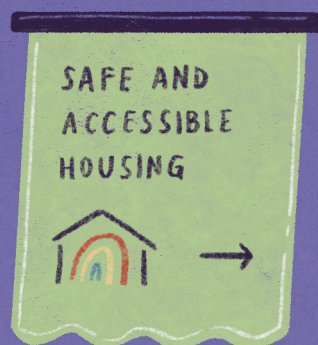
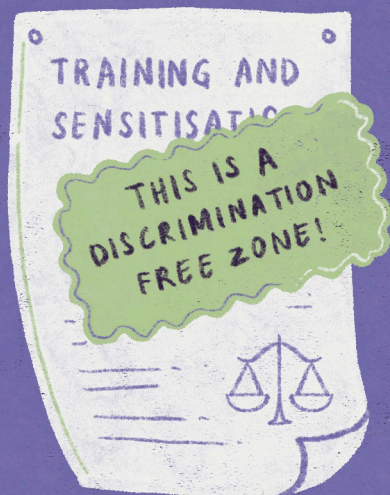
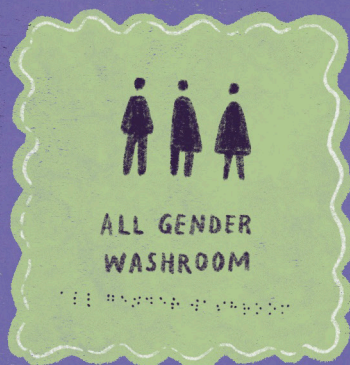


(TRANS)FORMING SPACES:

Expanding Queer People's Access to Livelihood



About The YP Foundation

The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth-led and youth-focused organisation that facilitates young people's feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights and social justice.



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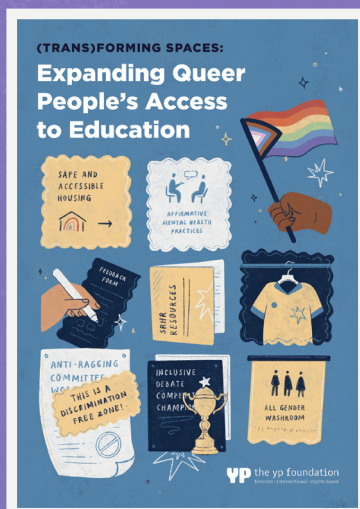


theypfoundation

About The Loud and Queer (LAQ) Programme

Loud & Queer is TYPF's intervention on queer and transgender rights and diversity. Through this programme, we create resources, platforms and leadership abilities to address critical issues of health, sexuality, prevention of violence and discrimination, and increase awareness about the lives and issues of LGBTQIA+ persons.

Check out the other resources in this series:



(TRANS)FORMING SPACES:

Expanding Queer People's Access to Livelihood

Credits

The YP Foundation acknowledges the contribution of all young people and leaders who have been associated with us over the years, for their invaluable perspectives and insights.

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Acknowledgement

This resource is a testament to the collective support and belief of everyone involved which includes our youth leaders, experts, researchers, and respondents who helped us complete the needs assessment (which laid the foundation of this work) and actively shaped the consultation processes. Their enthusiastic participation ensured that our work truly reflects the voices of those who are the most marginalised within the queer and transgender community in India. It is their love and commitment that gives this resource its meaning and life.

We can't thank enough for the unwavering support and faith that our advisors– Ankana Dey, Dr. Harikeerthan Raghuram, Gautam Ramchandra, Mihir Samson, Rajeev Anand Kushwah, and Vihaan Vee, provided us in this journey. Their encouragement, ideas and critical thinking helped us to shape the indicators holistically. Without their invaluable inputs and time, it would have been difficult for us to get the confidence needed for these indicators to be presented to you all.

