**FLIP the script**

**TRANSGENDER IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Actions** reflect workplace culture. Even with the best intentions, our actions can reinforce negative stereotypes around gender identity. Be mindful that our actions matter. Act in ways that ensure people know they are valued, feel safe to be their authentic selves at work, and have a sense of belonging as trusted, contributing members of their teams.

**TRANSGENDER IN THE WORKPLACE**

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**DISHONORING**

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY**

“AT LEAST YOU LOOK LIKE A REAL WOMAN NOT A MAN, IN A DRESS.”

**HOW IT’S DISHONORING**

Using words like “real” or “normal” discredits transgender individuals’ authenticity. Comments such as these also suggest that transgender people must look a certain way to be acceptable to society.¹

**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**

Avoid using terms or making judgments that attempt to qualify one’s gender identity or expression such as “real” or “normal.”

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**SENSITIVE**

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY**

“HAVE YOU HAD THE SURGERY YET?”

**HOW IT’S INSENSITIVE**

Not all transgender individuals want to transition from one gender to another by means of surgery, or want to achieve a binary male/female aesthetic.²

**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**

Allow people to express themselves freely without imposing on them the need to be either “fully” male or female.

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

**WHAT PEOPLE SAY**

“What was your name at birth?”

**HOW IT’S NOT CONFIDENTIAL**

Some transgender individuals prefer to identify by their gender identity rather than labeling themselves as trans. Probing questions that reference a person’s identity pre-transition can challenge a transgender individual’s ability to fully embody their current gender identity.³

**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**

Use people’s chosen name and other stated forms of address.

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Recognize and accept that each transgender person will present in their own unique way.

Refraining from asking intrusive questions or making comments that generalize the transgender experience helps reduce micro-aggressions that can take an emotional toll on transgender individuals.

Demonstrate **HUMILITY** by accepting that your views may be incomplete and showing your willingness to hear other points of view.
Dishonoring, invalidating, or otherwise being insensitive to the experiences of transgender people can contribute to feelings of disempowerment.

Actively listening to, validating, and supporting transgender individuals are important skills for an inclusive leader and ally in fostering a sense of empowerment.

**WHAT TO DO INSTEAD**

Always affirm transgender people’s experiences, and stay away from language that (unintentionally) minimizes the realities of their lived experiences.

Self-reflect

Assess your thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs to understand your unconscious biases and assumptions.

Engage in courageous conversation

Inquire across differences with sensitivity and humility to expand your knowledge and build bridges. Avoid making assumptions rooted in stereotypes, biases, and myths.

Continue to educate yourself

Learn more about issues that affect transgender individuals and how you can be an ally. Catalyst and many other organizations have resources that can support you in this process.

Keep a growth mindset

Remain open to different experiences and perspectives, even when they challenge you or push you outside your comfort zone. Recognize that your learning is a journey.
SOURCES: