



sparks & honey culture forecast

THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER

BINARY TO BLURRED

“People need to be willing to let go of what they think they know about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman.”

– LAVERNE COX



BINARY TO BLURRED

Language matters

Gender used to be viewed through binary terms: male and female, masculine and feminine. The new language of gender breaks out of that binary system in favor of blurred, fluid identities across a gender spectrum. To be culturally literate now demands knowing how to speak the new language of gender and knowing the difference between terms like sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Transgender and genderqueer people have shifted culture away from the idea of rigid binary genders, and the implications are massive. Almost everything is gendered somehow. How will the worlds of law, politics, media, tech, marketing and advertising, fashion, design, art, architecture, music, beauty, healthcare, and sports change if the categories of man and woman are deconstructed or eliminated altogether?

To be culturally literate means knowing how to speak the new language of gender

This report is a guide through the new language of gender, showing you how to demonstrate that you're an ally of these gender revolutionaries. We pinpoint ways this cultural shift is already impacting culture – through memes, viral videos, trends, products, and cultural signals that indicate that the gender revolution has arrived. And we'll show who's doing it right – and who isn't.



BINARY TO BLURRED

What do we mean by gender?

We're living in an era obsessed with gender. Conversation about transgender people and topics like gender fluidity are part of the air we breathe. Miley Cyrus declared herself gender fluid in 2015. Jaden Smith presented as genderqueer at Coachella wearing a dress with flowers in his hair. Reality television series *I Am Jazz* debuted on TLC, documenting the ups and downs of 15-year-old transgender teen Jazz Jennings, considered one of the youngest LGBTQ spokespeople ever.

But what is gender?

Gender is the way we express that “boyiness” or “girliness” we're assigned at birth, in ways that either conform with gender norms (societal expectations) – or in ways that subvert them.

“Masculine and feminine roles are not biologically fixed, but socially constructed.”

-Judith Butler



BINARY TO BLURRED

Gender is not the sex we're assigned at birth, based on things like genitals and XX or XY chromosomes. Gender is also not sexual orientation, or who you desire sexually. You could be a feminine straight man or a hyper-masculine gay man, a masculine straight woman or a high-femme lesbian who wears makeup, high heels and perfume.

From the time we're born, we're bombarded with cultural messages about how to look and behave as girls or boys. These messages – from parents, school teachers, media – tell us what it means to be a boy or a girl. Boys don't cry. Real men don't wear pink. Women shouldn't swear. Real women have curves.

And unless our gender identity or the way we express it matches those gender norms (how society narrowly defines masculinity and femininity), we might feel insecure in our masculinity or femininity. Gender, in other words, is hard work.

“The real promise of the transgender movement is not the freedom to figure out ways to become more fully male or fully female, but rather freedom from gender entirely.”

–Shannon Gilreath



LGBTQuestioning (and sometimes I)



BINARY TO BLURRED

Questioning gender

The “Q” in LGBTQI can stand for “queer”, an umbrella term for some or all of the LGBTI categories (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex). It can also stand for “questioning”, meaning that a person is still undecided about which category, or categories, they identify with.

