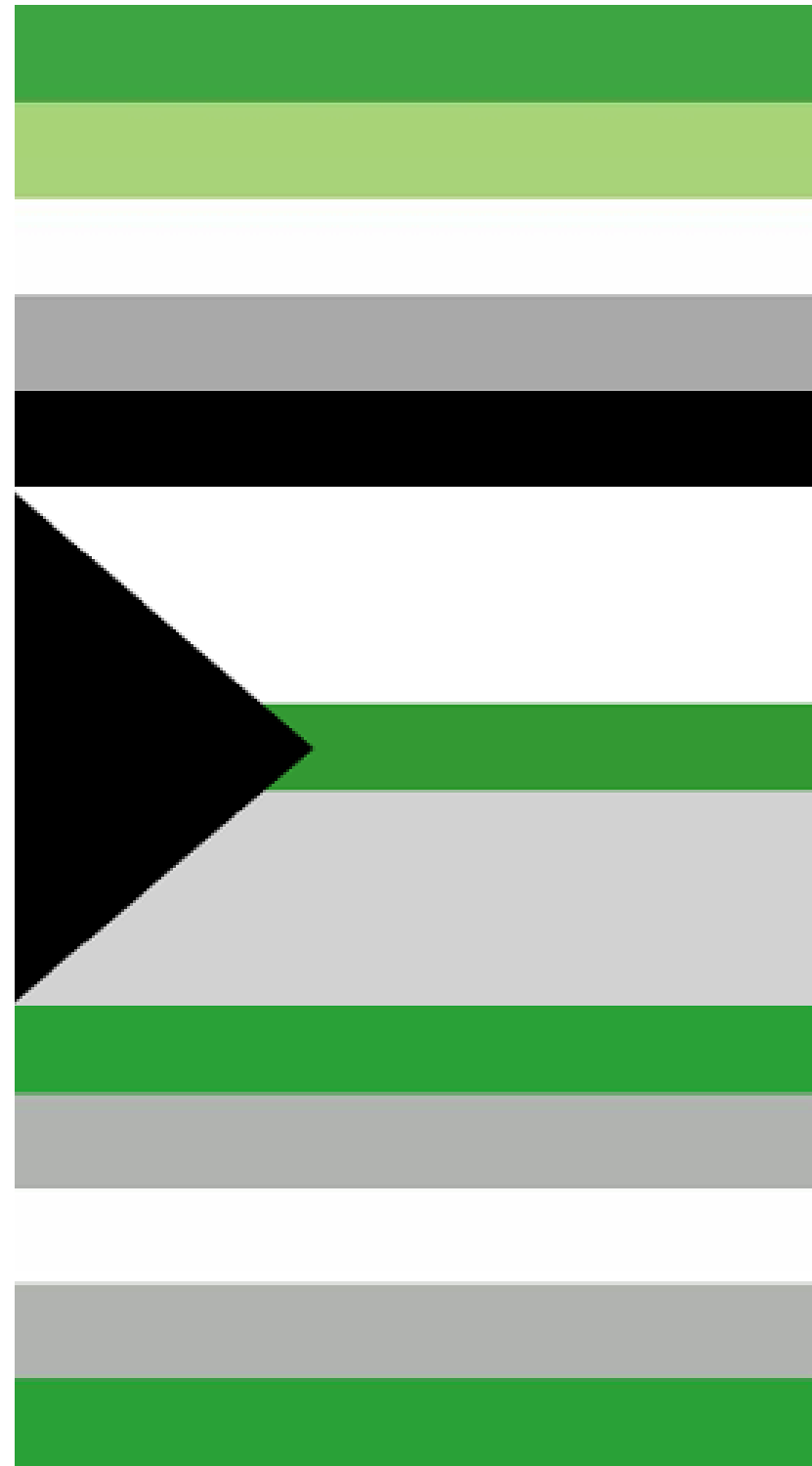
A person who generally does not experience sexual attraction or desire to any group of people, either within or outside of a relationship.

Asexuality occurs on a spectrum!

Demisexual people only feel sexual attraction to people with whom a close emotional bond has been formed.

Gray-Asexual people experience sexual attraction but either not very often or only to a minimal extent.

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

Aromantic

A person who generally does not experience romantic attraction or desire to any group of people, either within or outside of a relationship.

Aromantisism exists on a spectrum!

Demi-romantic people only feel romantic attraction to people with whom a close emotional bond has been formed.

Gray-romantic people experience romantic attraction but either not very often or only to a minimal extent.

2SLGBTQIA+



Terms

+

Pansexual - A person who is sexually attracted to people, regardless of gender.

Questioning - For some, the process of exploring and discovering their sexual orientation.

Monoromantic - A person who has romantic feelings for one gender.