We would like to acknowledge all the youth leaders of **Expanding Queer People's Access to Leadership (EQUAL) 2.0 cohort, 2025** – Aditi Rawat, Anamika Patel, Anurag, Diya Choudhary, Hetavi, Jyoti Muhal, Nishi, Shreya, and Soumya, who visited more than 47 spaces and facilities in Jaipur, Lucknow and Varanasi to assess them on a number of laid affirmative indicators and share their observations with us. Their dedication and persistent efforts are the reason why we were able to bring on ground observations and experiences to build this resource. We also want to acknowledge the youth leaders and team between 2022–2025 for laying the foundation for this work. We also would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Kolika Mitra who supported us with monitoring and evaluation of the work and guided us in this process for any course correction. We also want to thank Neeti who supported our work in Varanasi with a lot of enthusiasm and solidarity. A special thanks to the entire team of Sappho for Equality who very generously helped us in organising a community consultation on these indicators in Kolkata. We are grateful to everyone who was present during the community consultation and trusted us enough to share their experience with us. This work would have never been possible without them.

A special thanks to our designer Mrinalini Godara for working with us in all forms from voice notes, to emails to feedback loops and making sure these resources look gorgeous – we thank you for your work.

We also thank the entire staff of The YP Foundation, particularly the team that has led the queer and transgender rights work, for working on this and championing it in an era when global spaces are shrinking already. We would also like to thank Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice for supporting this initiative.

Implementing these indicators goes beyond mere compliance; it is about championing true equity, enhancing well-being for all, and channelising the collective potential that arises when every voice is valued. We urge all stakeholders to embrace these recommendations, to transform our spaces into truly affirmative ones where people from diverse identities do not only exist but thrive. Our collective commitment to this vision will undoubtedly strengthen our communities and enrich society as a whole.

Prabhleen and Zayan

CORPORATE ALLYSHIP

01. Ensure inclusivity by designating a few all-gender and accessible washrooms for use by everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Explanation: Transgender and gender non-conforming persons often face stress, anxiety and mistreatment when accessing gendered washrooms. Providing access to all-inclusive and gender neutral washrooms can greatly reduce or even eliminate this burden. These washrooms should be open to *all*, and everyone should be free to use a washroom that best aligns with their identity and personal comfort, without fear of judgement or restriction. Inclusive signage, including Braille and clear visual cues, should be used to ensure that these facilities are easy to navigate for all.

Reference: [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 6](#) also emphasises on the availability and sustainable management of sanitation and water for all.



02. Ensure availability and accessibility of menstrual products to people of all gender identities.

Explanation: Usually, sanitary napkin or tampon vending machines are only present in women's washrooms, but many people who menstruate don't identify as women. Transgender men, non-binary individuals, and people with diverse gender identities may also need access to these products. For example, think of a transgender man who menstruates. Using a men's washroom that lacks menstrual products can make it harder for him to manage his period with dignity and ease.

Hence, to make access equitable, menstrual products as well as appropriate sanitary waste disposal systems should be available in all washrooms, regardless of gender demarcation.



03. Strengthen accessibility across physical infrastructure to create an inclusive environment for everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Explanation: Ensuring physical accessibility and reasonable accommodation is essential to creating an environment where all employees, including those living with physical and psycho-social disabilities, can participate fully with dignity. When renting or investing in a workspace, HR and operations teams should prioritise infrastructure that meets accessibility standards. During recruitment and onboarding, proactively asking candidates about their accessibility needs, and ensuring the right support systems are in place, can make a significant difference to their experience in the organisation.

Accessibility also benefits everyone since anyone can encounter disability at any point in their lives. Disabilities may be permanent, temporary, or situational; an injury, surgery recovery, or even a broken limb can limit mobility. Hence, the infrastructure should be designed in a way that it is accessible for everyone.