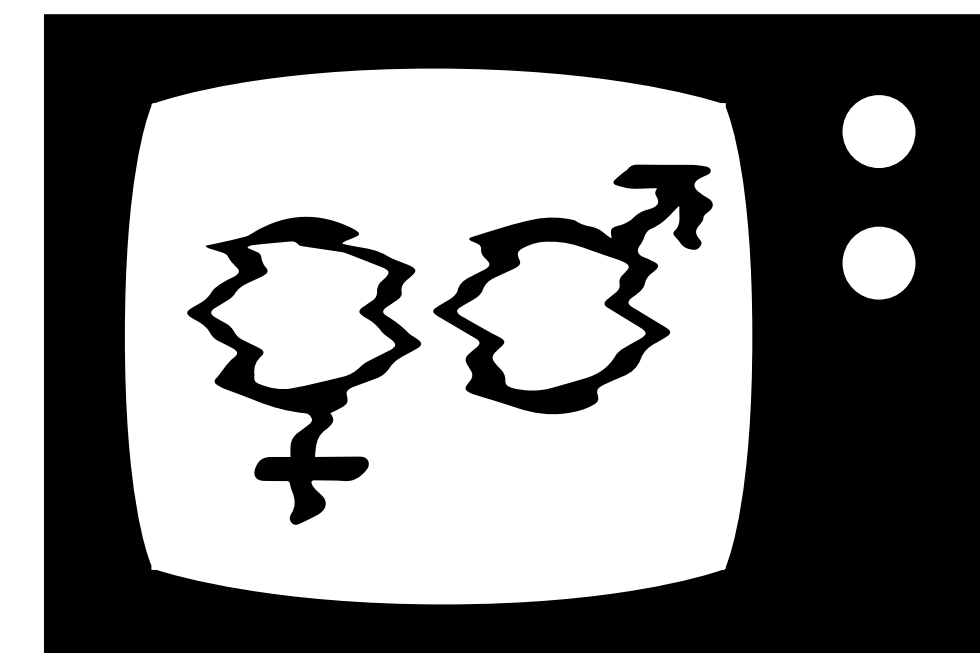
The consciousness and dialogue about gender identity has landed squarely in mainstream pop culture as Laverne Cox, Caitlyn Jenner, Lily Rose Depp, and Ruby Rose spark new conversations in the media and at home.

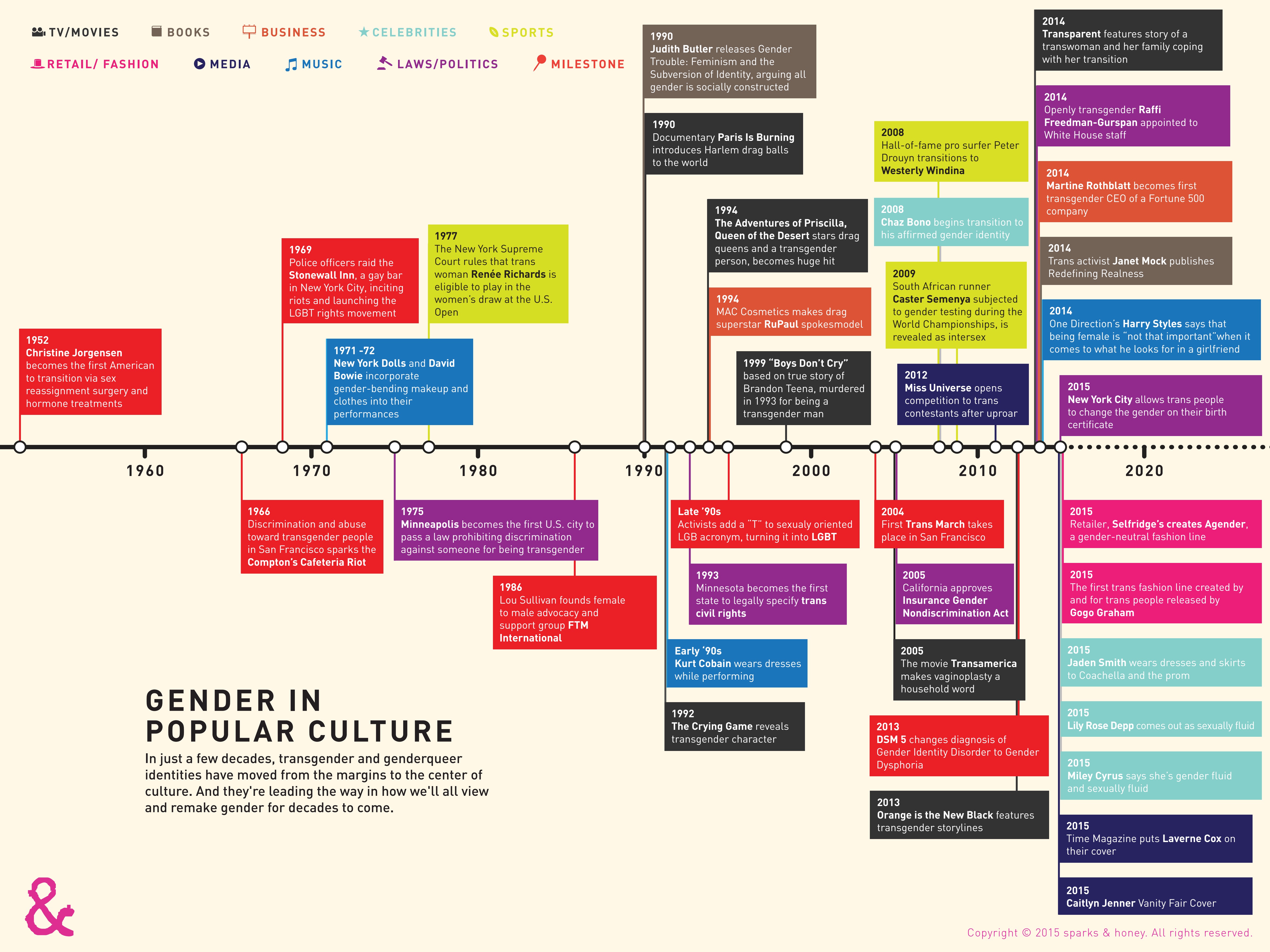
The internet has exploded with discussions about a dizzying and ever-expanding list of gender identities beyond men and women, including agender, bigender and gender fluid. Teenagers on Tumblr are using terms formerly heard only in academic settings – like gender identity, cisgender, and gender norms.