Cisgender- Heterosexual

Cisgender

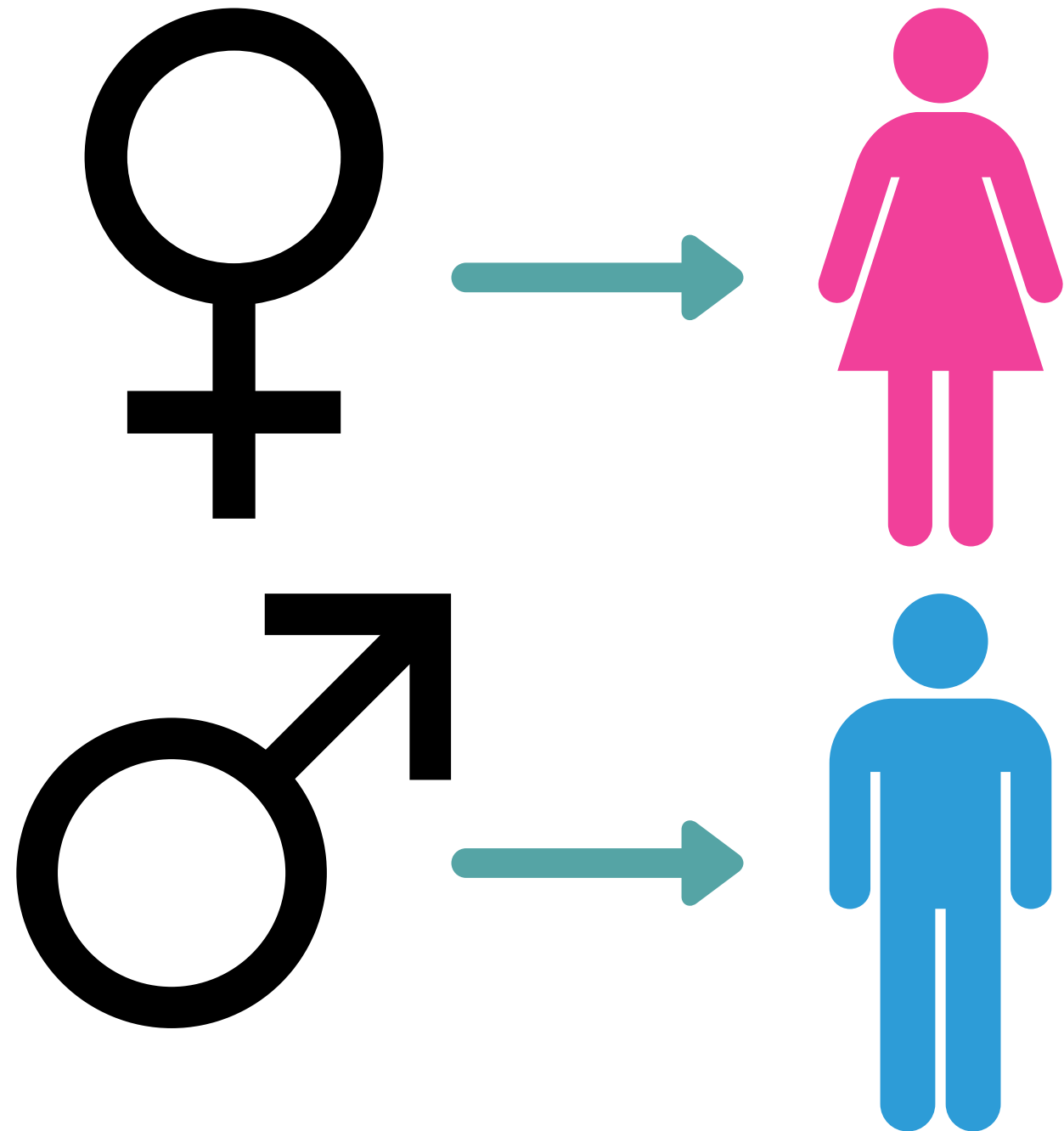
People whose gender identity and assigned sex are the same (e.g. someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man)

Heterosexual

A clinical term for people who are attracted to people of a different gender - commonly referred to as "straight"

Terms

Gender Binary



Concept

Describes the system in which a society classifies all people into one of two categories (men and women) each with associated stereotypes and norms.

This classification starts at birth and is based on genitals
e.g. penis = assigned male at birth = this person will grow up to be a man
e.g. vulva = assigned female at birth = this person will grow up to be a woman

People who do not conform to these binary constructions of gender are often subject to violence and discrimination.

Take a minute to reflect on the following...

The gender binary is a social construct that fails to acknowledge most of us in our entirety....

What are some stereotypes of people of your gender that you **do not** conform to?

What are some stereotypes of people of your gender that you **do** conform to?

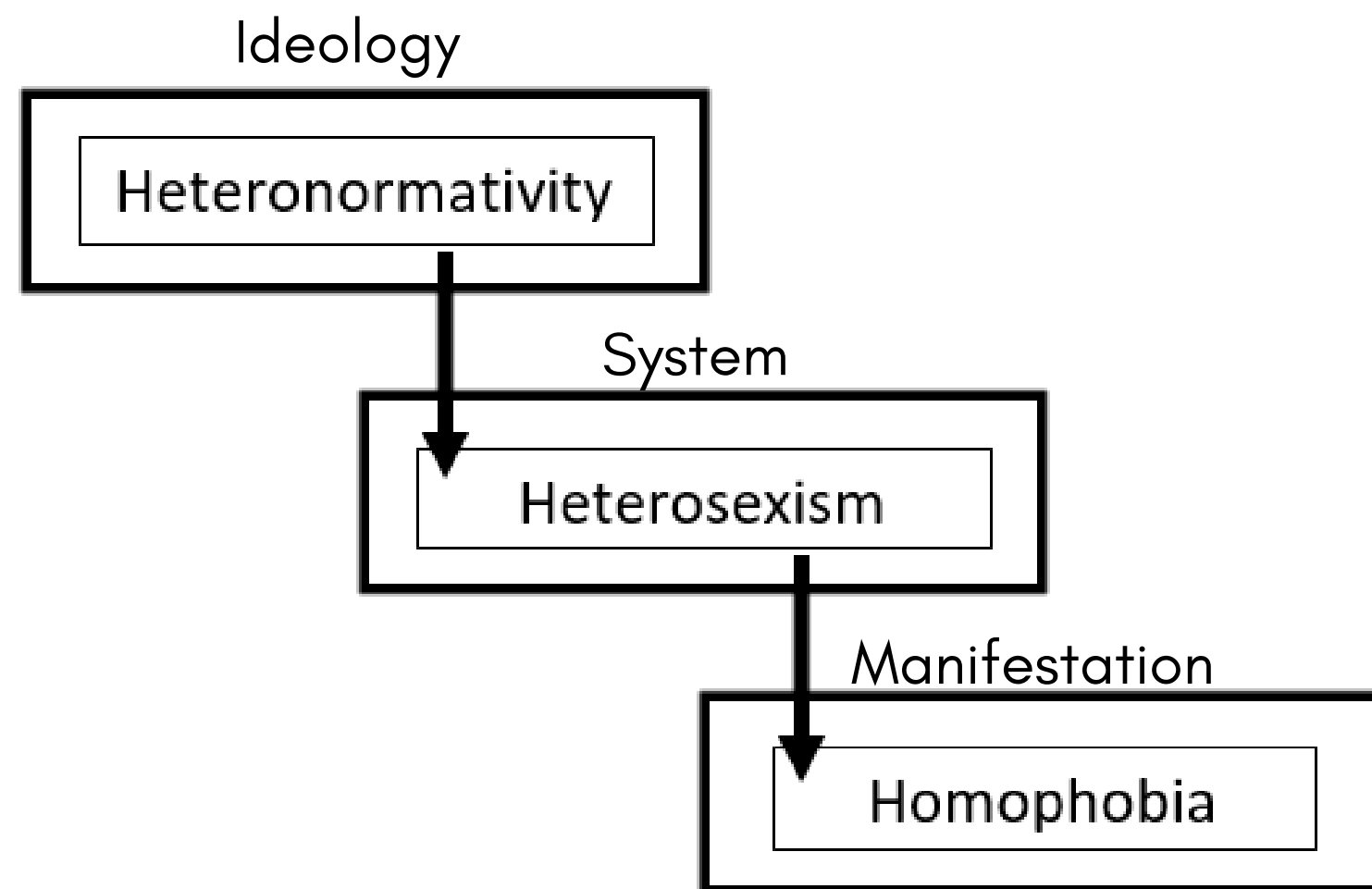
What are stereotypes of another gender that you conform to?

When you see someone whose gender is unclear to you, does this make you feel uncomfortable? Why?

How do you decide what pronouns to use when referring to someone?

Concept

Hetero- normativity



Concept

- Of, relating to, or based on the attitude that heterosexuality (informed by the gender binary) is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality.
- Contributes to the formation of heterosexist bias within social and cultural contexts, thereby creating systems which inherently oppress those who are not heterosexual.
- Can and does encourage overt forms of homophobia and increased rates of violence against queer people.

Heterosexism and Homophobia

Concept

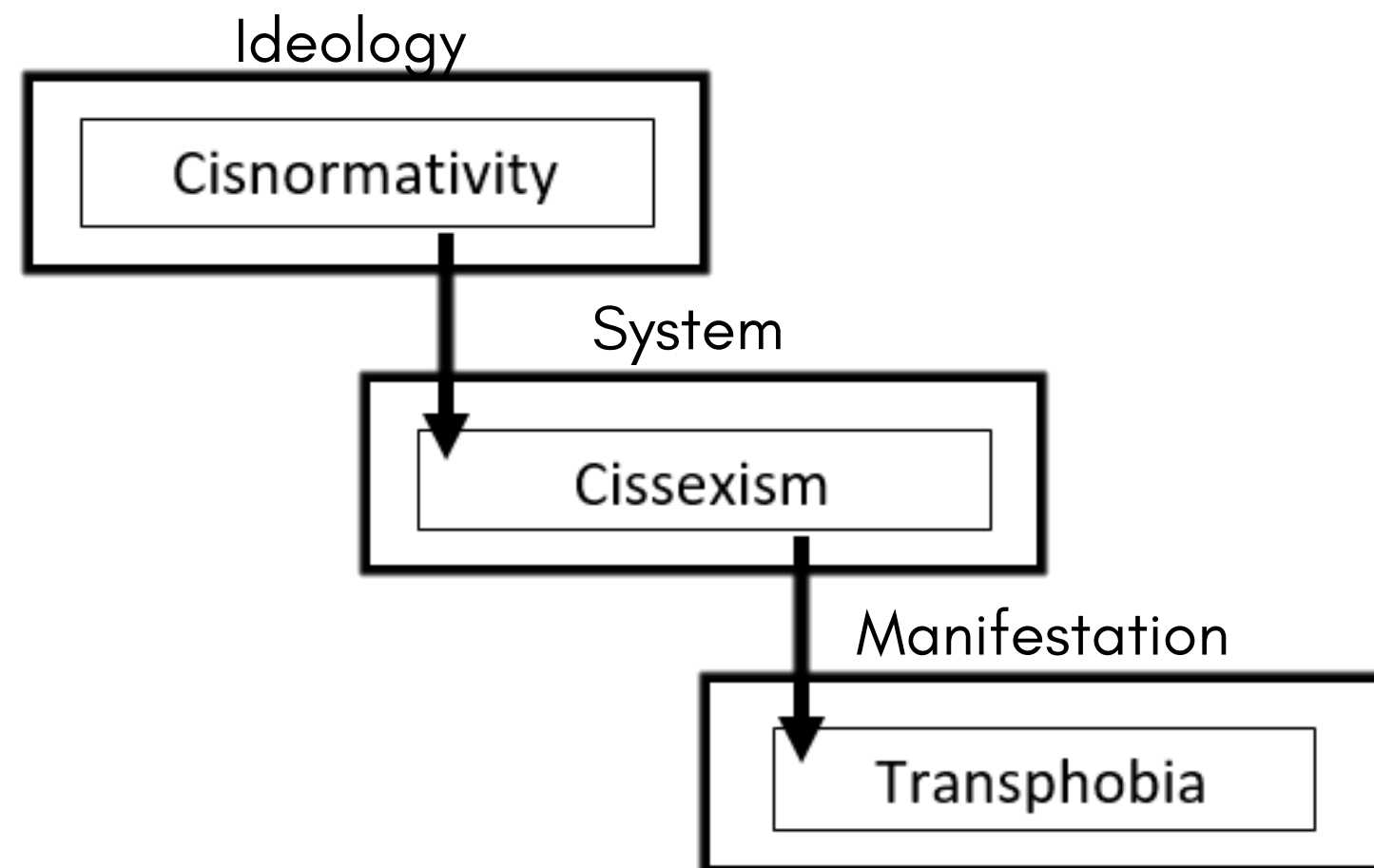
Homophobia

The systemic and individual oppression of people whose sexual orientation does not conform to heterosexuality (and/or of people perceived to be 2SLGBTQIA+). This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards people whose sexual orientation does not conform to (or is not perceived to conform to) heterosexuality.

