

Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Workspaces

Shannon McKay
Executive Director/Co-founder

9/5/24: Virginia Inclusive Summit



He She Ze 

and We



Educator
Ally
Advocate
Change Maker
Storyteller
Parent of trans youth

Shannon McKay (she/her)
Executive Director & Co-founder



Before we get started

- Please be open minded and be curious.
- Be respectful of the space and folks in it.
- We are all learning together - ask the questions in the language you have.
- Lean in and embrace the discomfort.



Goals of the Day

- Introduce He She Ze and We as a community resource
- Expand knowledge of some foundational concepts
- Discuss ways to create a sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ folks at your workplace



He She Ze and We

Mission: HSZ&W works to support Transgender and Nonbinary people by empowering their families, allies, and communities to create life-saving, inclusive environments.

Education...Support...Advocacy...Community Building

What we do

Provide Education and Support for families with trans and nonbinary loved ones of all ages:

Family Connections: a social program for school age children and their families in multiple regions

12 + Virtual and Live in-person educational support meetings every month!



Ally & Community Education

Your invited to continue learning with us



- Guest Speaker Panel Discussions
 - Open Forum with HSZ&W Staff and Guest Experts
- + Professional Development Training



Sign up for our monthly newsletter



Why is it important to create inclusive, welcoming spaces?

Inclusive spaces help LGBTQ+ people feel a sense of belonging...improving their overall health and wellness.



Transgender Community:

A minority group that faces significantly higher than average rates of emotional and physical abuse, homelessness, and mental health struggles due to the constant onslaught of transphobic rhetoric both from intimate family systems and society at large.



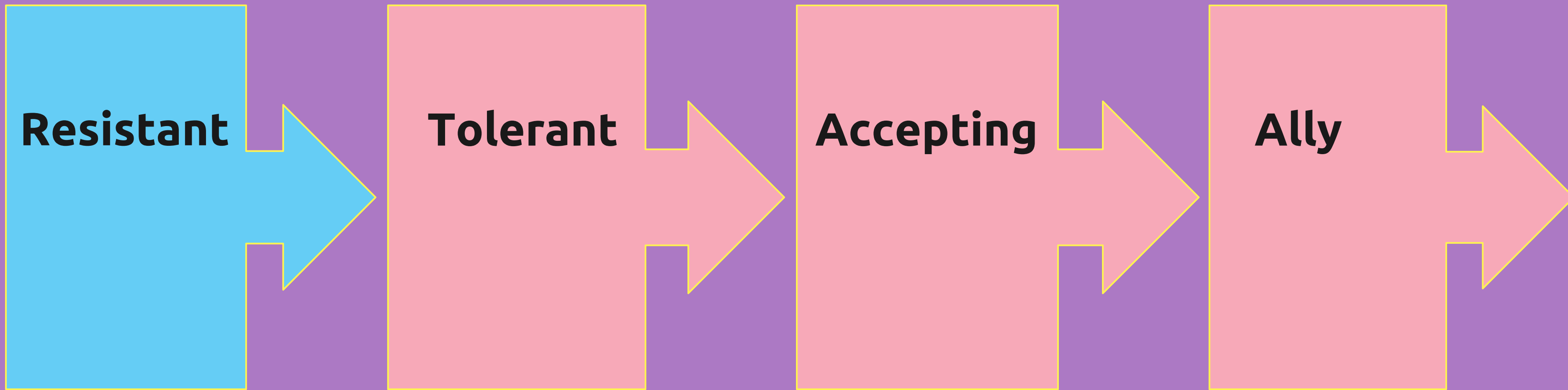
Let's Think about...

Heteronormativity

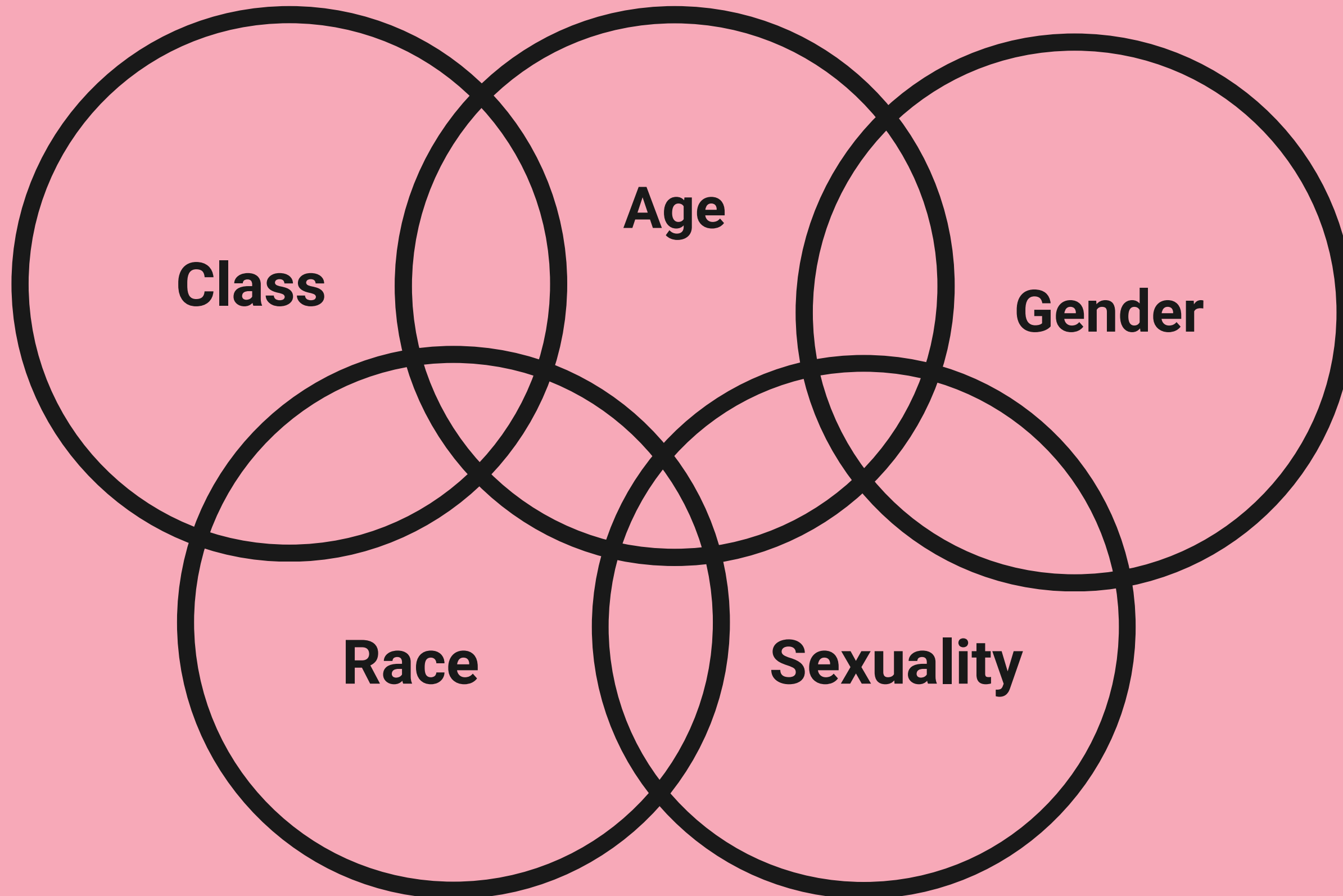
Refers to the belief that heterosexuality is the norm and all individuals are expected to conform to traditional gender roles and relationships.