People have a choice in their gender identity. The ability to decide which gender identity you have, how you choose to express it, or whether you want to even decide in the first place, is unprecedented.

17

MAJOR AWARDS FOR MEDIA
FOCUSING ON TRANSGENDER
INDIVIDUALS, 2014-15





GENDER IN POPULAR CULTURE

In just a few decades, transgender and genderqueer identities have moved from the margins to the center of culture. And they're leading the way in how we'll all view and remake gender for decades to come.



**BINARY TO BLURRED****Be an ally**

An ally is someone who supports people who are transgender or gender nonconforming, and whose efforts are intended to become a model for the culture at large. Allies know that language shapes the way we view gender, so they're careful to use someone's preferred gender pronouns and to avoid saying things like "sex change" for "transition" or "born a boy" for "assigned male at birth."

An ally also knows not to police someone's gender. They're not going to try to figure out what gender someone is, judge them for how they look, or keep them from the locker room or bathroom of their choice. And a cisgender ally (see p. 18) knows their privilege in this world and understands that, unlike someone who is transgender, they move through the world with relative ease.

An ally knows not to police someone's gender

Jill Soloway, who wrote the award-winning Amazon comedy-drama *Transparent*, is an ally. The series is based on her parent Carrie, who told her family she was transgender. When Soloway won an Emmy for Outstanding Director For a Comedy Series, she used her platform to advocate on behalf of trans people and urged them to vote for a trans equality bill. She was also careful about using her parent's post-transition name, and shared with the audience her new way of calling out Carrie: "Mapa", a mashup of mama and papa.



BINARY TO BLURRED

Piers Morgan, the English talk show host with progressive leanings, although well-intentioned, balked at having to learn the new language of gender. Morgan invited trans activist Janet Mock, author of *Redefining Realness*, to be a guest on his show. He promoted the show with sensationalized tweets that repeatedly described Mock as “born a boy” and asked straight male viewers how they’d feel if someone they dated “was formerly a man”.

Mock was rightfully offended. But rather than try to understand why the language he used about her was as important as his intent to be an ally, Morgan complained that she wasn’t grateful for the spotlight and was trying to create controversy.

“My Mapa could, tomorrow, go and try to find an apartment and in 32 states, it would be legal for the landlord to look her in the eye and say ‘we don’t rent to trans people.’”

-Jill Soloway





**BINARY TO BLURRED**

Talking about gender

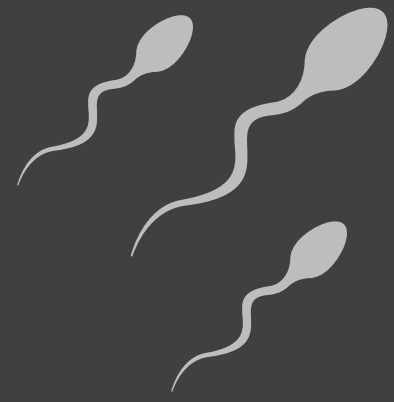
Like gender, the way we talk about it is evolving, making it a challenge to have a conversation without feeling like you're saying the wrong thing.