Heterosexism

Behaviours, assumptions, and rules that grant preferential treatment and privilege to heterosexual people.

Cis-normativity



Concept

- The belief that being cisgender, predicated on the gender binary, is the norm or default gender identity.
- Contributes to the formation of cissexist bias within social and cultural contexts, thereby creating systems which inherently oppress those who are not cisgender.
- Enforces gendered assumptions about "what men look like" and "what women look like".
- Can and does encourage overt forms of transphobia and increased rates of violence against trans and gender non-conforming people.

Cissexism and Transphobia

Transphobia

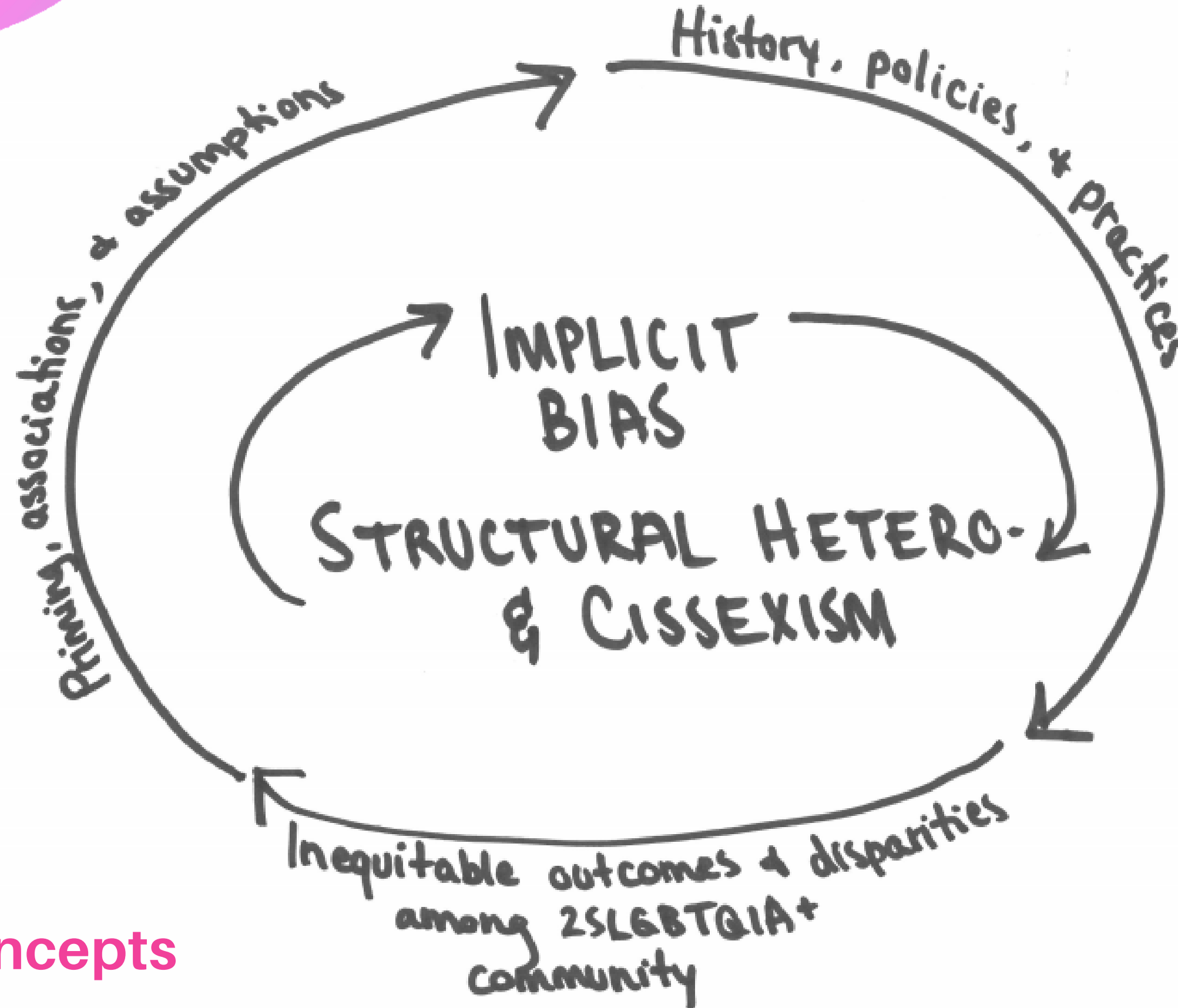
The systemic and individual oppression of people whose gender identity and gender expression do not conform to cisgender identities. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards trans* people.

Cissexism

Systemic of individual behaviours, assumption and rules that grant preferential treatment and privilege to cisgender people.

