Herefordshire Board Gamers

Here for Games Knowledge

Gender Inclusive Language

Herefordshire Board Gamers
April 2024

www.herefor.games @herefordbgamers

Why

- Everyone deserves a space they can feel safe and belong.
- We want our sessions to be inclusive, welcoming and fun for all.
- We may make assumptions and may not realise the impact what we say or do may have on others
- We started Herefordshire Board Gamers to be an inclusive space for all and we can do better, this is why this we are taking active steps to raise awareness and address the issue.

- This guide gives some small actions we can all make which could make a dramatic improvement to some other people's enjoyment

Important

- This is a massive, complex and incredibly important topic.
- It is nuanced and there isn’t one right answer
- It is about learning, improving and doing our best with the right intentions.
- This is a very high level introduction and we encourage you read around the topic or discuss it with us
- Gender Inclusive language is not only about trans or non-binary folks it’s about everyone and not being male centric

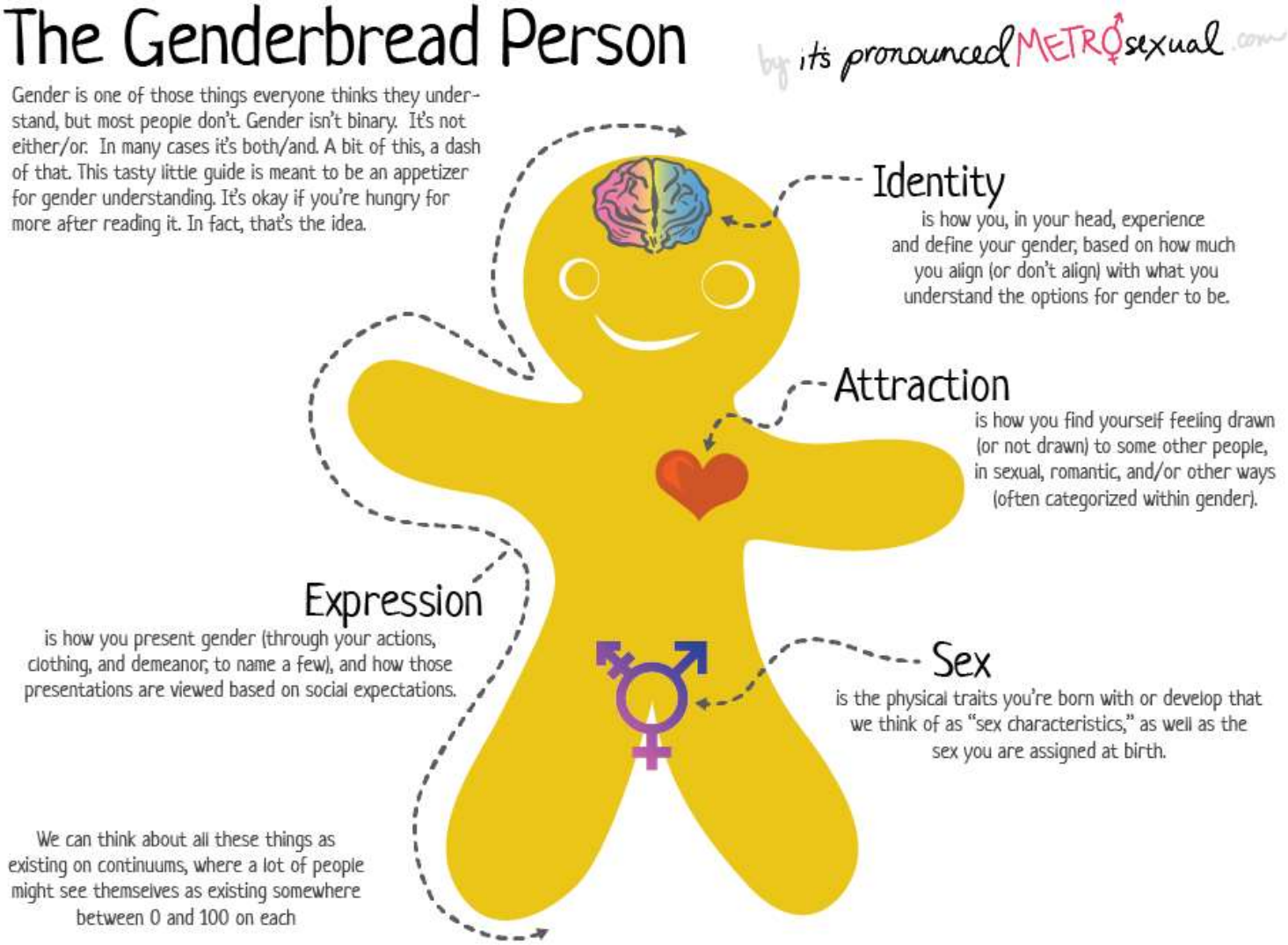
What do we mean by ‘gender inclusive’?

"Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias."

