



INCLUDE

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Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Inclusion in the Workplace:

What companies need to know and do

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In 2023, we are witnessing an increase in trans and gender nonconforming representation on television, in newspapers, in books, and in movies like we have never witnessed it before.¹ With this monumental increase in representation has also come an enormous surge in harassment of trans and gender nonconforming people through hundreds of pieces of anti-trans legislation across the United States.²

These bills range from restricting when trans athletes can compete to [making it impossible for trans people under 18](#) to receive gender-affirming health care. In the workplace, some trans and gender nonconforming tech workers are faced with issues ranging from ignorance and lack of sensitivity to uncertainty about how to navigate harassment and transphobic work culture.³ From May 2020 to February 2021, Project Include surveyed nearly 3,000 respondents across 48 countries and 50 industries, including 266 people who identified themselves as trans, gender nonconforming, or both.⁴ Two-fifths of trans and gender nonconforming people reported an increase in gendered harassment at work, illustrating that with representation can come added risk.

This report provides a broad overview of issues and recommendations based on over 30 consultations with transgender, agender, and gender nonconforming tech workers; conversations with DEI and startup leaders; and recommendations developed by advocacy groups and experts.

This report is the third in a series of research reporting on the state of harm and harassment in tech during the age of Covid-19. In our first two reports, [Remote work since Covid-19 is exacerbating harm: What companies need to know and do](#) and [Disability in the new workplace: What companies need to know and do](#), we explore the root issues and solutions required to create workplaces of the future where everyone has the opportunity to experience safety, grow and thrive.

You'll find a common theme across all of our reporting over the past three years: Systemic problems call for systemic solutions. That means tangible transformation requires us to explore the root causes for transphobia at work. Once we have identified the root causes, as leaders we have the opportunity to pull the weeds of inequity and toxicity out by the root. In addition, keep in mind that although representation of trans and gender nonconforming people among staff and executive leadership is important, it's just one

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aspect of the holistic approach required to confront and address harassment towards trans and gender non conforming people at work and to cultivate an inclusive culture that helps everyone at work. Representation alone cannot fix gender-based harm and harassment. These problems are difficult to solve and anti-trans sentiment has been part of our culture and systems for centuries. However, the pursuit of innovation in the workplace has long been a rallying cry for entrepreneurs, activists, and executives. Our striving for excellence does not stop at external products and services. If anything, it begins with work culture.

Our ongoing core values for how to implement systemic solutions continue to be: Inclusion means everyone, including trans and gender nonconforming people. Solutions need to be comprehensive across an entire organization, in every activity, and throughout its culture. You need to measure change to understand what works and what does not work—and for accountability.

A new theme we want to highlight is: Representation alone cannot fix gender-based harm and harassment. These problems are difficult to solve and anti-trans sentiment has been part of our culture and systems for centuries. However, the pursuit of innovation in the workplace has long been a rallying cry for entrepreneurs, activists, and executives. Our striving for excellence does not solely encompass external products and services. If anything, it begins with work culture.

The following context and findings were helpful in providing a list of the many ways trans and gender nonconforming people are excluded or harmed in the workplace, and, importantly, in pointing to solutions that are practical and doable. These solutions can be part of existing programs and often are inexpensive approaches to changing culture, educating employees, implementing inclusive policies and providing staff and leaders at every level in the organization with support. Our recommendations should ultimately create a better workplace culture by setting clear requirements for respect and inclusion, and guidelines for confronting inappropriate behavior.

The Context

An estimated 1.6 million people in the United States are transgender,⁵ and 1.2 million people are gender nonconforming,⁶ with visibility skyrocketing due, in part, to increased media prominence.⁷

As more public figures including elected officials⁸ and celebrities⁹ come out as trans or gender nonconforming, scrutiny of the community has increased, and inclusion efforts have not kept pace. At the same time, hundreds of laws and bills¹⁰ targeting trans and gender nonconforming people across the U.S. are putting the community at risk, especially in the case of trans youth. These laws are adding pressure to people concerned about their safety and also carry long term repercussions on where people are willing to live, where parents educate their children, and the trajectory of social and/or medical transition.

Finding accurate data on trans and gender nonconforming representation in the tech industry is challenging, though anecdotally some claim their representation in the industry is higher than the estimated numbers in the general population, a claim supported by Project Include's survey data. Nearly 5% of startup employees we surveyed from 2016 to 2019 said they are gender nonconforming, and 9% of respondents to our 2021 survey described themselves as gender nonconforming while an additional 5% chose not to answer. The workplace climate can often determine people's

sense of safety when answering survey questions comfortably and accurately. If no answer choice describes someone's relationship to gender, they may select the best of a series of bad choices or leave the question blank. Inconsistent survey questions may make it challenging to compare data across companies. Further, at many companies, the number of staff identifying as trans or gender nonconforming in internal surveys is so small that their details cannot be shared publicly due to concerns around privacy and anonymity.

Findings

As trans and gender nonconforming visibility increases, so does harassment, including transphobic abuse of colleagues and inappropriate behavior from people who aren't educated on trans and gender nonconforming issues. Lack of understanding among managers, human resources, and executives can stymie efforts at reporting and addressing harassment. For instance, someone may not understand why repeated comments about a trans woman's personal appearance could be experienced as harassment.

“Sometimes I choose not to identify. It sucks having to put female on things.”

Findings

Unfortunately, concerns for trans and gender nonconforming inclusion are often framed around pronouns and restrooms alone in media, diversity and inclusion guidance, and other settings. The misgendering issue is a symptom of a deeper cultural problem that surfaces in many ways in the workplace.

In conversations with workers, many described themselves as **closeted** or **“soft closeted,”** either concealing their identities or not actively disclosing them (e.g. a trans man who never discussed his history with colleagues). This issue particularly affected gender nonconforming workers, some of whom work as their gender assigned at birth rather than disclosing and expressing their gender.

Some trans and gender nonconforming workers felt comfortable being out on their immediate teams, but not within the company at large or with the public. They cited a variety of reasons, from fear about being harassed, misgendered, or held

back at work to not feeling comfortable with their teammates or not wanting to deal with the burden of being expected to educate or explain trans and gender nonconforming identities. Others were out, but preferred not to discuss it. Some workers changed their pronouns on Slack or in email signatures, for example, but were not interested in having a conversation with colleagues about their gender or in participating in DEI initiatives.

This lack of disclosure and trust suggests **tech companies may have more trans and gender nonconforming employees than they realize**, even if they are collecting demographic data. In addition to accommodating staff who are out as trans or gender nonconforming, leadership also needs to think about how to create an environment that is supportive of closeted staff, whether or not they ultimately decide to be open at work.

Signaling a welcoming environment, workers said, should include **deliberate decisions around policy as well as meaningful acts of culture shift**. For instance, a company may decide to establish a policy to enable the option to display pronouns in email, internal chat, HR paperwork, public-facing bios, and other areas, but it needs to be paired with training for technologists and managers to ensure that they know what to do with that information — and follow up to confirm that they did it.