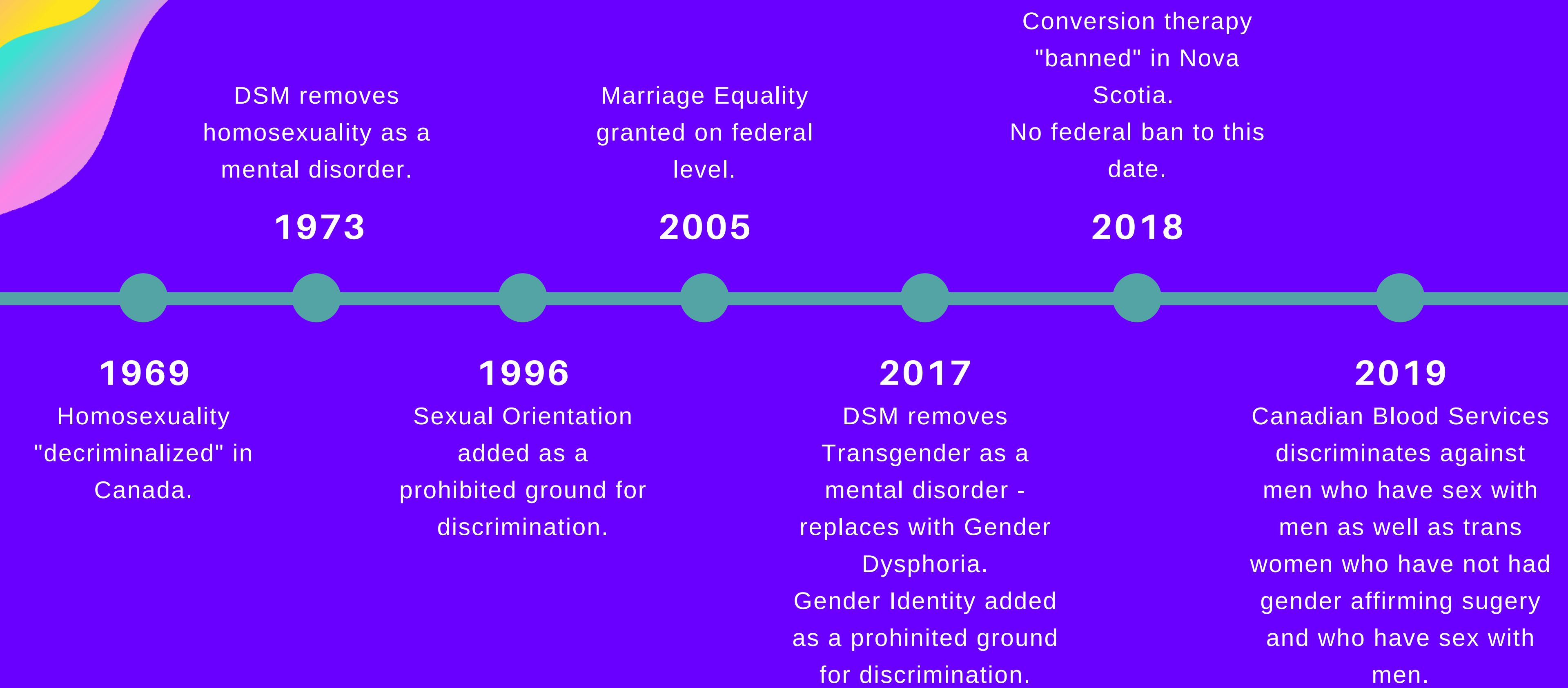
Concept

Words and diagram adapted from Implicit Bias and Structural Racialization by Kathleen Osta and Hugh Vasquez .(National Equity Project).



Applying Concepts

History, Policies, and Practices



Inequitable Outcomes and Disparities

25-40%

of homeless youth in Canada are members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

LGBTQ youth face approximately 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than heterosexual peers.

5x

how many times more likely queer and trans youth are to be food insecure.

77%

of trans respondents in an Ontario-based survey had seriously considered suicide and 45% had attempted suicide

Queer and trans people experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and phobic disorders, suicidality, self-harm, and substance use.