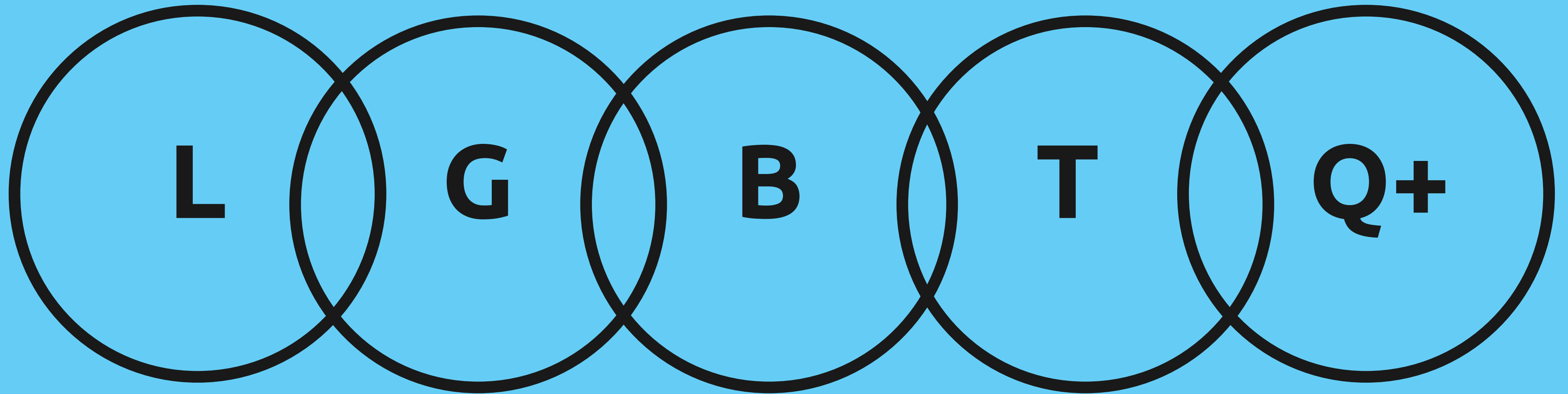
Spectrum of Support



Intersectionality

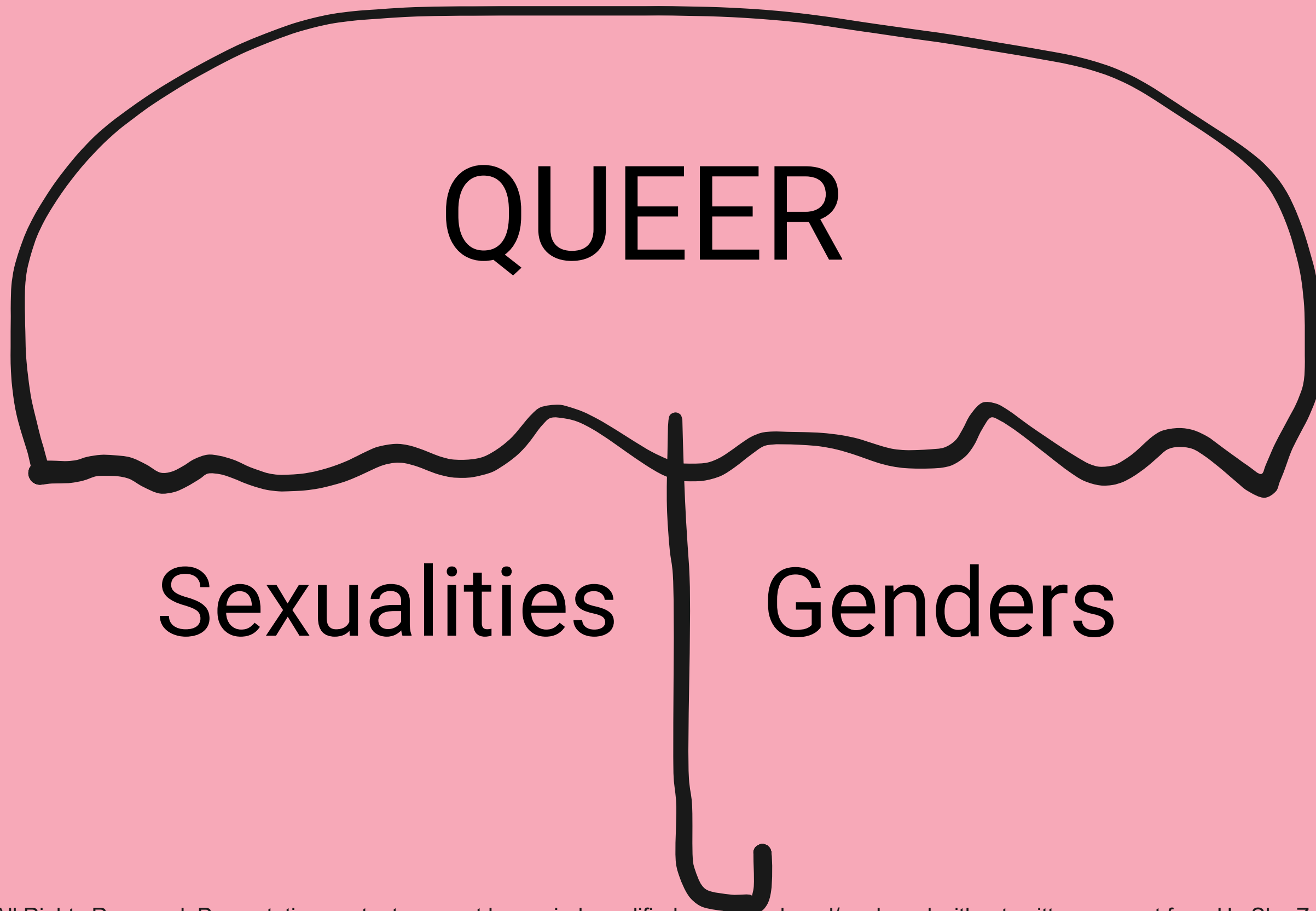


Exploring the Acronym

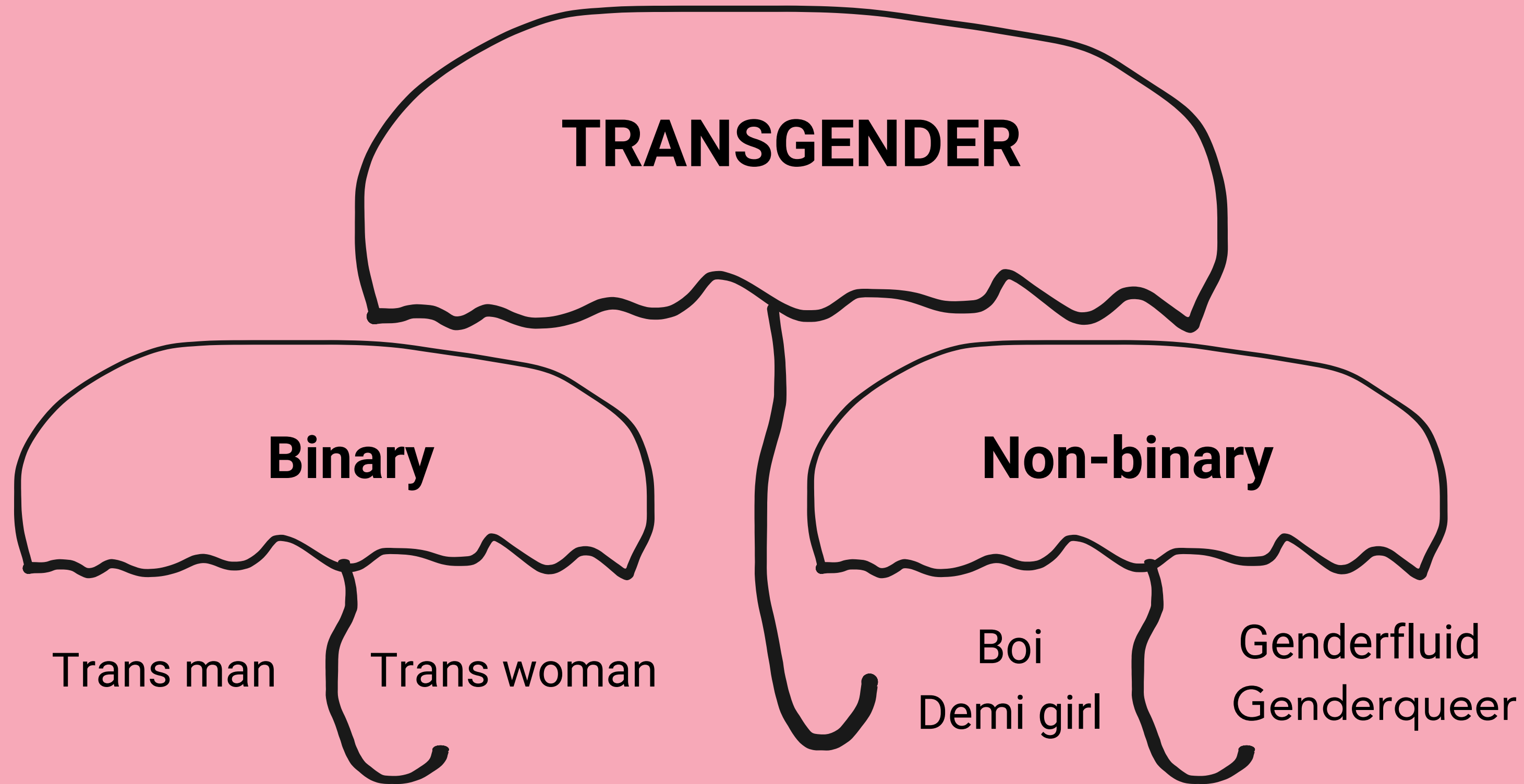


He She Ze 
 
and **We**

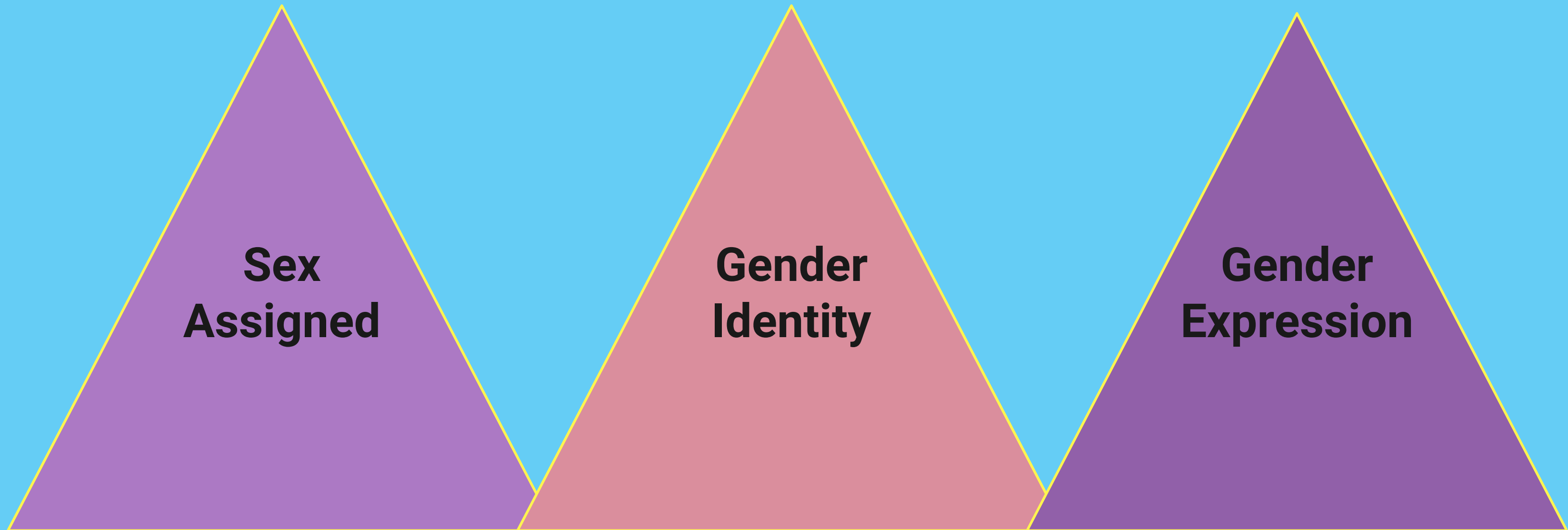
Exploring Identities



Exploring Identities



Foundational Concepts



Sex Assigned at Birth



**Sex
Assigned**

- Based on our **physical bodies**
- Two main categories **male** or **female**.
- Research shows human bodies are on a **spectrum** of diversity.
 - Mirroring animals like seahorses
- **Intersex** - bodies who do not fit into the two dominant categories.

He She Ze 
 **We**
and **We**

Gender Identity



**Gender
Identity**

- **Gender Identity** - internal understanding of ourselves.
- How we feel in heart, mind, and soul
- Man, woman or girl, boy.
- Not same as sex assigned at birth.
- **Socially constructed** - changes across communities and cultures.
- Massive spectrum of gender identities