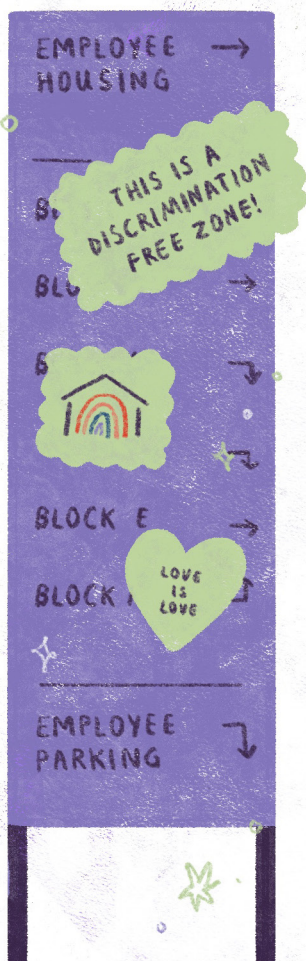


04. Accessible and discrimination-free accommodation and travel facilities for all employees.

Explanation: If your organisation provides the facility of accommodation to employees, it's essential to ensure that brokers, housing partners, and operations teams are sensitised to the lived realities of LGBTQIA+ individuals. This helps prevent discrimination and ensures employees feel safe staying with their partners or chosen families in a new environment.

Accommodation should respect the dignity and autonomy of each employee, hence, shared rooms should not be assigned based on sex or assumed gender.

Similarly, travel arrangements should prioritise the comfort and safety of LGBTQIA+ employees. They should not be asked to travel via modes which may render them unsafe. For example, while taking a long bus journey, an employee belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community might not feel safe using a washroom in transit. These considerations are also important when booking accommodation or making travel arrangements for company retreats, workshops, or work-related meetings.



05. Encourage transparency and accountability through anonymous employee feedback mechanisms.

Explanation: In workplace settings, it's often easier for employers to give suggestions to employees than the other way around. To make systems at the organisation more transparent and accountable, setting up an anonymous feedback mechanism can be extremely helpful. If meaningfully reviewed and acted upon, feedback and suggestions shared by employees can play a vital role in building trust and strengthening organisational systems.

Reference: Article on [Steegle.com](https://www.steegle.com) titled 'Benefits of a Suggestion Box in the Workplace'.



06. Strengthen inclusion through regular gender sensitisation sessions with the members of key committees.

Explanation: It is important to conduct annual gender sensitisation sessions for members of the **Grievance Cell, Internal Committee (IC) and HR teams** so they are equipped to address any challenge that an employee belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community might face. These sessions should introduce important legislature like the [Prevention of Sexual Harassment \(POSH\) Act](#), its historical context and also discuss gender and sexuality beyond the binary. This can help address and prevent instances of harassment or bullying (both verbal and non-verbal) within the organisation.

To build trust in grievance redressal systems, LGBTQIA+ representation within the IC is strongly encouraged. Simultaneously, all IC members should undertake sensitisation training in accordance with the [Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Act, 2019](#). This will help ensure that the complainant feels heard and understood during the proceedings.

Sensitisation is equally important for teams like HR and Finance who play critical roles in recruitment and onboarding. Proper training helps ensure that interviews and internal processes are respectful. It also helps avoid intrusive or inappropriate questions (such as those about one's surgical status or partner details), as well as harmful practices like misgendering and deadnaming.



07. Foster an inclusive workplace by conducting regular sensitisation sessions on intersectional identities for all employees.

Explanation: It is important to have staff who are active allies to the LGBTQIA+ community. Such a culture of allyship can be fostered through regular and mandatory sensitisation workshops on intersectional identities (on the axis of gender, sexuality, caste, class, religion, disability, etc.) as per the organisation's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) framework. These sessions should be thoughtfully designed to include everyone associated with the organisation, including administrative teams, outsourced vendors, as well as cleaning and ground support staff.

Source: Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013



08. Adopt an inclusive Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Policy.

Explanation: Your POSH policy should cover everyone. It is important to note that exact data on the number of LGBTQIA+ employees is not a prerequisite to creating inclusive policies since some might not be ready to or might feel unsafe disclosing their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Hence, making your POSH policy inclusive for LGBTQIA+ employees is a way of you making your workplace safe and inclusive for everyone!

Source: The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 clearly states that workplaces must not discriminate against transgender employees. This makes it essential for organisations to have an LGBTQIA+ inclusive POSH policy at the workplace.



09. Extend the scope of care, maternity, and paternity leave policies to include same-sex partners and queer relationships.