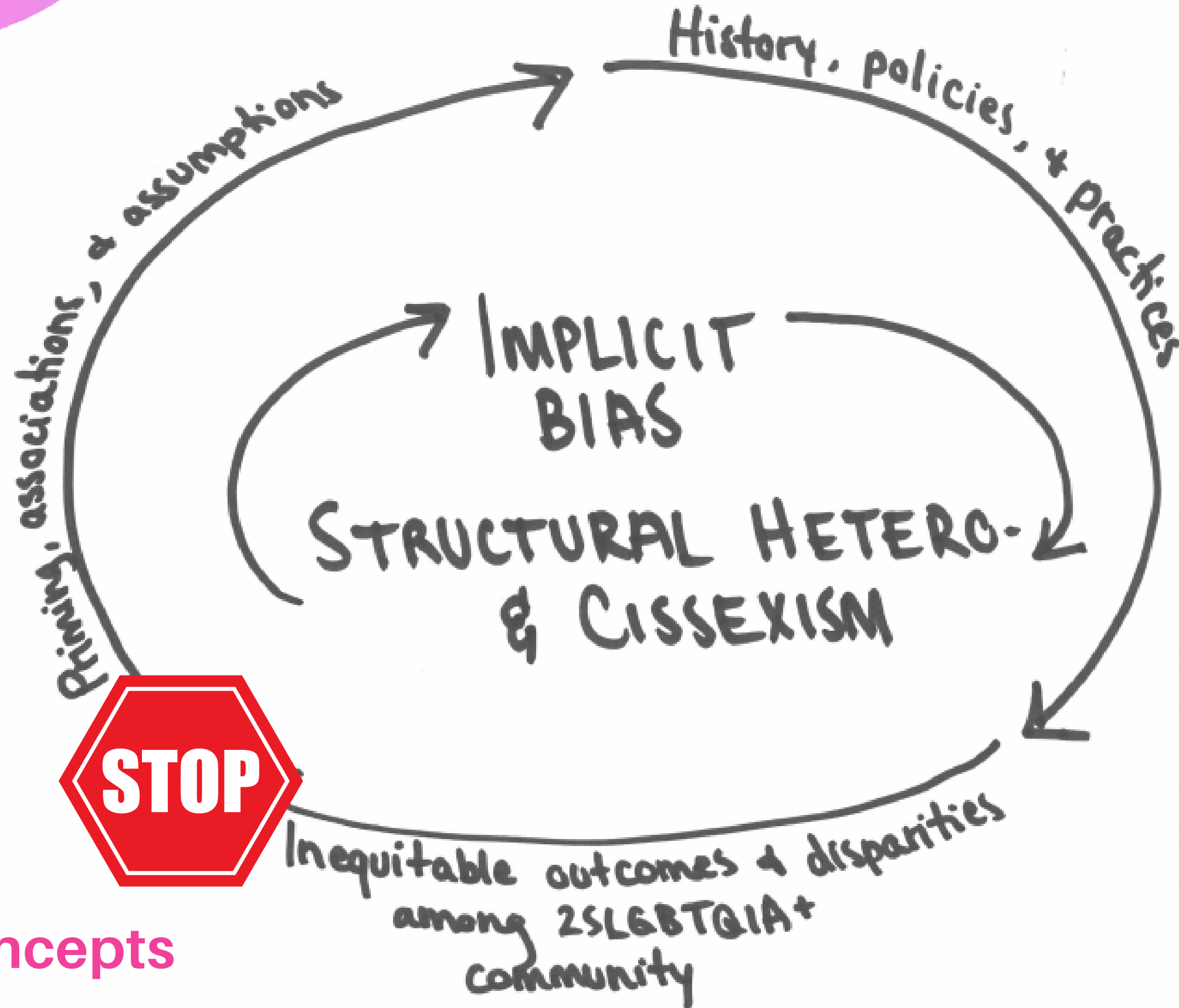
2x

how many times more likely trans and gender non-conforming people are to be unemployed.

Minority Stress

A model describing stress processes, including the experience of prejudice events, expectations of rejection, hiding and concealing, internalized homophobia, and ameliorative coping processes.

Words and diagram adapted from Implicit Bias and Structural Racialization by Kathleen Osta and Hugh Vasquez. (National Equity Project).



Applying Concepts

End of Part 1

Take a ten minute break!

Part 2

- "Quick Fixes" and Allyship
- Anti-Oppressive Strategies & Handling Mistakes
- Questions?

What's coming up next?

"Quick Fixes" and Allyship

Optical Allyship vs. Non-Optical Allyship

"Quick Fixes" are often Optical "Allyship"

"This is allyship that only serves at the surface level to platform the 'ally,' it makes a statement but doesn't go beneath the surface and is not aimed at breaking away from the systems of power that oppress" - Latham Thomas

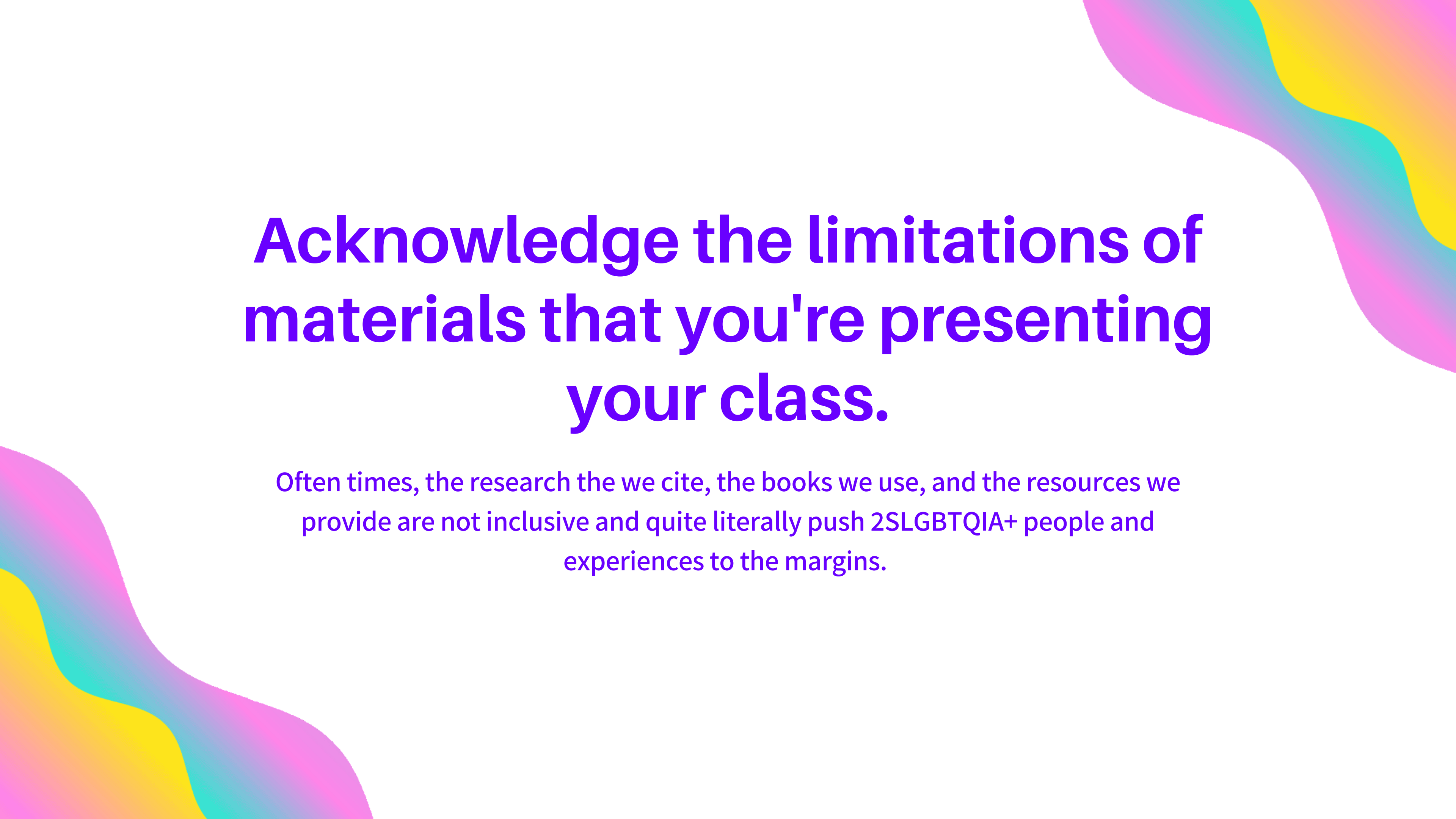
- introducing yourself with your name and pronouns when you meet someone new
- putting a rainbow sticker on your door/laptop/water bottle/etc.
- displaying your pronouns on your email signature
- using gender neutral terms to address people
 - "hello folks/friends/everyone"
- using gender neutral pronouns for someone you haven't met
 - "no, I haven't met Kyler! How did you meet them?"
- taking PST regularly and encouraging your peers/co-workers/friends/housemates to join you

Anti-Oppressive Strategies

**We are all affected by systems of oppression -
either positively or negatively.**

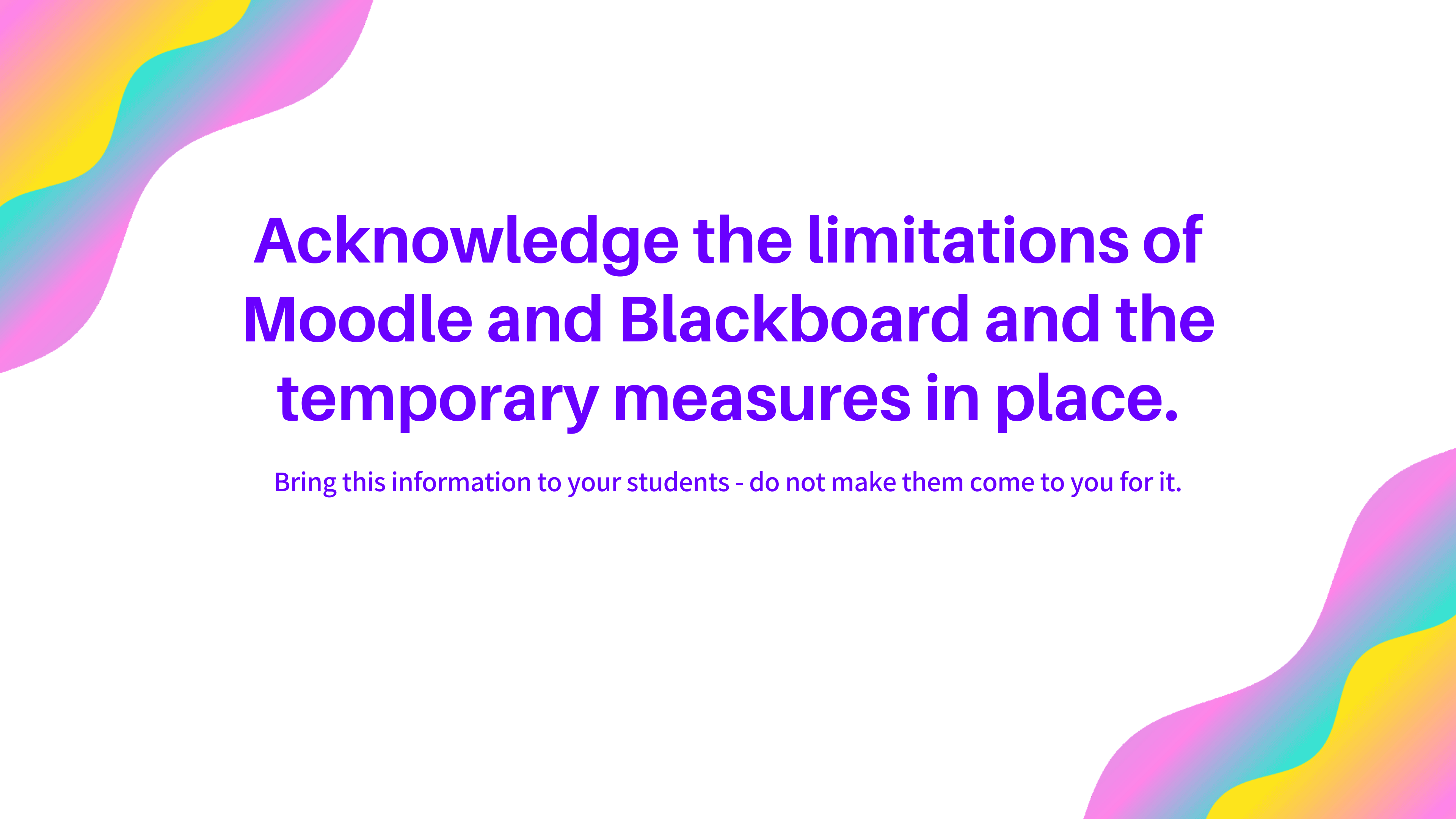
So what can we do about it?

We can practice Non-Optical "Allyship".