He She Ze 

and We

Exploring Identities

Cisgender: *cis* means *same*

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

-HRC Foundation



Exploring Identities

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

- Transgender folks can have various sexual identities.
- Trans people can identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

-HRC Foundation



Possibility Models



Zaya Wade
(she/her)



Laverne Cox
(she/her)



Elliot Page
(he/him)

“Community and trans people who have led the way in creating a world where I can actually exist – I wouldn’t be here without those things,” he told our cover story writer [Amos Mac \(@amosmac\)](#). “I think I probably would’ve faded away.” - Elliot Page

He She Ze 
 **and We**

Non-Binary Explored

- Someone whose identity does not fit into the binary.
- Someone who feels they float or exist between boy and girl.
- Someone who feels they are a combination of both man and woman.
- Someone who wants the freedom or exploration to create a new gender experience.



**You do not have to fully understand
someone's identity to respect
them as a human.**



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 **and We**

Possibility Models



Jonathan Van Ness
(they/them)



Fin Affleck
(they/them)



Alok Vaid-Menon
(they/them)

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Gender Expression



**Gender
Expression**

- **Gender Expression** - ways we dress, present, express ourselves.
- Does **not** have to align with gender identity.
- Folks whose gender expression is outside society expectation = **more harassment**
- Gender expression **does not** determine sexual orientation.

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Risk Factors

Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation.

Nearly 2 in 3 LGBTQ young people said that hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ people at school made their mental health a lot worse.

Source: Trevor Project US Survey 2023



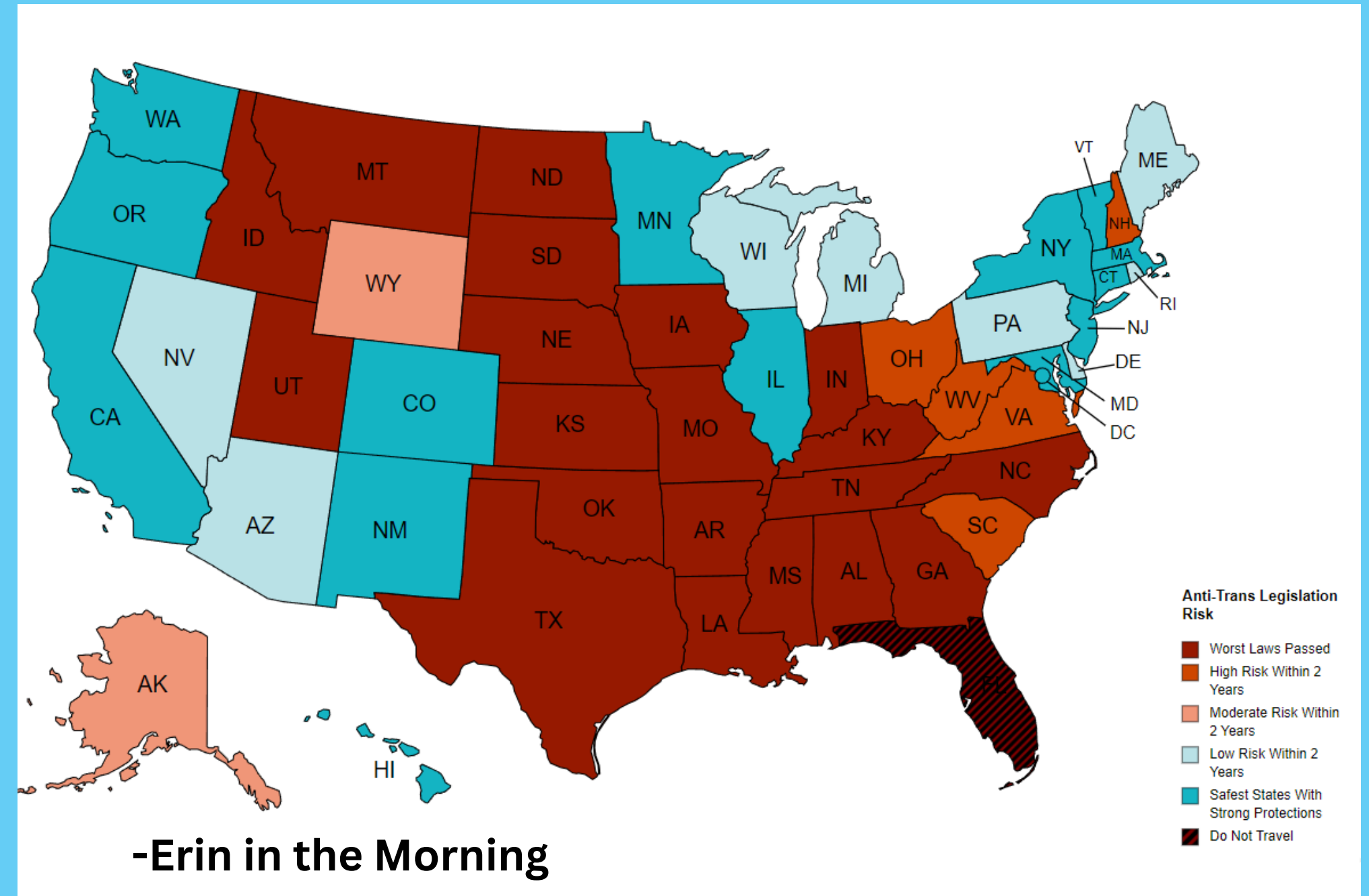
Issues of Safety and Accessibility

Legislation: more than 550 anti LGBTQ bills introduced.

Most were aimed at **trans youth**

Restricting or banning:

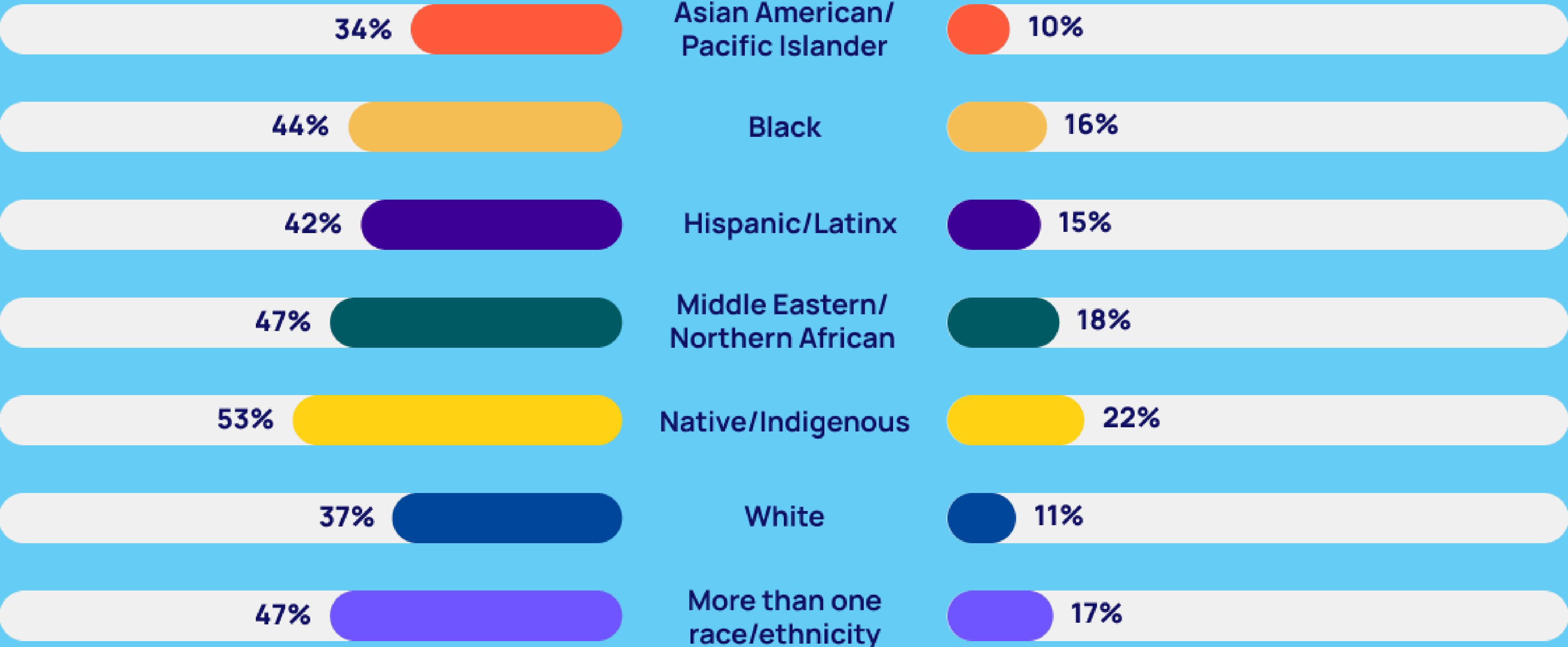
- playing on sports teams
- gender-affirming healthcare
- books with LGBTQ characters
- books with Black History
- public accommodations: bathrooms
- legal document updates



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Considered Suicide in the Past Year

Attempted Suicide in the Past Year



Source: Trevor Project US Survey 2023

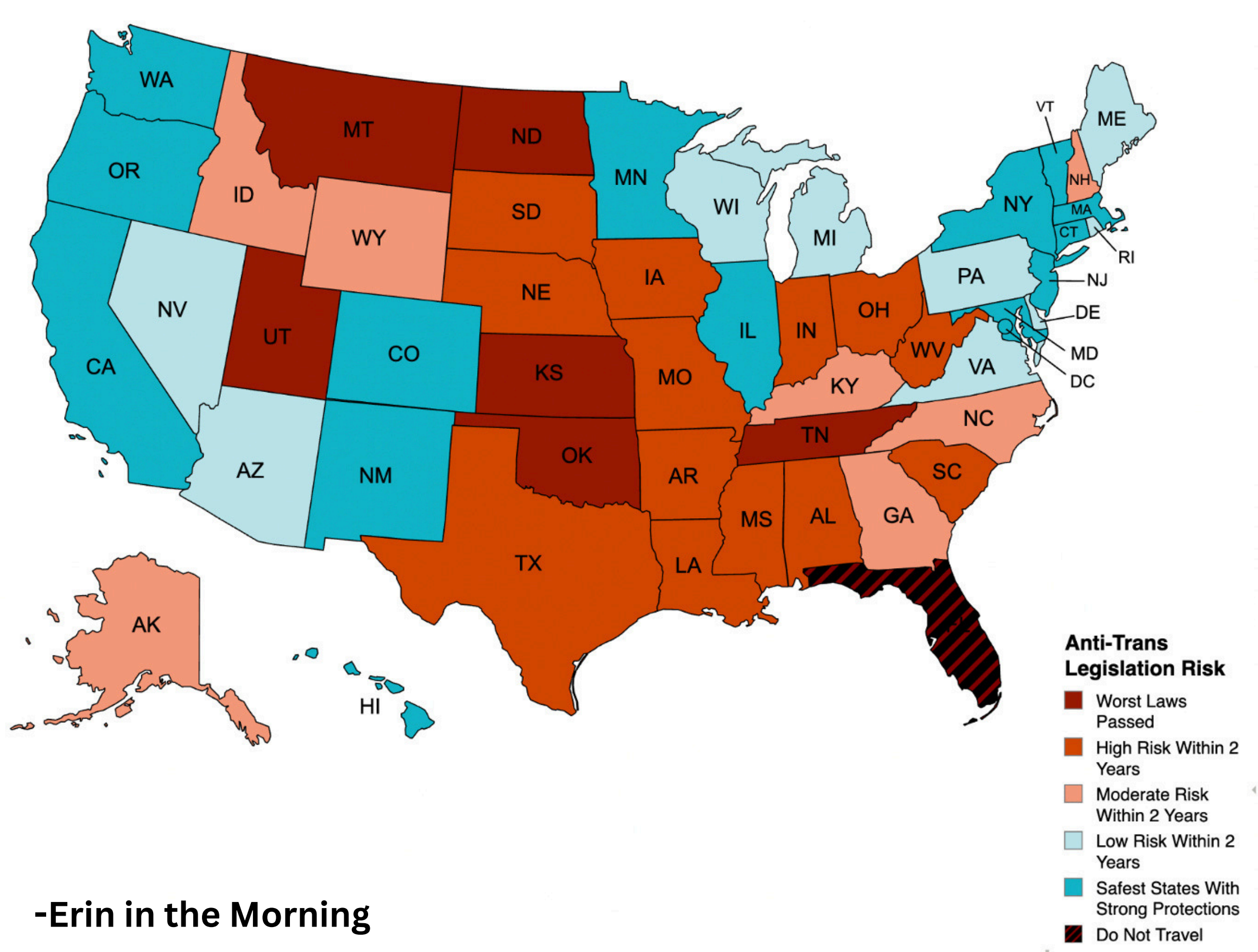


Risk Factors for Adults

- Discrimination at the workplace
- Discrimination when applying for housing and credit
- Discrimination in public spaces
- Lack of legal protection
- Restricted access to gender affirming care
- Restricted access to update legal documents



Adult Trans Legislative Risk Assessment Map



Protective Factors

Parents and families have been shown to be the greatest protective factor for LGBTQ+ youth, specifically trans and nonbinary youth.

A supportive community and workplace can be a protective factor for youth and adults.



Protective Factors

Affirming a trans person's chosen name and pronouns consistently at home, school, work, and in community experience:

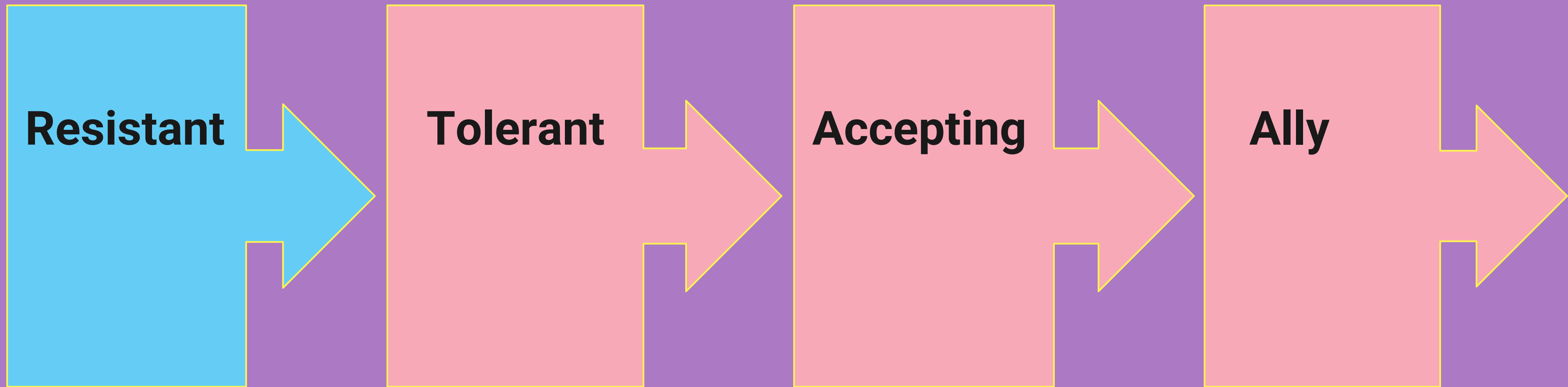
71% fewer symptoms of severe depression

34% decrease in reported thoughts of suicide

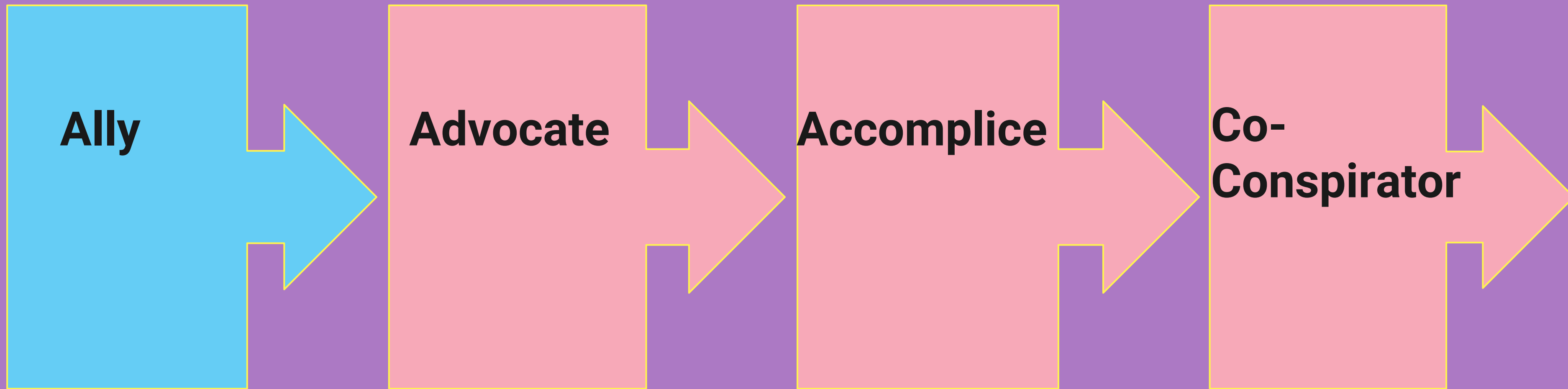
65% decrease in suicidal attempts



Spectrum of Support



Spectrum of Support



Let's Talk about Best Practices



Honor chosen names -

- don't misgender
 - If you do: own it, apologize, move on
- Ask their name and practice until you can say it



Pronouns - they/them; he/him, she/her + more

- Introduce yourself using your pronouns first



Signs Speak Volumes



Allies, let's keep in mind...

→ Don't assume gender -

- pause
- nuanced approach



→ Respect their privacy

- It is their story to share



→ Refrain from asking invasive questions



Let's talk about all of the gendered spaces...