Explanation: Maternity and paternity leaves are often designed while thinking of cisgender heterosexual couples. It is important that such leaves are extended to LGBTQIA+ employees in queer relationships, including those who do not identify as women but as transmasculine individuals or transgender men. For example, a woman whose partner is giving birth should also be eligible for maternity leave.

Existing policies can be made more gender-inclusive by renaming them to 'parental leaves', which should also cover care-related scenarios such as abortion and adoption. This small change can help ensure that diverse family structures and all forms of parenting and caregiving are acknowledged and supported equally within the organisation.



10. Offer inclusive health insurance that covers queer partners and gender affirmative care.

Explanation: Health insurance policies should recognise and support the diverse realities of your workforce. Extending partner coverage to include same-sex and queer partners affirms that not all employees are in heterosexual relationships, and helps build a workplace where all family structures are treated equally.

For transgender employees, access to gender affirmative care (including surgeries, hormone therapy or related procedures which help reduce dysphoria) can be life saving and essential for mental and physical well-being. These interventions are often expensive and inaccessible without insurance coverage. Including gender affirmative care in your organisation's health policy not only supports your employees' well-being, it can also be a powerful motivator in their professional life, leading to increased engagement and a sense of belonging at work.



11. Provide access to queer and transgender affirmative mental health counsellors.

Explanation: Providing accessible mental health support to all is crucial for employee well-being since it can significantly impact both personal well-being and professional performance. Ensuring that your organisation's list of therapists includes trauma informed and LGBTQIA+ affirmative mental health practitioners will help queer and transgender employees seek support more easily. Ensuring strict confidentiality around mental health services helps protect employee privacy and encourages them to access support when they need it the most.



12. Adopt a flexible and gender-inclusive uniform policy.

Explanation: If your workplace has a uniform or dresscode policy, offering employees a choice between all available options, regardless of their gender, can go a long way in creating a more respectful and affirming work environment. Enforcing a specific uniform based on assumed gender can cause significant anxiety and discomfort, especially for transgender and gender non-conforming employees. Where possible, consider eliminating mandatory uniforms altogether.



13. Organise focused recruitment events for LGBTQIA+ community members.

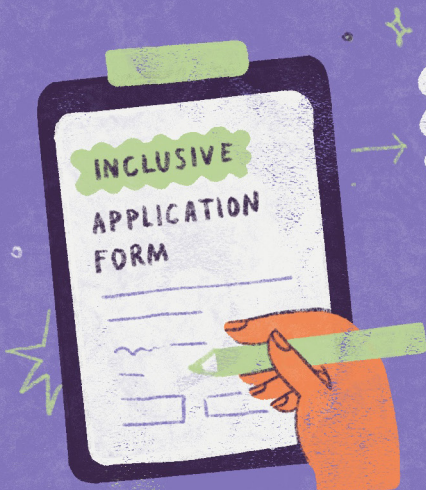
Explanation: Hosting recruitment events specifically for LGBTQIA+ candidates is a great way to ensure fairness and actively address structural barriers and underrepresentation in the workplace. Such initiatives signal your organisation's commitment to equity, widen the talent pool, and create opportunities for individuals who may otherwise be excluded due to bias or lack of access.



14. Ensure Recruitment and Communication Practices Reflect Inclusion

Explanation: You can help ensure that LGBTQIA+ candidates feel seen, respected, and safe by taking the following steps in the hiring process itself:

- Use gender-neutral language across all recruitment materials and application forms.
- Include an optional field for applicants to share their chosen name instead of their deadname. Legal names should only be requested for documentation processes upon selection.



OPTIONAL CHOSEN NAME: _____

PRONOUNS: _____ CITY: _____

- Use inclusive formats in official documents, such as ID cards, email signatures, and visiting cards, that reflect **chosen names, pronouns, and designations**.
- Ensure that LGBTQIA+ employees have equal access to promotions, performance appraisals, and compensation within the organisation's defined salary ranges.
- Effective DEI practices should be grounded in intersectionality. Actively include LGBTQIA+ individuals who may also belong to marginalised caste identities, religious communities, ethnic minorities, have disabilities, or hold other marginalised social identities – even in managerial and directorial roles.



