

10 Tips for Creating Trans-Inclusive Work Environments

SAND CHANG, PHD

- 1 Center self-determination.** Believe trans people when they tell you who they are. Someone's identity and lived experience is not up for questioning or debate. Discard gendered dress codes.
- 2 Acknowledge systemic barriers.** Many trans people experience anti-trans bias, microaggressions, harassment, and even physical violence on a regular basis – sometimes for years. Consider that whatever interaction you are having or witnessing exists in a larger and longstanding context.
- 3 Honor gender beyond the binary.** Be sure to include nonbinary folks and others whose genders do not fit into binary gender systems of male/man/masculine and female/woman/feminine.
- 4 Do your unlearning work.** Acknowledge your own gender socialization and how that may contribute to your beliefs about trans people. Reflect on your own gender-based privileges, even if you have also had experiences of gender-based or other forms of marginalization. Avoid the impulse to bypass the work that is needed to acknowledge cisgender or binary privileges.
- 5 Create inclusive built environments.** Gender-segregated environments pose barriers to access for trans and/or nonbinary people. Advocate for all-gender restrooms, as these create more safety for trans people who are often harassed in restrooms.
- 6 Create new norms while respecting choice.** Make it a system/company norm to share pronouns in your email signature. This communicates an understanding that we cannot assume a person's pronouns based on their name. However, when asking people to share their pronouns, make it an invitation, not a mandatory requirement. Example: "Please feel free to share your name, pronouns if you'd like, and what department you work in."
- 7 Respect privacy.** Don't ask intrusive questions about a trans and/or nonbinary person's gender history, medical or transition history, prior name, body parts, or sexual practices. A trans and/or nonbinary person may choose to share this information with you, but this should not be an expectation.
- 8 Be humble and accountable.** If/when you make a mistake (e.g., misgendered or mis-pronounced someone) and someone brings it to your attention, pause and make a choice before reacting. Be willing to engage in repair work. Acknowledge the mistake and its potential impact, apologize, correct your behavior, and state a commitment to do better. Then follow up by doing what you need to do in order to do better.
- 9 Shift the entire culture.** Apply efforts towards trans inclusion to your entire system, not just when you are (knowingly) interacting with a trans and/or nonbinary person.
- 10 Choose health insurance plans that cover gender-affirming medical care.** While trans people have different desires for their bodies, it is important that gender-affirming medical care is accessible. These are life-saving, life-affirming, medically necessary treatments.

About the author

Sand Chang, PhD

Sand Chang, PhD (they/them/their) is a Chinese American nonbinary queer psychotherapist, trainer, and DEI consultant.

Dr. Sand has a personal and professional commitment to body liberation for all people. They work at the intersections of trauma, trans health, and eating disorders using a combination of Internal Family Systems (IFS), Somatic Experiencing (SE), and anti-oppression frameworks.

Dr. Sand has written extensively on different aspects of trans health and experience. They are passionate about increasing the capacity of systems to honor the lives of trans and/or nonbinary people.



Sand with their pug Zelda and their Brussels Griffon BonBon.

Selected Offerings from Dr. Sand

- Live Training: [Trans Inclusion and Allyship In the Workplace](#)
- Book: [A Clinician's Guide to Gender-Affirming Care](#)
- Course: [Healing From Diet Culture](#)
- Blog: [The Complexity of Eating Disorders in Trans & Nonbinary Community](#)

Other Resources

- [Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Trans](#) by Brynn Tannehill
- Trans Can Work: <https://transcanwork.org>