Some found **campaigns to add pronouns to email and internal communications systems** alienating and stressful. This stress was most common for nonbinary workers who felt pressured into making decisions about their gender presentation that they weren't ready to make, and expressed a preference for navigating pronouns on a more granular or personal level. Workers in transition or

“Two people in my office loudly complained about someone asking for gender neutral pronouns to be used at the business next door to ours...They said they would go out of their way numerous times to use the wrong pronouns on purpose.”

Findings

still exploring their gender in particular reported feeling uncomfortable with the expectation that they provide their pronouns, or noted that they used different pronouns in different settings (such as they/them with close team members, but she/her with external stakeholders). In some situations, trans and gender nonconforming staffers were made to feel like their existence was a burden by colleagues complaining that using correct pronouns is “too hard,” for example, and expecting them to offer repeated grace for mistakes.

Trans and gender nonconforming people also reported a **heavy expectation to provide free education and consulting services to colleagues**. Sometimes what started as perhaps innocent and genuine interest and a desire to support colleagues could become grinding as people felt pressured to explain gender issues repeatedly.

“More and more people are including pronouns in their...email signatures, but I’m not sure if that makes me feel better or worse. Since I don’t feel like any pronouns really fit, it’s hard to put preferred pronouns in my signature.”

Many nonbinary and gender nonconforming people who were presumed female when they were born **express discomfort with being assigned to “women’s” or “women and nonbinary people” groups or other entities**. This phenomenon is known as **“women lite”** in which gender nonconforming people presumed to be female at birth are lumped together with women or tacked on as a clear afterthought; this issue also arose with mailing lists (women @ companyname), conference invitations (Women In Subfield), and other professional contexts.

The **“women lite”** treatment is a form of microaggression — and gender nonconforming people are not necessarily assigned female at birth, so some may experience an amplified feeling of marginalization. One person reported that they were made actively unwelcome in a “woman and nonbinary” ERG because of their presumed gender at birth, for instance, with some women in the group saying they felt “uncomfortable” because of their presence, even though that ERG was the closest available fit for their gender.

Managers can be a source of frustration, especially when they do not take reports of bad behavior seriously. Interviewees said some managers didn’t understand the nature of microaggressions targeting trans and gender nonconforming people, while others didn’t seem to care. Bad actors in the workplace sometimes took advantage of this confusion and apathy by continuing their behavior.

Benefits are a specific source of friction. Trans and gender nonconforming people may be concerned about what is covered in their health insurance. One person we spoke with said the majority of trans people she knows in the tech

Findings

sector consider comprehensive, trans inclusive health benefits to be an “absolute requirement” in a workplace. Unfortunately, needed benefits, even when offered, can be lacking in practice. Some workers reported that though their insurance purportedly covered gender-affirming care, in actuality, their claims were denied with no assistance from HR benefits managers. Others struggled with reproductive health coverage such as IVF or abortion care. One noted that many companies lack clear, inclusive guidance around time off for elective procedures, making it challenging to schedule gender-affirming care, or to manage accommodations upon their return. Someone who receives vocal surgery, for example, may need a week off in addition to sustained vocal rest, which would require not speaking at work for a week or more.

Workers also noted that some **employers and colleagues failed to consider policy implications for multinational and/or interstate companies.** Companies operating in regions where LGBTQIA+ people are policed or subjected to criminal penalties need to think carefully about the stakes of company-wide policy changes that could put workers or their family members at risk. In addition to workers at these locales, immigrants awaiting visa decisions, planning to welcome family from home, or considering returning home may also have concerns. Blanket policies that could inadvertently out people or put pressure on them to be out could subject them to legal or physical danger. Similarly, workers expressed fears or frustrations about being assigned to areas with restrictive laws such as Utah’s recent ban on gender-affirming care for minors.

“They wanted to do some comprehensive initiatives, [but] we’re a global company; in some countries it’s illegal to be gay or LGBTQ!”

Project Include has a number of recommendations to help companies attract and retain trans and gender nonconforming workers. Due to legislative and legal attacks on the trans community, legal protections are in flux and vary from state to state, but company protections for trans and gender nonconforming staff can and should go beyond following legal requirements in the same way many companies, for example, already provide more parental leave¹¹ than required by law.¹²

Ultimately, these recommendations are designed to promote recognition and respect in the workplace to create a strong foundation for building a gender-expansive workplace, whether via building better culture, adjustments to computer systems, improvements to codes of conduct, or providing comprehensive benefits.

“What do trans people want out of their workplaces? I personally want gender respected but not brought up as a defining characteristic.”

The guiding principles for an inclusive culture mean designing policies based on many voices, rather than assuming one voice speaks for all, paying for internal and when needed external expertise, and understanding that norms will

change over time and policies should, too. Intention in actions informs what corrective steps should be taken to prevent future missteps, and actions driven by bad intent should be treated more stringently than actions that come out of ignorance or insensitivity. As with all inclusion practices, trans and gender nonconforming policies and practices should be a consideration in all activities across the workplace and all interactions between employees.

Make (Trans and Gender Nonconforming) Inclusive Cultures

“One of the challenges in tech is pattern matching,” says Brenda Darden Wilkerson, President and CEO of AnitaB.org. “It’s one of the hardest things to get people to break. People have in their mind what a technologist looks like, where they’re from, what school they attended.” Not all people in tech have to come from uniform backgrounds and experiences, she notes.

A crucial aspect of moving away from pattern matching to a more fair and inclusive culture is understanding your current culture, cultural gaps, and commitments to long term change and sustainability. A step we recommend leaders take is understanding your origin point. What is the culture like now for trans and gender non conforming people? What gaps can the company actively close that make the workplace unsafe for trans and gender nonconforming people?

Culture starts before people even join a company with **clear communication about what they**

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can expect from the hiring process and how trans and gender nonconforming workers are treated in the workplace. Job listings and communication during the hiring process should include information about benefits, trans-inclusive policies, physical facilities, what is included in training offerings, and resources for trans and gender nonconforming staff. When providing information about resources such as ERGs, tell applicants how they are structured and how the company is investing in them, rather than referring them to a page on the website. This information, along with other materials about inclusion such as disability-related policies and resources for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian staff, should be provided to all applicants equally.

“I have a relatively sought after skillset and the financial flexibility to be picky about where I work.”

Misgendering is an ongoing stressor for trans and gender nonconforming people, and in the workplace, power imbalances can make it difficult to address, whether it's a genuine accident or gendered harassment. Many workers expressed frustration and stress around instances of misgendering that were turned into a larger production, derailing conversations, drawing attention to them, and ultimately centering the person who used the wrong pronouns. **Employees should be empowered to correct people when they make**

mistakes and corrections should result in a brief apology and a return to business. (“Jared uses they/them, actually.” “Oh, I’m so sorry, Jared, I’ll keep that in mind for the future. If you’d like to continue with your Q3 marketing presentation...”)

“Our policy is that getting [pronouns] wrong is a job performance issue.”

Clearly define inappropriate behavior and its consequences in the employee handbook, at onboarding, and in training. **Provide concrete examples** that explicitly include microaggressions so trans and gender nonconforming staff, their colleagues, and management understand how their company defines harassment and what will happen in the event of an incident. Multiple instances of misgendering should result in specific consequences outlined in the employee handbook and code of conduct (e.g., a verbal warning, a formal writeup, specific education).