- Ensure all internal communication, especially emails, forms, and HR documents, uses non-binary and gender-neutral language.



These practices may seem small, but they help build real trust with prospective LGBTQIA+ candidates from the very start.



15. Appoint a designated Complaints Officer to uphold workplace protections.

Explanation: Under Section 11 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, every establishment should appoint a complaints officer responsible for addressing any violations of the act within the workplace. Additionally, the role of this officer is also critical in ensuring a safe and respectful environment for LGBTQIA+ employees.

Source: [The Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Act, 2019](#)

16. Support employee-led resource groups (ERGs) that centre LGBTQIA+ voices.

Explanation: ERGs can play a vital role in building community by offering formal and informal career support, professional development and mentorship for LGBTQIA+ employees. They also aid in the creation of safer spaces for queer employees at the organisation. Consider introducing mechanisms which ensure these groups function efficiently, and that employees receive the necessary support to maintain the ERG's smooth operation.



17. Adopt an Equal Opportunity Policy that affirms the rights of transgender employees.

Explanation: To promote equal opportunity, rights and dignity of transgender people, Rule 12 of the Transgender Persons Rules mandates equal opportunity policy for transgender persons. This policy extends beyond recruitment and hiring to prohibit workplace harassment, bullying, deadnaming, and discrimination based on gender identity or expression. As highlighted in earlier points, measures such as providing gender-neutral washrooms, menstrual hygiene products, and conducting regular sensitivity trainings are key to fostering a more inclusive and caring environment for all.

Sources: [Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India](#). Also see Rule 12 of the [Transgender Persons \(Protection of Rights\) Rules, 2020](#).

Glossary

P.S. if a glossary definition includes a [highlighted word](#), it means that term is also defined elsewhere in the glossary. Each term builds on the others, and reading them together can offer a more comprehensive understanding of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

To explore similar terms in Hindi, check out the [Inqlusive Newsrooms](#) resource by The News Minute and Queer Chennai Chronicles.

Asexual

A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum – some asexual people may feel romantic or emotional attraction, or may experience sexual attraction only rarely or under specific circumstances (this can include identities such as *graysexual* or *demisexual*).

It is important to remember that many terms in the [LGBTQIA+](#) spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as asexual at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

Bisexual

A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to more than one gender. This can include attraction to people of the same gender identity as them, as well as to people of different gender identities.

It is important to remember that many terms in the [LGBTQIA+](#) spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as bisexual at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

Cisgender

A person whose gender identity matches the gender and [sex that they were assigned at birth](#) (typically male or female).

Deadnaming

The act of referring to a [transgender](#) or [genderqueer](#) person by their deadname. A *deadname* is the name given to a transgender person by their natal family at the time of their birth which they no longer use or identify with.

Whether intentional or accidental, deadnaming is a deeply hurtful and harmful practice, as it disregards a person's [gender identity](#) and chosen name.

Gay Someone who identifies as a man and is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men.

It is important to remember that many terms in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as gay at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

Gender A social and cultural system used to classify people into 'men' or 'women' based on their physical and biological characteristics. One's gender also shapes their experiences and expectations around behaviour, roles, appearance, feelings, and expression.

Gender exists on a spectrum, and one can identify as a man, a woman, both, or neither. Gender is distinct from [sex assigned at birth](#) and is deeply influenced by personal identity, culture, and lived experience.

**Gender
Affirmative
Surgeries
(GAS)**

Surgeries that [queer](#) or [transgender](#) people undergo to affirm their gender identity, or look how they feel with regards to their gender identity. It is not necessary that all queer or transgender people undergo GAS, and a person's [gender identity](#) is valid regardless.

GAS includes procedures such as top surgery, breast augmentation, facial feminization surgery, orchiectomy, hysterectomy, etc.

**Gender
Identity**

Refers to how an individual understands, experiences, and self-defines their gender. Gender identity needn't correlate with the body a person is born into, and it may not correspond with the gender they were assigned at the time of their birth. Everyone has a gender identity (typically [cisgender](#) or [transgender](#)), and it can exist across a wide and diverse spectrum.