United Nations

What do we mean by gender?

www.genderbread.org



Herefordshire Board Gamers

Assumptions based on gender identity

Herefordshire Board Gamers

Some examples: How many have you seen?

- Assuming someone feminine wants to play a cooperative / non violent or nature themed game.

- In a mixed gaming group approaching speaking to the 'male' for information about the game

- Talking over someone or assuming they don’t have game knowledge

Try to avoid making assumptions based on gender identity

They; it’s singular and always has been

Herefordshire Board Gamers

Build the ‘they’ habit (as a generic singular pronoun). Build this into your vocabulary. Remove he or she/ his or her, unless you are 100% sure of their pronouns (because they have told you).

Try imagining you've found a lost textbook and you're looking for its owner.

You want to return the textbook to THEM so THEY can finish THEIR homework

Lots of other examples
The other driver cut me off. THEY were going too fast.

Share your pronoun- normalise it

Herefordshire Board Gamers

When introducing yourself share your pronoun,

Especially in longer social games when folks will be addressing or talking to or about each other. For example Blood on the Clock Tower.

It’s great allyship

- Normalises it
- Signals this is a safe space

Don’t say ‘preferred pronouns’ – just pronouns.

Don’t say ‘preferred pronouns’ – just pronouns.

Preferred implies it’s optional.

How to correct

Accidental misgendering / wrong pronouns

Politely interrupt- including doing it on behalf of someone (if you know they want that)

Calling out 'joke pronouns’

"Pronouns may not be important to you but for many they are, so we use them respectfully to make everyone feel welcome and included"

How to be corrected

Herefordshire Board Gamers

Just say thank you and carry on. That's all!

Don't over explain.
Don't get defensive.
Don't over apologise.

This can put pressure on people to make you feel better or make them feel like a burden.

Next time
Try using the correct pronouns intentionally in the next conversation or practice in your head.

Curious and want to know more?

Herefordshire Board Gamers

If you want to ask about pronouns imagine you are asking about a nick name.

Would you stop an official meeting to ask why someone uses Alex and not Alexander.

If the setting is right and you know the person well enough ask.

Most people will be willing to share if you ask nicely but also please respect privacy and accept a no.

https://www.instagram.com/tai.draws

Privacy and boundaries

Herefordshire Board Gamers

Be aware if you have met someone in a private or safe space where they have felt comfortable they may present differently in public.

Respect their privacy. They may not be out for the safety or other personal reasons.

Don't pressure others to disclose their pronouns if they don't wish to do.

The practical bit – swap gendered for neutral language

- Gents
- Fellas
- Guys
- Lads
- Dudes
- Bro
- Bruh
- Ladies and gents
- Sweetheart / Love
- Darling / Young Lady / Young Man

- Folks
- Folx
- Team
- Friends
- Everyone
- All
- Y'all
- [insert positive adjective] people
- Mate
- Peeps

The practical bit – pronouns & gender identity

1. Avoid making assumptions about gender identity, based on gender expression.

2. Build the ‘they’ habit (as a generic singular pronoun). Build this into your vocabulary. Remove he or she/ his or her, unless you are 100% sure of their pronouns (because they have told you).

3. Don’t say ‘preferred pronouns’ – just pronouns.

4. Avoid all gendered language - ‘gents’, ‘lads’, ‘ladies’, ‘guys’, ‘mr’, ‘mrs’, nothing good ever comes of gendered language (it could be wrong, it may exclude, it may patronize… just remove it from your vocab). Instead, start building in gender neutral terms –team; folks; ya’ll; friends…

5. Disclose your pronouns to begin normalising this– at the start of meeting new people, changing your discord name, wear a name / pronoun badge. This makes it easier for others to disclose.

6. Don't pressure others to disclose their pronouns.

What we will do and invite you to join us*

Herefordshire Board Gamers

- Aim to use only gender inclusive language
- Aim to not enforce gender stereotypes in our language or actions
- Include pronouns as part of introductions (especially in large social games)
- Use and respect name badges and pronoun badges
- Use pronouns as part of our names on discord and other online sessions (Where possible)
- Ask if we are not sure (but not demand or pressure)
- Politely correct others where we hear misgendering / incorrect pronouns
- Politely correct others when we hear negative stereotypes
- Not be offended or defensive when we make mistakes
- Listen and improve ourselves
- Enforce our code of conduct

* we have your back and will support you

Signage at all of our events

Herefordshire Board Gamers

Improvements completed for 2023

- Larger print pronoun badges
- Revamped ‘crew / team’ badges.
- Workshops / feedback sessions on diversity and inclusion

Updated Team badge and lanyards

Any questions?

Final thoughts

- Be kind to yourself
- Be kind to others
- Be open to learning
- Be open to others' view points

Please let us know what we can do better?
Share any great resources with us so we can share them

www.herefor.games @herefordbgamers

Further reading

- Can you recommend any good links?

  Cartoon on new pronouns
  Ethan Tai Bossuyt (@tai.draws) • Instagram photos and videos
  (Some content in this presentation was taken from here)