Executive Representation plus Buy-In Are Key for Trans and Gender Nonconforming Inclusion

“Expand and diversify your leadership team,” says Nicole Sanchez, founder and head of Vaya, a DEI consulting firm. “It’s the shortest way to culture change.” That may be challenging, but companies should still take an active role in

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What to do if a problem arises

- + If an incident is reported or witnessed, decide who should be involved. Usually, HR and a relevant manager or managers should be informed. It may also be wise to inform higher levels, potentially up to the CEO, in smaller companies or for more serious situations.
- + A manager should check in with both parties, drawing upon guidance in the employee handbook, and determine if additional action is needed.
- + After three months, the manager should check in again with both parties to follow up and determine whether the problem has been resolved or additional action is needed. Acknowledge that checking in can create additional stress; training on how to check in thoughtfully may be needed.

diversifying recruitment and internal promotions. Jerrica Kirkley, co-founder of Plume, a gender-affirming care startup, says: “The reality is that for a lot of positions, especially upper management, upper leadership, it can be hard to recruit directly for those and hire folks who have marginalized backgrounds, especially BIPOC trans people... Try to create development opportunities.” Specific training for members of the C-suite and other senior leadership should supplement bottom-up DEI measures, says Wilkerson. “We brought in a diversity person to do DEI training for our board. So we were doing it within, but wanted to make sure leadership at the board level was doing it.” Members of the C-suite set the tone for the whole organization, and without C-suite buy-in and enthusiastic support, any measures are likely doomed to fail. Socially active companies should include transgender issues in their work. For example, a CEO should seriously consider submitting testimony to a hearing on

transphobic legislation in regions where the company operates and boycotting events or doing business in those regions.

Managers Must Proactively Support Trans and Gender Nonconforming Staff

Managers should be provided with **trans- and gender nonconforming-specific training** that includes discussion of trans and gender nonconforming issues as well as coverage of workplace policies that affect these communities. This training should focus on management’s obligation to lead by example and provide clear guidance to their teams on affirming and working respectfully with trans and gender nonconforming colleagues. The relationship employees have with their manager is an enormous factor in employee retention. In January 2022, 82% of U.S. workers

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in a survey said they would potentially quit their job because of a bad manager.¹³ When managers are undertrained, they burn out,¹⁴ their relationships with their direct reports suffer, and staff and management leave.

Managers need policies that include clear expectations of staff, outlined consequences of policy violations, and information about how to support direct reports who come out or request assistance with gender expression and inclusion in the workplace.

“One of my requirements was that whatever new job I had, I wanted to be able to be out at work.”

Multiple interviewees stated that they felt more welcomed at a company because their team leads discussed their needs with colleagues before they arrived. One noted that a recruiter specifically asked for their pronouns and any other information they wanted to share; their hiring manager in turn discussed them with the team before their start date so they didn't have to educate and correct colleagues while onboarding.

Because trans and gender nonconforming people have diverse and sometimes conflicting needs, **managers should be prepared to explicitly ask how they should provide support** and may wish to provide examples of support that has been provided in the past.

Asking individuals what they want is critical, as one person's preference may not reflect another's. For example, one person noted that they had enabled they/them pronouns in Slack, but it took their manager a month to notice. The manager apologized and also asked the best way to communicate the change to the team, putting them in control of how they wanted the situation handled.

Workplaces should provide **clear guidance on what constitutes harassment and consistent frameworks for handling reports**, including escalation if necessary, with appropriate training for managers so they understand company values and which steps to take if an incident occurs. **A third-party ombud can ensure staff have multiple venues** for reporting violations of company policies, even if they do face trust concerns.¹⁵ Options are essential as staff may question the priorities and fairness of certain individuals or processes.

Set Expectations for Behavior

These examples of inappropriate behavior that policies should anticipate and address should be explicitly part of an employee handbook. Most examples highlight needed guidance around basic respect that applies to everyone in the workplace, but they can come with an extra layer for trans and gender nonconforming people. Setting clear expectations for respectful and appropriate behavior can help employees feel less anxious about what to do and how to interact at work, not just with trans and gender nonconforming employees, but in general to create a more inclusive culture for all.

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Levels of behavior range from insensitive and ignorant to intentionally harassing and harmful. In all cases, having clear examples of inappropriate behavior can prevent the behavior and also encourage all employees to step in and challenge the behavior if someone does it anyway.

Intentional harm can be hard to detect. For example, some groups are purposefully outlining ways to harass that are not blatant and harder to detect, but that may be obvious to many trans and gender nonconforming people. It could be an indicator of broader harassing behavior that needs attention and addressing. One group is TERFs, trans-exclusionary radical feminists. TERF is a term that has become synonymous with transphobe, though TERFs sometimes try to defend themselves by saying they believe in a form of feminism or that they are gender-critical. TERFS can use certain terms to try to avoid being identified as transphobic while amplifying their views and harassment, especially to extremists. These and other terms are sometimes referred to as dog whistles, because a group of people can perceive them very strongly while the rest of the world may not notice anything. Dog whistles enable harassers to harm a subset of people while hiding their bigotry and negative behavior from most people and claiming plausible deniability around their harassment and hate.

“Our Chief Diversity Officer made a joke about transgender individuals that one day we could be men and tomorrow we could be women.”

Recommendations

Harmful behavior or term	Why it is harmful
<p>Referring to trans women as “socialized as men” (“How could you understand what women go through? You were socialized as a man.”)</p>	<p>These comments undermine the experiences of trans women. The phrase “socialized as men,” is a dog whistle used by hate groups to garner support from extremists without provoking opposition or critique.</p>
<p>Misgendering, whether the target of the misgendering is present or absent (“He, she, whatever” “I don’t understand why he keeps using the women’s room”). Targets can include clients and public figures.</p>	<p>Misgendering can be based on ignorance, but repeated and malicious misgendering is often harassment.</p>
<p>Racialized harassment, such as referring to a white trans person by their correct pronouns but then referring to a Black butch woman as “they/she/whatever”¹⁶</p>	<p>Refusing to call a Black, Indigenous, Latinx or Asian person by their correct pronouns while using correct pronouns for white colleagues communicates that they are not as deserving of fair and affirming treatment at work. Undermining gender identities is a historical tactic of white supremacists and an attempt to other and denigrate.</p>
<p>“Just asking questions” conversations (“Is it safe for kids to be on hormones like that?” “How do we know men aren’t saying they’re women just so they can get into women’s bathrooms?” “Is it really fair to let men pretend to be women so they can compete against real women in sports?”)</p>	<p>Questions can be genuine or harassing, but a worker should not have to train coworkers about these topics or speak for an entire group. Any training should be done in a planned way, and not on-demand. Many of these topics are inappropriate for the workplace.</p>
<p>Approving comments about ERF ideology or the use of TERF rhetoric such as referring to cis women as “adult human females,” referencing “gender critical” ideology, or calling trans people, particularly women, pedophiles or groomers. TERF culture is constantly evolving, so stay alert to trends — such as adding coded emoji to Slack display names.</p>	<p>Transphobia takes many forms, and some of them are well-known. TERFs use certain terms to try to avoid being identified as transphobic. Using transphobic terms is harassment.</p>

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Other behaviors may not necessarily indicate harmful intent. Sometimes it comes from ignorance. Other times it may come from insensitivity. Sometimes people need to be reminded to adopt changes. Repeated failures to correct the behavior after being told it is inappropriate should be treated as negative intent.

Harmful behavior	Why it is harmful
<p>Using someone’s prior name (sometimes known as a deadname¹⁷) or assigning a nickname (“That’s too hard to say/remember, I’ll just call you Rose”) or asking someone’s prior name. Coworkers can help by correcting the person using the wrong name</p>	<p>Every employee should be called the name they want to be called; no one should have to be called by an undesired nickname or old name. For trans people, a deadname can be an uncomfortable or even traumatic reminder of the past. Sometimes this behavior is intentional and bullying.</p>
<p>Criticism of someone’s gender presentation or expression (“If you’re not a woman, how come you’re always wearing dresses?”)</p>	<p>Criticism of how anyone looks is not appropriate and can be insensitive at best, harassing otherwise.</p>
<p>Deriding or complaining about neopronouns such as xe/hir or ey/em (“It’s just too hard to remember that” “That sounds weird, I’m not going to use it in front of clients”)</p>	<p>Each person should be supported in the name and pronouns they use. Derision and complaints are not supportive.</p>
<p>Pointedly noting that someone (including a public figure or someone outside the organization) is transgender when it’s not relevant to the conversation</p>	<p>These comments can be transphobic, and are insensitive and unnecessary.</p>

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Harmful behavior	Why it is harmful
<p>Expecting one trans staffer to answer questions about trans issues for all trans employees, or for trans people in general</p>	<p>It is a burden to be the spokesperson for an entire identity; it's also an impossible task. Transgender people do not have a single consensus view; neither do gender nonconforming people</p>
<p>Questions about social or medical transition, including a family member's ("So when are you getting The Surgery?" "I don't understand, are you making your kid take hormones?" "Wait, so your wife is now your husband? Are you getting divorced?")</p>	<p>Medical questions are not appropriate in general and violate privacy, and these specific questions usually cause friction instead of bonding</p>
<p>Comments about "passing" ("You look just like a woman!" "You look so much more like a man with a beard!")</p>	<p>These questions are inappropriate as they call out gender and appearance and can be sexualized.</p>
<p>Explicit or implicit questions about genitals ("What were you born with? What does it say on your driver's license?" or "Were you raised as _____?")</p>	<p>These questions are as inappropriate as questions about circumcision status. They are inappropriate in the workplace for any employee. If it's inappropriate in general, it's inappropriate to ask trans and gender nonconforming employees.</p>
<p>Questions about sexuality, family structure, or fertility</p>	<p>These questions are inappropriate in the workplace for any employee. If it's inappropriate in general, it's inappropriate to ask trans and gender nonconforming employees</p>

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Harmful behavior	Why it is harmful
<p>Questions about which bathroom someone uses (when directing people to a restroom, consider listing all nearby restrooms: “there’s a designated men’s room on four, an all-gender on three, and a single-stall just down the hall from the all-gender”)</p>	<p>Some people are not comfortable sharing pronouns or gender. A general answer avoids assumptions and provides the needed information.</p>
<p>Hiding behind “rules” like “singular they is improper grammar”</p>	<p>Arguing about a generally accepted use of pronouns is often a way to express disapproval without appearing intentionally negative. Some people who engage in this behavior have ill intent and are using this as a dog whistle.</p>
<p>Past-tense misgendering e.g. saying “when you were a man” to a trans woman instead of “before you came out”</p>	<p>This language focuses on the past, which is not relevant, and can be used to undermine a trans person’s identity.</p>

Think about ways your company handbook can signal inclusion and belonging. If a company has a dress code, for example, **it should be gender-neutral**. Focus on the desired outcome, such as neat professional appearance with no rips or stains, or appropriate PPE in the lab, rather than gendered standards, such as no skirts on men.

Audit the handbook for other gendered content, and consider whether you need to add trans- and gender-nonconforming specific content such as a section with resources on learning about pronouns so all staff have a ready reference.

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Enable Straightforward Self-ID for All Staff

Employees should be able to dictate how they want to be referred to in name, gender, and pronouns. Information about gender, transitioning, and legal names should be private and its access and use should be on an as-needed basis or as requested by the individual.

If someone uses multiple pronoun sets, such as she/they, ask how they would like them to be used. Someone may want “she” in external-facing contexts but feel more comfortable with “they” internally, for example, or may want colleagues to alternate. (“Have you seen Carmen?” “They went down to four because she had to meet with someone from finance.”)

Requests should be followed. Interviewees were concerned about ensuring the correct pronouns are used and recommended **top-down guidance on pronouns**, including companywide documentation on why appropriate pronoun use is expected (our resources provide some examples), with information about neopronouns and the varied ways in which trans and gender nonconforming staff may use pronouns. Executive buy-in on clear communication about pronouns is critical, reiterating the fact that it is a company value.

Throughout, employees, managers, and executives should be expected to determine and use the correct pronouns for their colleagues – and to apologize when they make mistakes. Companies should **enable self-identification in their systems** when it is available, but should not pressure people to list their pronouns. It should also be noted that instead of asking about “preferred pronouns,”

people should simply ask “which pronouns do you use?” or “which pronouns would you like me to use in communications with external stakeholders?” Similarly, no one has a “preferred” gender and people do not “identify as” a given gender (“Xiomara is a woman,” not “Xiomara identifies as a woman”).

Legal compliance should not be an issue. Employee’s general work records can be changed to reflect their chosen name. Only documents that require a legal name should display it. For example, Form W-2 by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires a legal name, and other payroll and tax documents and insurance and retirement documents may also require a legal name. This legal name should only be accessible by select HR and legal staff. When an employee contacts IT because they have a software issue, IT providers shouldn’t be able to go into a system and view the employee’s legal name. Instead, it should be for federal and state reporting purposes and only viewable confidentially to select staff in HR for specific reasons.

“I would have people use the wrong pronouns for me all the time. I stopped complaining because I’d complain and nothing would change.”

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Several concrete measures can make the operational systems that companies rely on more welcoming. Multiple workers reported frustration with gender markers or rigid display names used in internal systems, often when it wasn't at all relevant to the task they were trying to perform, such as creating a Slack profile or requesting equipment. Fixing these technical issues can improve feelings of belonging for trans and gender nonconforming staff, and many are relatively easy to implement.

Workers recommended **removing gender markers**, when possible, and providing a range of “select all that apply” options when it is not. They also stated that **options for selecting pronouns should be enabled or added**, ensuring that self-identification is available to all staff who wish to take advantage of it. While legal names and/or gender may be

required in some internal documents (e.g. banking and tax details), **users should be able to self-ID with the names they want displayed** to colleagues, clients, and the public. Administrators should again think carefully about who should be allowed to access legally required — but inaccurate — gender details just as with names.