Genderqueer

A term used by people whose [gender identity](#) exists outside or beyond the traditional binary of 'man' and 'woman'. Genderqueer individuals may identify with multiple genders, no gender, or a fluid or shifting gender. Some people who are genderqueer also identify as [transgender](#), while others may not – it depends on how the individual understands and names their own identity.

Like many terms in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, genderqueer is flexible and self-defined.

Intersex An umbrella category for people who live with variations in their biological and physiological traits that cannot be strictly labelled as male or female. Being intersex is a natural part of human biological diversity.

If a baby's genitals don't clearly fit typical definitions of male or female, doctors may identify the child as intersex at birth. However, intersex traits are not always visible or identified at birth. In fact, many intersex people are assigned male or female at birth, even if their bodies do not fit into those categories.

Lesbian Someone who identifies as a woman and is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women.

It is important to remember that many terms in the **LGBTQIA+** spectrum are flexible and self-defined. People are free to choose the words that feel right for them, and anyone can identify as a lesbian at any point in their lives, regardless of sexual experience or history.

LGBTQIA+ An umbrella term that stands for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual**, and more. The "+" acknowledges that there are many other sexual orientations, gender identities, and experiences that may not be captured by these letters alone (such as pansexual, non-binary, genderfluid, and others). It reflects the diversity and fluidity of identities, and reminds us that language continues to evolve as people find new ways to name and express who they are.

Misgendering The act of referring to someone using **pronouns**, names, or gendered terms that do not align with their **gender identity**. Whether intentional or accidental, misgendering is a deeply hurtful and harmful practice, as it disregards a person's identity.

Non-binary Someone who doesn't identify as either a man or a woman i.e. they do not identify with either end of the traditional gender binary. Some people who are non-binary also identify as **genderqueer**, while others may not – it depends on how the individual understands and names their own identity.

Like many terms in the **LGBTQIA+** spectrum, non-binary is flexible and self-defined.

Pronouns Words we use to refer to someone in place of their name, such as she/her, he/him, or they/them. Everyone has pronouns, using the correct pronouns is a way to respect and affirm a person's **gender identity**.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Queer | An umbrella term used by people to describe diverse sexual orientations , gender identities , and sex characteristics that fall outside of cisgender and heteronormative norms. |
| Sexual Orientation | <p>Refers to how one experiences sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction to others.</p> <p>Everyone has a sexual orientation – one can be attracted to people of the same gender, a different gender, more than one gender, or none at all. Sexual orientation exists on a spectrum and can include identities such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer, and more. It is distinct from gender identity, which relates to a person's own sense of self and gender.</p> |
| Sex assigned at birth | The sex (typically male, female or intersex) that is recorded or <i>assigned</i> to a person when they are born, usually based on the appearance of their external genitalia. Everyone is assigned a sex at birth, and this is often conflated with and used to <i>assign a gender at birth</i> even though this label may not align with a person's gender identity later in life. |
| Transgender Person | <p>Someone whose gender identity is different from the gender that was assigned to them at birth.</p> <p>The term trans* (with an asterisk) is sometimes used to signal the broad and inclusive nature of this umbrella, encompassing a wide spectrum of non-cisgender identities.</p> |
| Transgender Man | Someone who was assigned female at birth and whose gender identity is that of a man. |
| Transgender Woman | Someone who was assigned male at birth and whose gender identity is that of a woman. |
| Transmasculine Person | <p>Someone who was not assigned male at birth and who identifies and expresses themselves on the spectrum of masculinity. Transmasculine persons can identify with any gender identity.</p> <p>Transmasculine is a self-defined term, and individuals may relate to it differently based on their experiences.</p> |
| Transfeminine Person | <p>Someone who was not assigned female at birth and who identifies and expresses themselves on the spectrum of femininity. Transfeminine persons can identify with any gender identity.</p> <p>Transfeminine is a self-defined term, and individuals may relate to it differently based on their experiences.</p> |

* INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES FOR ALL *





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