People are struggling to get the language right, to refer to a transgender person with their preferred gender pronouns, or to not “dead name” them (see p. 25). And even among trans and genderqueer people, there is no clear consensus about what the appropriate terminology is or isn't.

The new language of gender is a living language, because the people it describes are living it and defining it as they go. Learning it may feel difficult and awkward at first, and you're bound to make mistakes. But to be culturally literate and relevant now demands speaking the new language of gender – even if it's with a distinct, cisgender accent.

The following terms will help you navigate *The New Language of Gender*. They're the most current, charged, and tuned-in words that will get you situated in the new landscape.

These are the most current, charged, and tuned-in words that will get you situated in the new landscape



Embryo Stage



Monosomy: Turner syndrome (45,X)
 Trisomy: Klinefelter syndrome (47,XXY) 48,XXYY
 48,XXXY 49,XXXYY 49,XXXXY
 Triple X syndrome (47,XXX) 48,XXXX 49,XXXXX
 47,XYY 48,XYYY 49,XYYYY

You're assigned a sex

BOY

GIRL

Intersex



Do you identify with your assigned gender?



NO → TRANSGENDER
 NOT EXACTLY → GENDERQUEER
 YES → CISGENDER

What gender do you identify with?



NO GENDER → AGENDER
 NOT SURE → GENDER QUESTIONING
 IT DEPENDS → GENDER FLUID
 BOTH → BIGENDER

Who are you sexually attracted to?



Are you → FEMALE → Lesbian, High Femme, Low Femme, Soft Butch, Butch, Boi
 Are you → MALE → Gay, Masc, Fem

SAME SEX → BISEXUAL
 OPPOSITE SEX → BISEXUAL
 BOTH SEXES → BISEXUAL
 QUEER → NOT STRAIGHT, UNSPECIFIED
 NOT SURE → QUESTIONING
 NO ONE → ASEXUAL

GENETICS AND BIOLOGICAL SPECTRUM
 Anatomical sex involves both what's visible (outer genitals) and what's only visible through blood work (sex chromosomes), surgery or MRIs (internal sex glands and organs). We still associate biological sex with genitals, although that's only part of the story.

BINARY SEX
 A doctor assigns us a sex when we are born. Even the one in 1,000 intersex children who are born are often assigned a sex regardless of the signs their bodies aren't unambiguously male or female.

GENDER SPECTRUM
 People no longer have to identify as men or women if those categories don't suit them. Cisgender and transgender people tend to have one gender identity, male or female, while broader categories like genderqueer or gender nonconforming fall somewhere on a spectrum.

SEXUALITY SPECTRUM
 Sexual orientation is often confused with gender. Separate, though interrelated, sex and gender are uniquely complex ways in which we identify ourselves and our desires.

THE JOURNEY TO GENDER

▲ ASSIGNED
 ▼ AFFIRMED

Each of us is assigned a sex at birth, and at some point in our lives we decide that we're either comfortable or not comfortable in our assigned gender. For cisgender people, assigned sex and gender identity more or less align, but for transgender and genderqueer people, the road to affirming gender is trickier.

Binary



THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER

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Welcome to the world, we've assigned you a gender





BINARY

Assigned

A person is not born male or female, but rather assigned male or female at birth, usually by a doctor who looks at the child's body for a vagina or penis. So from the moment we're born, our bodies are interpreted and labeled with a specific, culturally loaded meaning: boy or girl.

If a baby's genitalia are ambiguous, as they are in the case of some intersex babies, the doctor might assign a gender anyway and even surgically eliminate the source of the confusion (for example, testes in the case of a baby who otherwise looks female). Sometimes, an intersex baby can look male from outer genitalia, but also have female internal reproductive organs, like one ovary and a shortened uterus.