In addition, they recommended **reducing the friction in name- and gender-change processes** for those changing their names and/or gender markers socially or legally. Ideally workers should be able to access a single document in employee handbooks, intranet, and other locations where resources are kept that provides information about how to change names, genders, and pronouns in company systems as well as external services a company may contract with. **Workers should be able to submit a single ticket to update all instances across company systems.** In cases where the workplace does not have the capacity to execute a name or gender change, as for example on third-party-administered benefits such as health insurance and 401(k)s, the form should include information about who to contact, and employers may want to consider providing assistance with these changes through a benefits manager or similar. **Changes should not require a reason.**

The company should also **provide a point of contact for former staff** who want to change their details on company publications and other materials if they transition after leaving the workplace. This allows people to be recognized by name for their accomplishments, but also ensures people can add their tenure at a company to resumes, job applications, and the like, knowing that anyone following those links will find them correctly named and gendered.

“My biggest axe to grind with HR is places that assure you that they’re friendly and accepting to trans people and then you go into Workday and the first question is like ‘male or female, we demand to know about your genitals before you can enter your direct deposit info.’”

Recommendations

Companies should also **think carefully about if and where they store information, including about gender**, and how it might be used. For example, some companies offer travel assistance to trans and gender nonconforming employees who need to leave the state for care. Codifying this assistance as a gender-affirming travel benefit may expose workers or the company to legal liability; instead it could be described as a “medical travel benefit” or “medical assistance benefit.”

Provide Accessible, Gender-Appropriate Restrooms for Employees and Visitors

Bathrooms tend to be an area of particular tension for cisgender people, who have made it into a problem for trans and gender nonconforming people even though we almost all use restrooms that are gender-neutral regularly, whether it is at someone’s home or on an airplane. Some trans and gender nonconforming people are comfortable using bathrooms designated for men and/or women. Others would prefer a gender-neutral individual restroom or a single-stall, nongendered restroom (in the state of California single-stall restrooms must be gender-neutral per the Equal Restroom Access Act of 2016). Some may also have accessibility needs to consider when selecting a restroom. Regardless of labeling and fixtures, all restrooms should stock menstruation supplies. Instead of gendering bathrooms, consider simply providing information about which fixtures are available. For example, the bathroom door could have a sign visibly indicating that it has urinals, bathroom stalls, and a changing table.

No matter the size, the company should ensure staff and visitors have access to accessible, gender-affirming restrooms in every building, both inside and outside badged or otherwise secured areas. Aim for one on every floor within a reasonable distance for every employee. For example, when looking for a restroom would you feel comfortable having to exit the building and travel two blocks each time you had to use one? If there are barriers (such as legal bans on all-gender restrooms or code issues that limit single-stall options), communicate these to staff and convene to discuss possible solutions. Employers should also provide separate spaces with appropriate supplies for nursing/pumping (as may be legally required in some jurisdictions), taking injectable medications, or managing other personal needs that should not be addressed in a bathroom.

Provide Evidence-Based, Regular Trans- and Gender-Inclusive Training

Training is about more than pronouns and must be inclusive of gender identity, culture, and even trans history. Training should move beyond minimal legal compliance requirements to describe expectations and goals for work relationships and an inclusive culture for everyone. Ideally it is part of all your training. For managers and executives, training should be included in managerial training for all and especially for first-time managers and managers of teams that include trans or gender nonconforming people, and it should be specific as well as contextual. “I don’t believe we can discuss pronouns without discussing the social...construction of gender, pronouns don’t equal gender,” says Char Brown Griffin, Senior

Recommendations

Consultant and People Scientist at ReadySet, a DEI consulting firm.

Employers should hire an external firm that specializes in this kind of training, especially if it is trans-run. Such firms also offer training for all staff on cultivating strong relationships with trans and gender nonconforming colleagues. All training should be evidence-based, with clear plans for measuring effectiveness, such as including trans and gender nonconforming topics on pulse surveys to determine how and if shifts in company culture are occurring. It should occur at regular intervals alongside other mandatory training such as anti-harassment and disability awareness, and trans- and gender nonconforming-related content should be integrated into the overall training curriculum.

Value Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Workers also want their work in diversity, equity, and inclusion **treated as work**. Budget time for those on committees or in leadership to do this work and provide clear guidance around how much time they can dedicate. Each employee should be contributing either to their team's culture or to the company's overall DEI efforts, and these contributions should be evaluated during performance reviews and promotions. Efforts should also be funded through compensation

“My role is not to be a gender expert, it is to write code.”

“I am writing the guide [on] nonbinary coworkers. When I joined I was the 11th employee...[my work has] been recognized as nontechnical but important work, the same as coworkers who will write white papers.”

adjustments and bonuses. If a company uses time cards with billing codes, task tracking, or similar metrics, one specifically for DEI work should be added so staff can track their hours and be paid. If a person is asked to perform specific work tied to their being trans or gender nonconforming, **“no” should be respected as an answer.**

If your company hears “no” a lot, explore why that is: Do workers feel like their time and expertise are not valued? Do they not feel safe and welcome being out? Do they not feel supported by managers who can help them balance their workload? Are you relying on them to do work that should be handled by skilled professional outside consultants and trainers with extensive experience?

Add an explicit DEI lens to work plans. What work are individuals and teams doing to support the organization's overall DEI goals? How will this work be communicated and measured? DEI should be woven throughout individual and team planning, not tacked on as an add-on.

Recommendations

Use and Support ERGs to Cultivate Internal Networks

Trans and gender nonconforming people can also **benefit from employee resource groups that are valued and respected by managers and executives**. Some expressed comfort with fitting into umbrella LGBTQIA+ groups, while others working for larger companies appreciated access to trans and/or gender nonconforming-specific groups. Any such group should contain at least three employees. In order to be a meaningful part of company culture rather than a PR exercise, ERGs should be funded; their leadership should be provided with time, compensation, and professional development; and work performed in leadership roles should be recognized in work plans, evaluations, performance reviews, and promotions. There should be a forum for ERGs to share their perspectives and recommendations with managers and executives with a sponsor, who does not have to be part of the ERG or even identify as a member of the population but is responsible for getting agreed actions done.

Employees should be made aware of ERGs at onboarding, and ERGs can provide special resources at onboarding, including providing a buddy trained and prepared to help navigate workplace culture if someone wants one.

Avoid catchall ERG groups that lump together multiple groups, like gender nonconforming people in a women's group, and instead encourage and **fund multiple ERGs** and their leaders. **Encourage collaboration between ERGs**, giving them resources, time and opportunities to work together.

ERG groups require valuing the contributions of their members; as above, many people answering “no” to ERG requests or no one volunteers in response to an all-hands call is an indicator that workers may not feel safe or supported in this kind of work.

Ensure Benefits are Trans- and Gender-Inclusive

Benefits should be inclusive of trans and gender nonconforming staff. In negotiations over the specifics of health insurance coverage, for example, companies should make sure access to clinical transition needs is as expansive as possible, and this should be clearly communicated to staff. Switching to non-gendered benefits based on need (e.g. family leave, not maternity leave) is more inclusive for all staff, from a trans mom bonding with a daughter she had via surrogate to a cis man taking time off to care for an elder. This information should be **clearly disclosed in hiring materials** as applicants weigh benefits when deciding where to apply and whether to accept an offer.