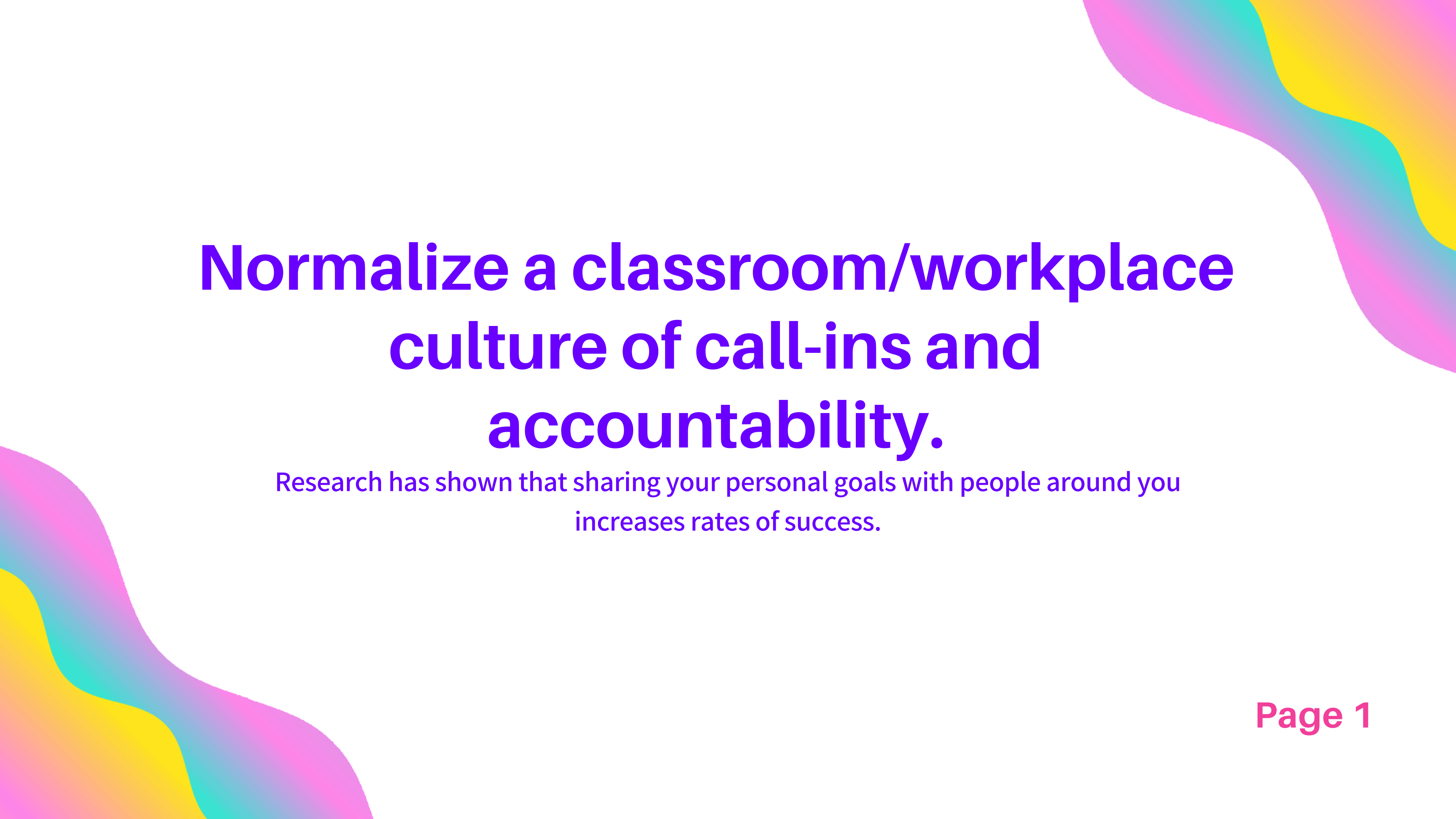
Acknowledge the limitations of materials that you're presenting your class.

Often times, the research the we cite, the books we use, and the resources we provide are not inclusive and quite literally push 2SLGBTQIA+ people and experiences to the margins.



Acknowledge the limitations of Moodle and Blackboard and the temporary measures in place.

Bring this information to your students - do not make them come to you for it.



Normalize a classroom/workplace culture of call-ins and accountability.

Research has shown that sharing your personal goals with people around you increases rates of success.

Withdrawing

"I thought you wanted my help, but I guess not. I'll just go home."

Centering yourself

"I can't believe you think I'm a toe-stepper! I'm a good person!"

Refusal to center the impacted

"All toes matter!"

Denial that others' experiences are different from your own

"I don't mind when people step on my toes."

Derailing

"Some people don't even have toes, why aren't we talking about them instead?"

Victim blaming

"Some people don't even have toes, why aren't we talking about them instead?"

Denial that the problem is fixable

"Toes getting stepped on is a fact of life. You'll be better off when you accept that."

Some ways to NOT handle mistakes VS Helpful ways to handle mistakes (boots and sandals analogy)

Center the impacted

"Are you okay"
Listen to their response and learn.


Stop the instance

move your foot

Apologize for the impact, even though you didn't intend it.

Stop the pattern

Be careful where you step in the future. When it comes to oppression, we want to actually change the "footwear".



Familiarize yourself with the rights you, your students, and your coworkers hold.

Giving yourself and others the tools and information necessary to self-advocate is an important down-stream approach to ending discrimination in working, living, and learning environments.



Normalize using gender neutral terminology as well as referencing concepts in gender neutral ways.

This is one of the most quick and easy ways to communicate openness and respect to all students and/or coworkers.



Be willing and READY to interrupt "-ist" and "-ic" comments that you encounter.

It is important to communicate when you don't agree - otherwise people might assume you are aligned with discriminatory beliefs, behaviours, attitudes, and feelings.

Reflect on whether publicly or privately is the most effective way of helping them understand...

"Before you carry on, I would like to address what you just said about _____ that is something I find offensive because _____ and I would like it if you didn't say that anymore".


"What you just said made me feel uncomfortable because _____ and I would appreciate it if you didn't say that again".

"You may or may not have meant to come across this way, but saying _____ is actually a very insulting thing to say."

"Would you mind explaining what you mean by that? I would be interested to know where you got that information from".

"I/we are currently learning how to be actively anti-oppressive and we have realized that saying _____ is not okay. I would suggest taking PST/reading/following..."

"I'd be really interested in chatting to you more about this sometime, as I think there is more to unpack here."



Questions? Comments?

Ask me!