In 2013, Germany became one of the first

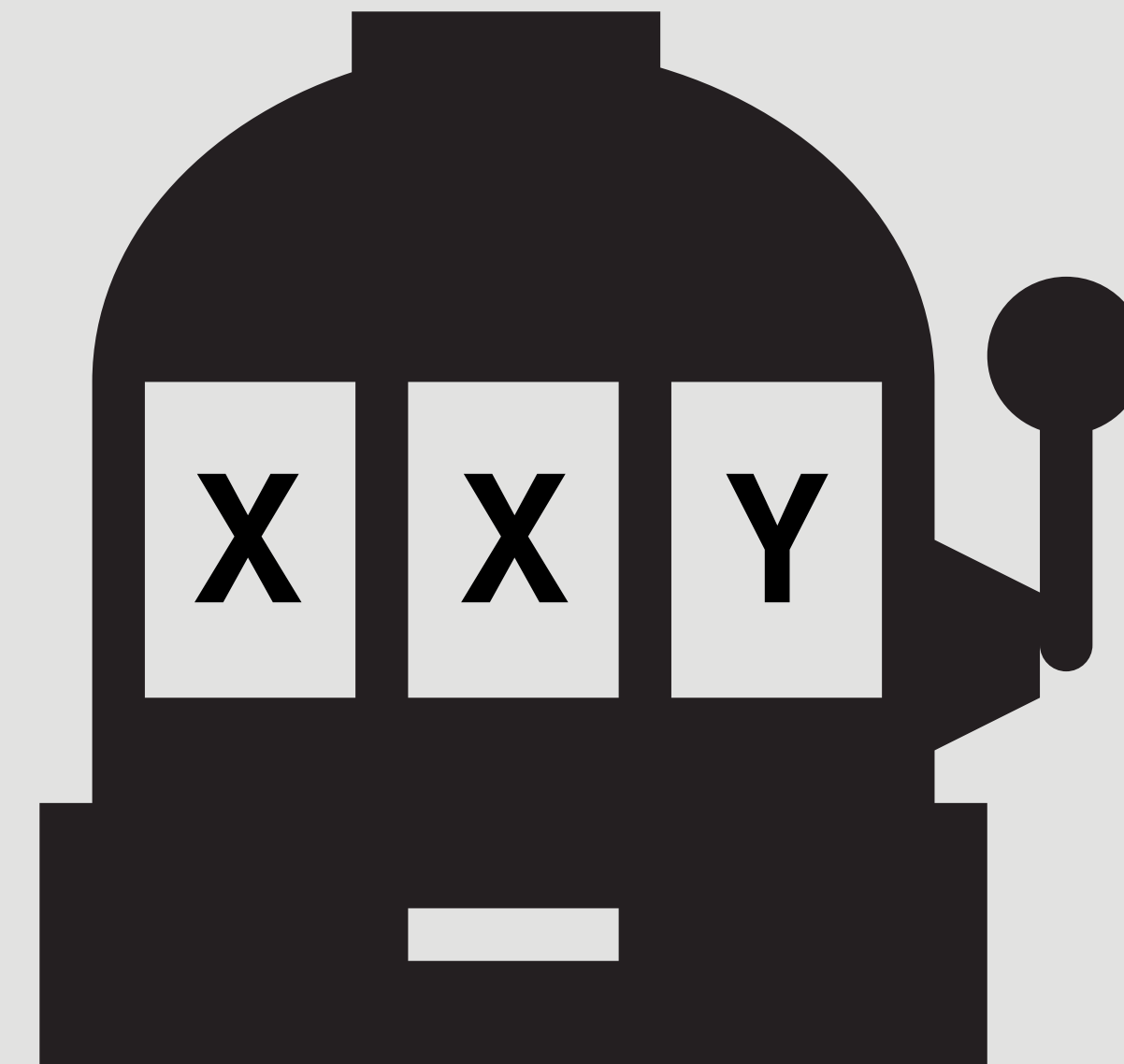
From the moment we're born, our bodies are interpreted and assigned culturally loaded labels

countries in the world to allow the parents of intersex babies to register them with an "X" rather than being forced to choose male or female. Previously, German parents had a week to decide if their babies were male or female