Health insurance benefits should be comprehensive. They should also include services such as hormones, breast reduction or augmentation surgery, electrolysis, facial feminization or masculinization surgery, therapy, inclusive fertility benefits, and other services staff may identify as priorities. “We talk to our employees to understand what they want,” says Kirkley. “We just sent out a benefits survey, asking ‘what’s important?’” For Kirkley, the consideration with health insurance isn’t just cost, but appropriate coverage for a company that’s approximately two-thirds transgender.

Recommendations

If employees are required to travel for work (i.e. relocation, conferences, customer visits, offsite meetings, and retreats), consider their safety or legal status in states, countries, or venues where trans and gender nonconforming people may be subjected to policing or harassment. Employees should not be penalized for being unable or unwilling to travel or relocate to regions where their health and safety and/or that of their families could be at risk because they are transgender or gender nonconforming.

Companies should provide mental health care benefits in policies that are easy to access and fully covered, and help normalize their use. Trans and gender nonconforming people have particular experiences with LGBTQ+ discrimination that detrimentally impacts mental health, and providing access to therapists who are trans- and gender nonconforming people or experienced in working with trans- and gender nonconforming people.

Leverage HR for Administrative Support

When staff transition at work, they should be provided with the **option of an HR representative to help them navigate the medical and administrative process**. A representative can help navigate the practical administrative logistics as well as directing colleagues to resources. Managers should receive training in supporting direct reports as they or their direct reports navigate the process. Employees in transition should always be in control of the process, determining when and where any announcements or changes are made, including to their details in company systems.

Collect and Act on Survey Data about Trans and Gender Nonconforming Experiences

To understand the scope of representation and need, gather meaningful and actionable data about trans and gender nonconforming workers. Read “[Measuring Progress](#)”¹⁸ for more information on developing effective metrics tools for measuring and reporting out demographic data. Because these workers can make up a small percentage of the workforce, data collection and reporting may require special care to protect their privacy. Project Include recommends collecting gender data, but not sharing it publicly if it cannot be safely anonymized (e.g. two nonbinary staffers at a 10-person company). Many employees prefer third-party data collection by a trusted provider.

Writing survey questions can be tricky, notes Sanchez. “How do we count? How do we know who’s here?,” she asks, noting that surveys often confuse gender and sex or create forced errors for participants. The survey question used to collect that data should be inclusive and descriptive: Today we recommend including categories for women, men, gender nonbinary, gender nonconforming, two-spirit, gender-queer, bigender, and allow them to not respond. We also recommend not using the word “other” to avoid othering and include a text option for an individual to add their own category. Exit surveys should also be inclusive and descriptive, and should be taken seriously and reviewed regularly to inform culture and process.

Recommendations

Sharing findings, next steps in response, and meaningful changes will make employees more willing to participate in surveys in the future.

“Every year we pushed a little harder to make sure they’re counting everyone. Who am I hiring? Am I hiring nonbinary people? Who’s leaving? Why? What are the circumstances?,” asks Wilkerson, adding that this information should be contrasted with groups that “may have flourished.” What are the circumstances?,” says Wilkerson, noting that this information should be contrasted with groups that “may have flourished.”

We know diverse and inclusive companies perform better. Building a workplace that is inclusive of trans and gender nonconforming people means considering the broad and diverse spectrum of gender. It should make existing staff feel safer and better able to participate fully in company life, including their work, even staff who may have been nervous about coming out. In a workplace where they are affirmed and given clear signals about company values, they may be more open about their gender, a shift that should be clearly visible in company survey data. Anyone interested in participating in DEI work will also have an incentive to do so, feeling like their contributions will be clearly valued.

Historically marginalized groups who feel included and comfortable at work are more likely to recommend their company to a friend or former colleague, expanding access to a talent and client pool that may have previously been out of reach.

Successful shifts in company culture around trans and gender-nonconforming people must be systemic. That means leaders—the CEO, all executives and all managers—must consciously make it clear that company values include dignity and respect for trans and gender nonconforming staff. Inclusion should be part of all interactions and processes, from HR programming, policies, and benefits, along with directed, evidence-based training for all staffers that includes coverage of gender, company policies (including examples of violations and disciplinary steps), and company values. Survey data is one metric for information about whether these programs are working and which steps are necessary into the future, and can be used for accountability when change does not happen or moves in the wrong direction.

“If you care about your people, not just about having a ‘supportive workplace,’ but also about providing support for people navigating transition, you help them open doors that are otherwise not open to them.”

As with all meaningful change, trans and gender nonconforming inclusion requires inclusion of all, a comprehensive approach, and metrics for accountability.

Ultimately learning how to make your workplace respectful of a marginalized group benefits all groups by creating better processes and better outcomes.

If you found this report useful for your work or otherwise, consider contributing to its [funding](#).

06

Appendix



Further Reading

Organizations

[FORGE](#)

[Lambda Legal](#)

[Lesbians Who Tech & Allies](#)

[LGBTQ in Technology](#)

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

[Out in Tech](#)

[Sylvia Rivera Law Project](#)

[Trans Tech Social Enterprises](#)

[Transgender Law Center](#)

[We Open Tech](#)

Company example

[“Mozilla introduces gender transitioning guidelines and policy,”](#) Mozilla, March 2019

Articles

[“Building a More Inclusive Environment for Non-Binary People in Tech: Insights from Serge’s Journey,”](#) OLX Group Careers, March 2021

[“Transgender employees in tech: Why this “progressive” industry has more work to do to achieve true gender inclusivity,”](#) Tech Republic, October 2019

[“Transgender in tech: More visibility but obstacles remain,”](#) ABC News, March 2021

Guides

[“Best Practices for Asking Questions to Identify Transgender and Other Gender Minority Respondents on Population-Based Surveys,”](#) Williams Institute (UCLA School of Law), 2014

[“Best Practices for Nonbinary Inclusion in the Workplace,”](#) Out and Equal, 2018

[“For Employers,”](#) Trans Journalists Association (guides on supporting trans staff, including those who are coming out)

[“A Guide to Gender Identity Terms,”](#) NPR, June 2021

[“A Guide to Restroom Access for Transgender Workers,”](#) OSHA

[“How to Spot TERF Ideology”](#) Cambridge SU

[“Model Transgender Employment Policy,”](#) NCTE

[“Supporting the Transgender People In Your Life,”](#) National Center for Transgender Equality

[“TTI’s Guide to Pronouns,”](#) Trans Training Institute

Research

[“Injustice at Every Turn,”](#) National LGBTQ Task Force, 2011

[“Nonbinary LGBTQ Adults in the United States,”](#) Williams Institute (UCLA School of Law), June 2021

[“Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter,”](#) Catalyst, 2015

[“Why Diversity Matters,”](#) McKinsey & Company, 2015.

Related Project Include Publications

[Case Study: LGBQA People](#)

[Measuring Progress](#)

[Remote Work Since 2019 is Exacerbating Harm](#)
[Implementing Culture: Encourage and support employee resource groups](#)

Acknowledgements

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Thank you also to each person who shared their experiences by taking the survey in 2021. Your involvement made this report possible.