Bathrooms



Locker Rooms



Small actions...Huge Impact



Representation is important

- **Use symbols -**

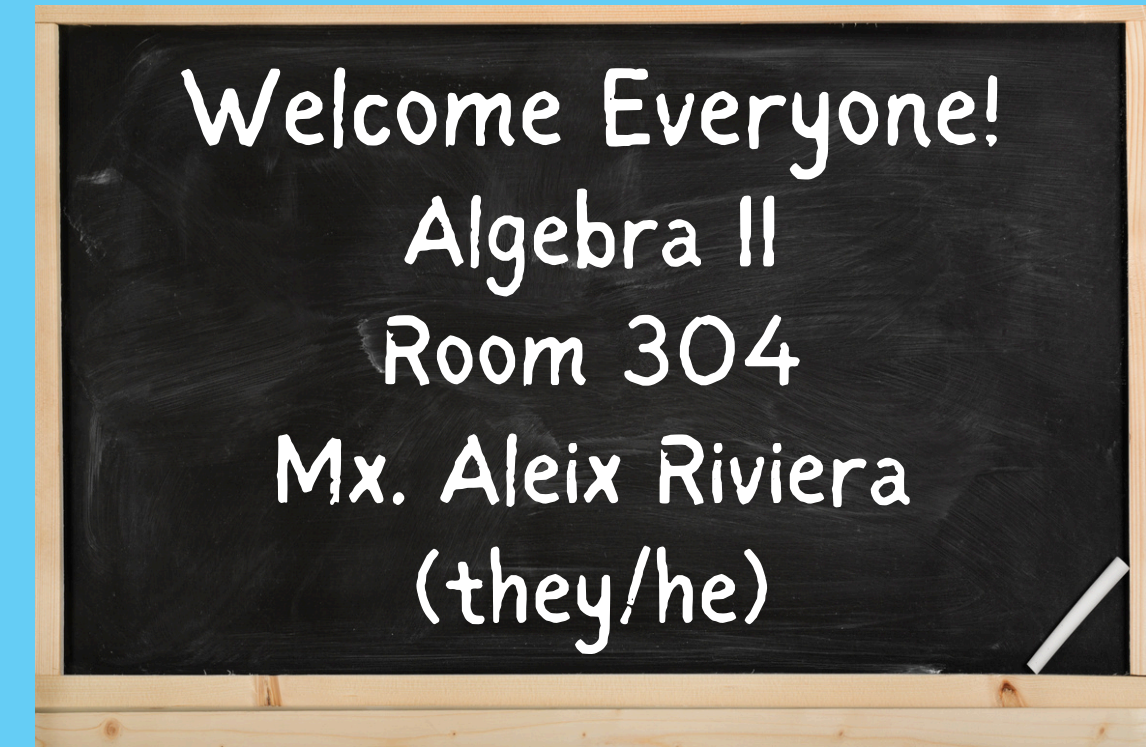
- stickers, flags, pronoun pins



- **Provide books in waiting areas that have LGBTQ+ characters**



Language Matters



Keep it Gender Neutral



Display your own name & pronouns



Use they/them in your writing



Advocate for updated forms and signage



It's never too early...

Start teaching and modeling for children and others

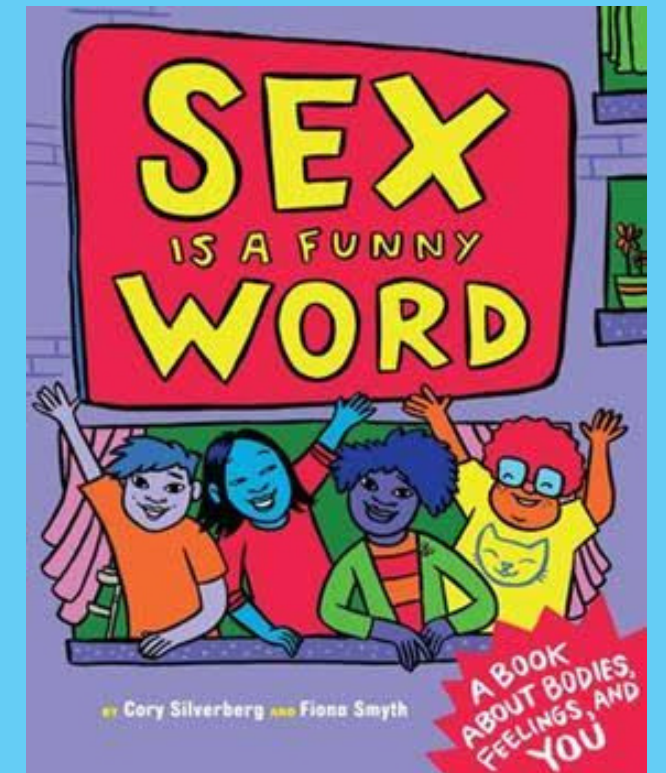
**Treat others the way *THEY*
want to be treated!**

Inclusive Messaging...

➔ Neutral language helps them remain open to all possibilities.

➔ Talk about body parts in a neutral way

➔ **Being Respectful** doesn't mean you have to agree with another. It is a choice!





...Diversity is Beautiful

Trans people have always existed

**Everyone deserves to live
authentically and be treated
with respect & dignity!**

Thank you!

**A friendly reminder that
you don't need to fully
understand the nuances
of gender identity to know
that each individual person
knows who they are better
than you ever will.**

He She Ze 
 **We**
and

Allyship is a verb

What actions can you take?



Visit our Website:



Volunteer and

Donate to local orgs



Let's keep the conversation going, you can reach me directly:

shannon@heshezewe.org

Please scan the QR code to complete a short feedback and interest survey. Thank you!

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