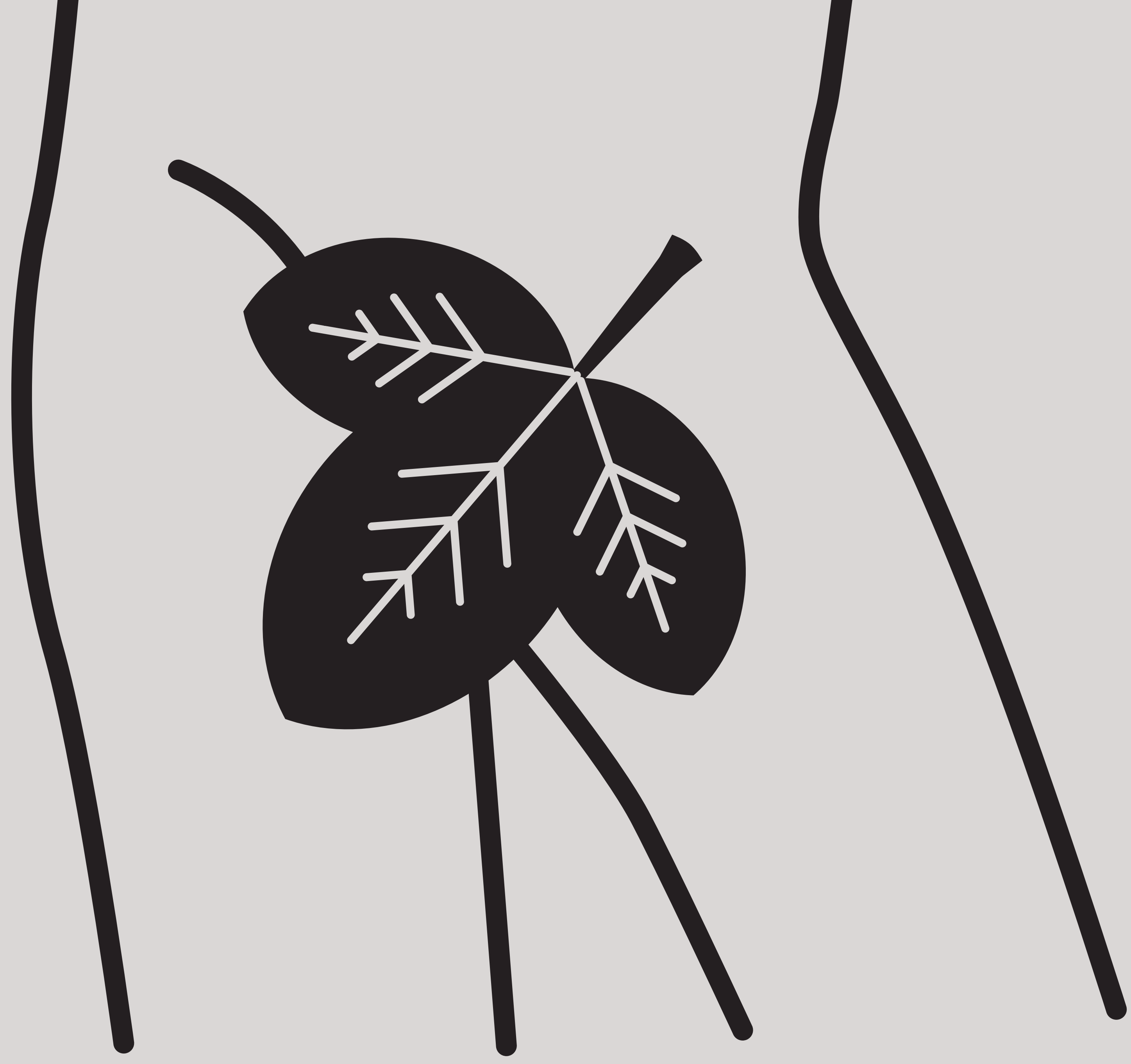
BINARY

before registering them. Forced operations, such as of ambiguous genitalia, were some of the tragic outcomes of that pressure. Now, German children who are intersex can decide at a future time whether they feel that their gender identity is male or female.

This mania for maintaining a gender binary doesn't exist in all cultures. In native Hawaiian culture, for example, Māhū are people who are born “in the middle” who express both kāne (male) and wahine (female) spirits. Māhū were once considered sacred healers, and those now “in the middle” are working to reclaim its honored place.