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About Gender and Our Language Choices

In the future, readers will find that some of the terms we use are out-of-date and do not stand the test of time. Some words have ambiguous meanings or negative connotations, and here we explain our uses and share other uses that we considered. Often, terms viewed as inclusive for some people were exclusive of others; for example, “gender nonconforming” is not preferred by some people. Several identities did not have a fully inclusive term.

We chose the terms we thought were most inclusive based on conversations and consultations with members of the communities we are trying to describe. You should always follow the individual preference of the person you are talking to and be mindful that some communities may use language others deem outdated or offensive, or language that is used within the community but not by outsiders.

“Trans and gender nonconforming” refers to people whose gender and/or gender expression do not match that assigned at birth, and **“cisgender”** generally applies to people whose gender assigned at birth aligns with their current gender. Be aware that some agender people, intersex people, Indigenous people, nonbinary people, and other diverse communities do not fit tidily within this framework. The term cisgender is not inherently bad or negative; it is simply a term used to describe gender identity.

“Trans” includes transgender men and women, and also many nonbinary people as well as people who may describe their gender in other ways.

Do not use “transsexual” as a generic descriptor for trans people. Though some trans men and women describe themselves using the term, others are moving away from it as it focuses on sex, which relates to physical characteristics, and they prefer focusing on gender, which is related to cultural and social identities and expressions. Very broadly, **“nonbinary”** means someone is not a man or a woman. Some people view nonbinary as a gender, and others as an umbrella that covers specific genders, such as **genderfluid** or **genderqueer**, or as both, depending on context. Some nonbinary people are also transgender, while others may describe their gender using other terms.

Not being a man or woman also does not necessarily mean someone is nonbinary, as there are a variety of gender identities beyond the binary, and some people do not identify with binary gender (i.e., being a man or woman or a boy or girl) at all.

Some people may use the term **“gender nonconforming”** to describe their relationship with gender, including some nonbinary people. These individuals engage in gender expression that does not align with what our dominant culture recognizes, such as genders assigned at birth, for example by being a man who wears skirts and makeup. Some may describe themselves as cisgender, while others may occupy other points of the gender spectrum. Many people identify with more than one gender term; for example, someone may describe themselves as a man and genderqueer.

We use the term “gender nonconforming” to encompass all people who identify with genders

About Gender and Our Language Choices

that do not exist on the gender binary, and specifically to refer to survey respondents who identified as one or more of gender nonbinary, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, and/or as individually specified.

Trans and gender nonconforming people may express their gender in a variety of ways. Some choose to socially transition, changing their names along with the way they dress, use makeup, and otherwise present themselves to the world. They may use one or more sets of pronouns (such as they or he/they). Some may pursue medical transition (such as hormones or surgery), while others may not. In all cases, being trans or gender nonconforming does not mean someone needs to pursue social, medical, or surgical transition in order to be “real.”

While gender is sometimes reduced to three categories of cis, trans, or nonbinary, this definition is not complete or accurate. It does not necessarily encompass intersex and agender people, for example, as well as those whose relationship with gender is associated with non-Western and Indigenous traditions, such as **hijra** in India, **two-spirit** people in North America, or **muxe** in Mexico. Nor does it acknowledge the nonbinary population that is transgender or the larger gender nonconforming community.

We opted to use “trans” and “gender nonconforming” because the terms encompass many experiences of gender identity and expression, even though they aren’t an inclusive, perfect fit for everyone.

Be aware that gender can be a journey someone navigates over time, which may mean someone in the workplace describes their gender differently or changes pronouns multiple times. For example, someone introduced to you as a trans woman may later say they are agender, or someone who comes out as nonbinary and genderfluid may later explain he is a trans man. Others may use different pronouns simultaneously, such as a genderfluid person who goes by he and/or they, depending on the setting.

“Deadnaming” is referring to a trans person by their prior legal name, or “deadname;” e.g., referring to Shveta as Jawahar. Whether or not someone has changed their name legally, it is not respectful or appropriate to use their deadname. It is a form of harassment.²⁰

About Our Methodology

Our workers included 20 nonbinary, gender nonconforming, agender, and neutrois people; seven trans women; three trans men; two two-spirit people; and six people who declined to state or wished to be anonymous.

Among those who disclosed their race, ten were white; four were Latinx; four were Black; three were Indigenous; three were East Asian; and two were Southeast Asian. This publication is not designed to be all-encompassing and we expect ongoing changes in standards of practice, thinking about gender, and inclusive language. These changes will appear in future Project Include publications as we evolve our recommendations to meet a shifting workplace and society.

Our work on this project was made challenging by the fact that trans and gender nonconforming workers were hesitant to speak on the record for a variety of reasons, including concerns about privacy; unwillingness to speak to people they didn't know about sensitive issues; worries about jeopardizing employment; increased transphobia and harassment at work and in society; and limitations of our own networks. We have chosen to keep participants in aggregate anonymous for their protection. Sidebars throughout this report feature quotes from their interviews.

It was also difficult to secure funding for this work, which included compensating interviewees who spoke with Project Include at length, a new policy Project Include adopted last year. We hope this document will increase interest in funding this work to learn more about the experiences of trans and gender nonconforming people in tech and how companies should change to improve their experiences, and we look forward to revisiting the subject.

The Demographics

From October 2020 to February 2021, we asked 120 questions of 2,796 survey respondents across 1,186 U.S. zip codes, 48 countries, 50 industries, and 8 work levels.

We engaged in concerted outreach with communities and people from marginalized backgrounds and groups who have been traditionally overlooked in the tech industry; our respondent demographics do not reflect overall industry demographics. Here we disaggregate demographics for 95 survey takers who responded as transgender and 244 who responded as gender nonconforming, including 75 who responded as both.

We include information on sexual orientation, mental health and disability after some thought. While we believe none of these categories should be stigmatized, they usually are, and we have some concerns that this data will be interpreted incorrectly. The data showing more respondents experiencing mental health differences reflect the transphobia and gender discrimination in society and the workplace. Trans and gender nonconforming people have experiences that may affect mental health (for example, anxiety, depression, and PTSD).

Of the 95 survey respondents who said they are transgender:

Age	%
50 or older	3%
40-49	16%
35-39	17%
30-34	33%
25-29	18%
25 or younger	13%
Did not answer	1%

The Demographics of Trans Respondents

Race/Ethnicity	%	Men	Women	Gender Nonconforming
Asian/Asian American	5%		1%	4%
Black/African American/African	6%	1%	1%	4%
Hispanic Latinx	2%			2%
Middle Eastern	1%			1%
White	68%		17%	52%
More than one race/ethnicity	14%	1%	1%	12%
Specified otherwise	3%			3%
TOTAL	100%	2%	20%	78%

For gender nonconforming, we include respondents who said they are one or more of gender nonbinary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, or further specified (half of whom also identified as either women or men).

Disability	%
Blindness/visual impairment	0%
Chronic illness or pain	16%
Deafness/hearing impairment	0%
Use wheelchair or other assisted device for mobility	3%
Multiple types of disabilities	19%
Specified otherwise	6%
None apply	41%
Did not answer	15%

Mental Health	%
Anxiety	7%
Depression	3%
Neurodiversity	5%
PTSD	3%
More than one type	73%
None apply	5%
Specified otherwise	2%
Did not answer	1%

The Demographics of Trans Respondents

Immigration Status	%
Immigrants	15%
Not an immigrant, both parents are	8%
One parent is an immigrant	6%
Not an immigrant or child of immigrants	68%
Not listed	1%
Did not answer	1%

Sexual Orientation	%
Heterosexual	2%
Queer	27%
One or more of asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, or further specified	71%
Did not respond	0%

The Demographics of Gender Nonconforming Respondents

Of the 244 survey respondents who said they are gender nonconforming:

Age	%
50 or older	8%
40-49	15%
35-39	22%
30-34	28%
25-29	16%
25 or younger	10%
Did not answer	1%

Disability	%
Blindness/visual impairment	4%
Chronic illness or pain	15%
Deafness/hearing impairment	1%
Use wheelchair or other assisted device for mobility	10%
Multiple types of disabilities	1%
Specified otherwise	6%
None apply	46%
Did not answer	17%

The Demographics of Gender Nonconforming Respondents

Mental Health	%
Anxiety	7%
Depression	3%
Neurodiversity	3%
PTSD	2%
More than one type	73%
None apply	8%
Specified otherwise	1%
Did not answer	2%

Sexual Orientation	%
Heterosexual	10%
Queer	22%
One or more of asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, or further specified	68%
Did not answer	0%

Immigration Status	%
Immigrants	17%
Not an immigrant, both parents are	11%
One parent is an immigrant	8%
Not an immigrant or child of immigrants	61%
Not listed	1%
Did not answer	1%

Endnotes

- ¹ Read About Gender for more information about the language used in this report.
- ² Branigin, Anne and Kirkpatrick, N. “Anti-trans laws are on the rise. Here’s a look at where — and what kind.” The Washington Post. October 14, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/life-style/2022/10/14/anti-trans-bills/>.
- ³ In our 2021 survey-based report, 40% of people who identified as both nonbinary and women experienced an increase in gender-based harassment since Covid compared to 9% of people who identified as nonbinary and men. Twice the proportion of trans people (42%) experienced an increase in harassment compared to cis people (25%). We also found that 42% of trans nonbinary/genderqueer people, 40% of trans women, and all trans men (n<5) experienced an increase in gender-based harassment. Read also Baboolall, David (they/them), Greenberg, Sarah (she/her), Obeid, Maurice (he/him), and Zucker, Jill (she/her). “Being transgender at work.” McKinsey & Company. November 10, 2021. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/being-transgender-at-work>.
- ⁴ 95 respondents identified as transgender, and 244 identified as gender nonconforming, used here to refer to people who identified as one or more of gender nonbinary, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, two-spirit, unsure, and/or as individually specified. In each group, we have included the 73 respondents who identified as both trans and gender nonconforming.
- ⁵ Herman, Jody L., Flores, Andrew R. and O’Neill, Kathryn K. “How Many Adults and Youth Identify as Transgender in the United States?” UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. June 2022. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-adults-united-states/>.
- ⁶ Wilson, Bianca D.M. and Meyer, Ilan H. “Nonbinary LGBTQ Adults in the United States.” UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. June 2021. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/non-binary-lgbtq-adults-us/>
- ⁷ Mocarski, Richard, King, Robyn, Butler, Sim, Holt, Natalie R., Huit, T. Zachary, Hope, Debra A., Meyer, Heather M. and Woodruff, Nathan. “The Rise of Transgender and Gender Diverse Representation in the Media: Impacts on the Population.” Commun Cult Crit. September 2019. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6824534/>.
- ⁸ Smith, Kelsie. “Mauree Turner is the first nonbinary state legislator and first Muslim Oklahoma lawmaker.” CNN. November 5, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/05/politics/first-nonbinary-and-muslim-oklahoma-lawmaker/index.html>.
- ⁹ McNamara, Brittney. “Demi Lovato Came Out as Non-Binary, Saying They Use They/Them Pronouns” Teen Vogue. May 19, 2021. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/demi-lovato-came-out-as-non-binary>.
- ¹⁰ As of March 26, 2023, The Trans Legislation Tracker website reported 46 states introduced 488 anti-trans bills in 2023. <https://translegislation.com>.
- ¹¹ While the federal government uses the term “maternity leave,” we use the term parental leave to include trans men and gender nonconforming people who choose to bear children.
- ¹² Legislation often lags behind the contemporary needs of people. For example, in the U.S., the federal government requires employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave, job protection, and health insurance coverage for employees that qualify. In addition, 11 states across the U.S. require paid family leave, and about 55% of all U.S. employers offer paid parental leave in some form. These employers are not all required to do so by law, some employers that offer paid parental leave because new parents need access to adequate health insurance coverage and compensation to provide for their families. “State and Family Medical Leave Laws.” National Conference of State Legislatures. September 9, 2002. <https://www.ncsl.org/labor-and-employment/state-family-and-medical-leave-laws>. “Paid Leave in America: An Economic Overview.” SHRM and Oxford Economics. August 2020. <https://advocacy.shrm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SHRM-Paid-Leave-US-Report-Final.pdf>.
- ¹³ Korolevich, Sara. “Horrible Bosses: Are American Workers Quitting Their Jobs Or Quitting Their Managers?” GoodHire. January 11, 2022. <https://www.goodhire.com/resources/articles/horrible-bosses-survey/>.
- ¹⁴ “Executives feel the strain of leading in the ‘new normal.’” Future Forum Pulse. October 2022. <https://futureforum.com/research/pulse-report-fall-2022-executives-feel-strain-leading-in-new-normal/>.
- ¹⁵ Ombuds can have a hard time building trust if they are perceived to be more loyal to management than employees. For structural fairness, an ombud should be just as accountable to staff as they are to executives. Staff should receive regular read-outs and updates from the ombud and direct access for when they have questions, concerns, or reflections to share. Ombuds also need autonomy to run a confidential and independent process and to make their own final decisions and recommendations.
- ¹⁶ Black women are often stereotyped as having masculine traits, as Hannah Eko describes. Eko, Hannah. “As A Black Woman, I’m Tired Of Having To Prove My Womanhood.” BuzzFeed News. February 27, 2018., <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hannaheko/aint-i-a-woman>.
- ¹⁷ Read “About Gender and Our Language Choices” for a description and definition of “**deadname**.”
- ¹⁸ Read our recommendations on metrics for more. https://projectinclude.org/measuring_progress.
- ¹⁹ Dixon-Fyle, Sundiatu, Dolan, Kevin, Hunt, Dame Vivian and Prince, Sara. “Diversity wins: How inclusion matters.” McKinsey & Company. May 19, 2020. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>.
- ²⁰ “Why deadnaming is harmful.” Cleveland Clinic. November 18, 2021. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/deadnaming/>.
- ²¹ Mayo Clinic Staff. “Health concerns for transgender people.” February 4, 2023. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/transgender-health/art-20154721>.