

Six Tips for Creating Trans Affirming Spaces During Face-To-Face Interactions



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Tip #1 Try and use gender neutral terms whenever possible. Avoid terms like “sir,” “ma’am,” “ladies” or “guys.”

Examples: “Good evening everyone, may I take your drink order?” or “Are you folks ready to order?”

Tip #2 Avoid pronoun use if you are unsure which pronoun to use or use a gender neutral pronoun like “they.”

Examples: “Your customer is ready to order” or “They have checked in already for their surgery.”

Tip #3 If you are unsure about a person’s name or pronoun, politely ask.

Examples: “How may I address you?” or “Which name would you like us to use?”

Tip #4 If names do not match records, find a private place to respectfully ask about the discrepancy.

Examples: “Might your chart be under a different name?” or “Do you have a different name on your driver’s license?”

Tip #5 If you make a mistake, politely apologize and consider ways that you and others might avoid the mistake in the future.

Examples: “Please forgive me. I did not mean to be disrespectful” or “Please excuse my mistake. I will make a note of that in your chart.”

Tip #6 Share the limitations of your systems with trans individuals.

Examples: “We will use your actual name here at the clinic, but I do need to let you know that, at least for now, we must enter your legal name in our system.”

Bonus Tip and Fun Fact: Be respectful of everyone’s pronouns, even if it feels grammatically odd to you. Did you know that the 2nd definition of the word “they” in the Oxford English Dictionary is: “Used to refer to a person of unspecified gender”? Ex: “Ask a friend if they could help.”

* This flier was adapted from “Best Practices for a Transgender-Affirming Environment” created by the National LGBT Health Education Center

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