1 IN 1,000 BIRTHS RECEIVE
SURGERY TO “NORMALIZE”
GENITAL APPEARANCE



Gender isn't genitals and neither is sex





BINARY

Sex

Nature is often used as a foundation against sexual and gender diversity. Two sexes are biologically programmed to be expressed in a certain way, and anything deviating from that is named an unnatural perversion.

These arguments were also used to deny women rights until the “biology is not destiny” rallying cry of the feminist movement questioned the validity of dictating social norms based on a person’s anatomy.

Before science had better tools to understand how sexual difference is expressed in bodies, a person’s sex was assigned solely based on the presence of genitalia. But “sex”, or biological gender, can be much more complex (as intersex people can attest). It includes chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical differences that are internal and hence invisible without blood work, surgery, or MRIs.

You can’t always just look at someone – even naked – to determine their “true sex.” And, although we know that gender isn’t genitals, sex isn’t only genitals either.

Sex, in other words, is becoming a dubious foundation on which to stake any claims, much less ones that deny people the freedom to define themselves.

**You can’t always
just look at
someone naked
to determine
their “true sex”**



Intersex: what was that about a binary?





BINARY

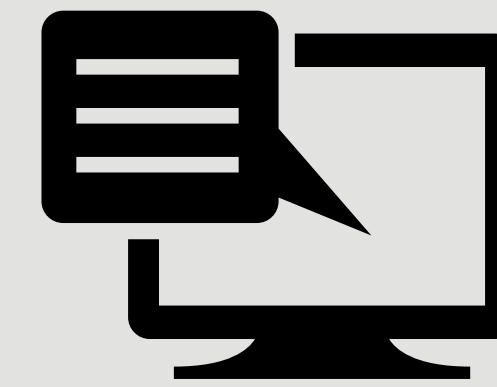
Intersex

The “I” for “intersex” is sometimes included at the end of the LGBTQI acronym and sometimes left out. Although intersex isn’t a third gender or a sexual orientation, intersex people challenge the binary of sex and gender.

An intersex person is born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that aren’t considered “standard” for male or female. Their sexual anatomies lie on a spectrum, which, according to the binary logic of gender, is seen as anomalous rather than one of many ways a body can be.

Some intersex girls might look conventionally female and later identify as women, but have a Y chromosome, no ovaries, or menstrual cycle. Intersex boys might look conventionally male but have internal testes that never descend and

67%



INTERSEX IS FUELING THE MOST
ONLINE CHATTER AROUND SEX
AND GENDER

XXY chromosomes; hormone therapy may be a necessity later if they want to continue looking like conventional men.

Until recently, doctors would assign intersex people a gender when they were babies or children and would even perform unnecessary surgery to remove internal testes in intersex girls or penises from the bodies of intersex boys to make their bodies conform to a binary – denying the person the right to choose later.

“Nature doesn’t decide where the category of ‘male’ ends and the category of ‘intersex’ begins, or where the category of ‘intersex’ ends and the category of ‘female’ begins. Humans decide.”

- INTERSEX SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA





Due to ignorance about intersex conditions, people aren't always treated with respect. South African runner Caster Semenya was accused of being a man while competing in the women's division of the 2009 World Championships and forced to take a "gender test", which revealed that she was intersex. Although she's still running now in the women's division, she described the public scrutiny at the time as intense and humiliating.

“Intersex people don't need to be fixed. There's nothing wrong with them.”

-The Interface Project

Gender Spectrum



THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER

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GENDER SPECTRUM

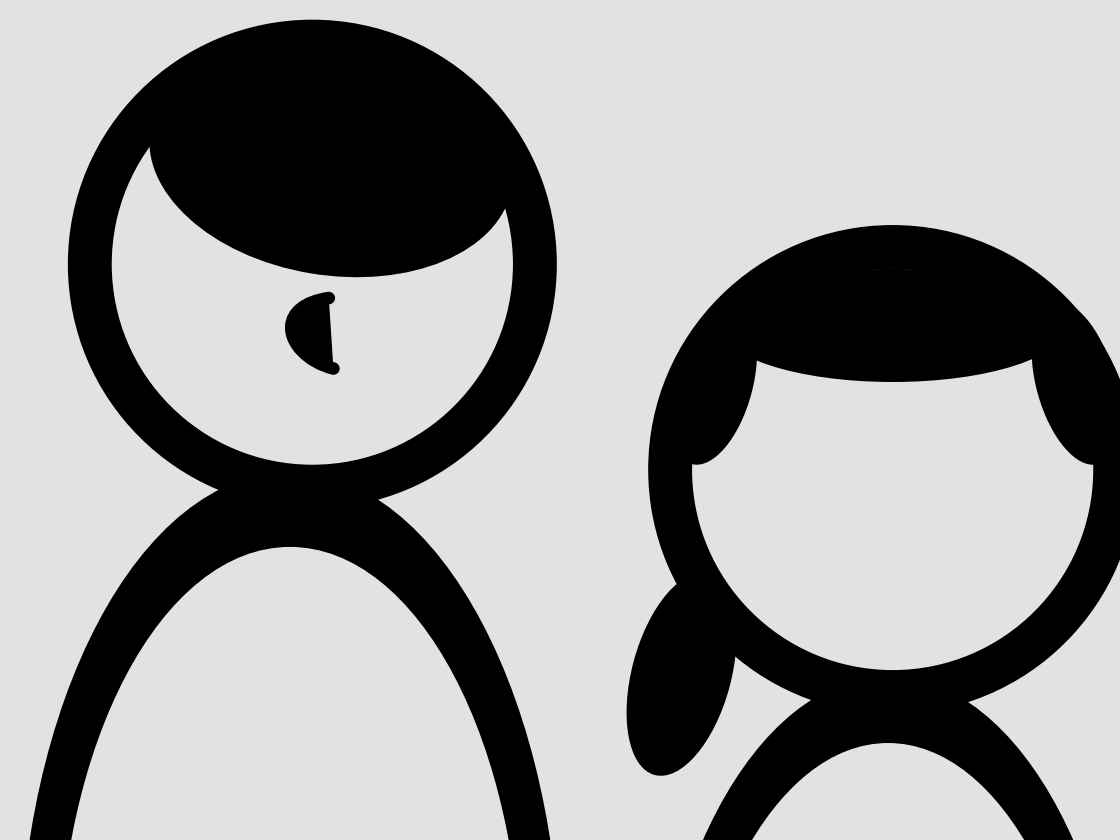
Gender Identity

Gender identity is a person's experience of themselves as one gender, a blend of genders, or no gender. Experts say that children begin to develop a sense of what gender is, and what their gender is, starting at around 18 - 24 months. For people whose gender identities don't align with their assigned gender, they can change the way they dress, what they're called, and even their preferred pronouns. They can also transition not only in presentation, but also through hormone replacement therapy and sex-reassignment or gender reassignment surgery.

Gender identity is not the same as gender or gender expression. For example, a gay, feminine-presenting man may still have a solid gender identity as male. A very masculine-presenting lesbian may have a solid gender identity as female.

Until the 1990s, gender identity was not a part of the gay rights movement LBG acronym, which included only sexuality-related terms: lesbian, gay, and bisexual. During that time, a "T" was added, expanding the movement to include transgender identity.

Children develop a sense of their gender identity from 18 months to 3 years





Who will you present as today?



GENDER SPECTRUM

Presents

Every day, people choose what kind of clothes and shoes they wear, and what image they want to project. It's usually a gendered image, and one that conforms to their gender identity. More than likely, it conforms to gender norms.

The verb "to present" means how someone chooses to express their gender identity through clothes, hairstyles, or behavior. It's typically used by transgender and genderqueer people to describe which gender they're expressing. Gender is a performance and a presentation for everyone – cisgender and transgender alike.

For Rae Tuteru, blogger for *The Handsome Butch*, presenting as a butch woman was difficult without the right suit. But, like many genderqueer people, Rae couldn't find a suit that fit. When she finally had one tailored

Every day, people choose what kind of clothes and shoes they wear, and what image they want to project

for her body, something clicked. Tuteru was finally able to present herself in the way she saw herself: as a handsome butch woman.

Seeing a niche for other people like her, she's now the LGBTQ liaison for suitmaker Bindle & Keep. The collaboration introduces masculine-presenting women, gender queers,

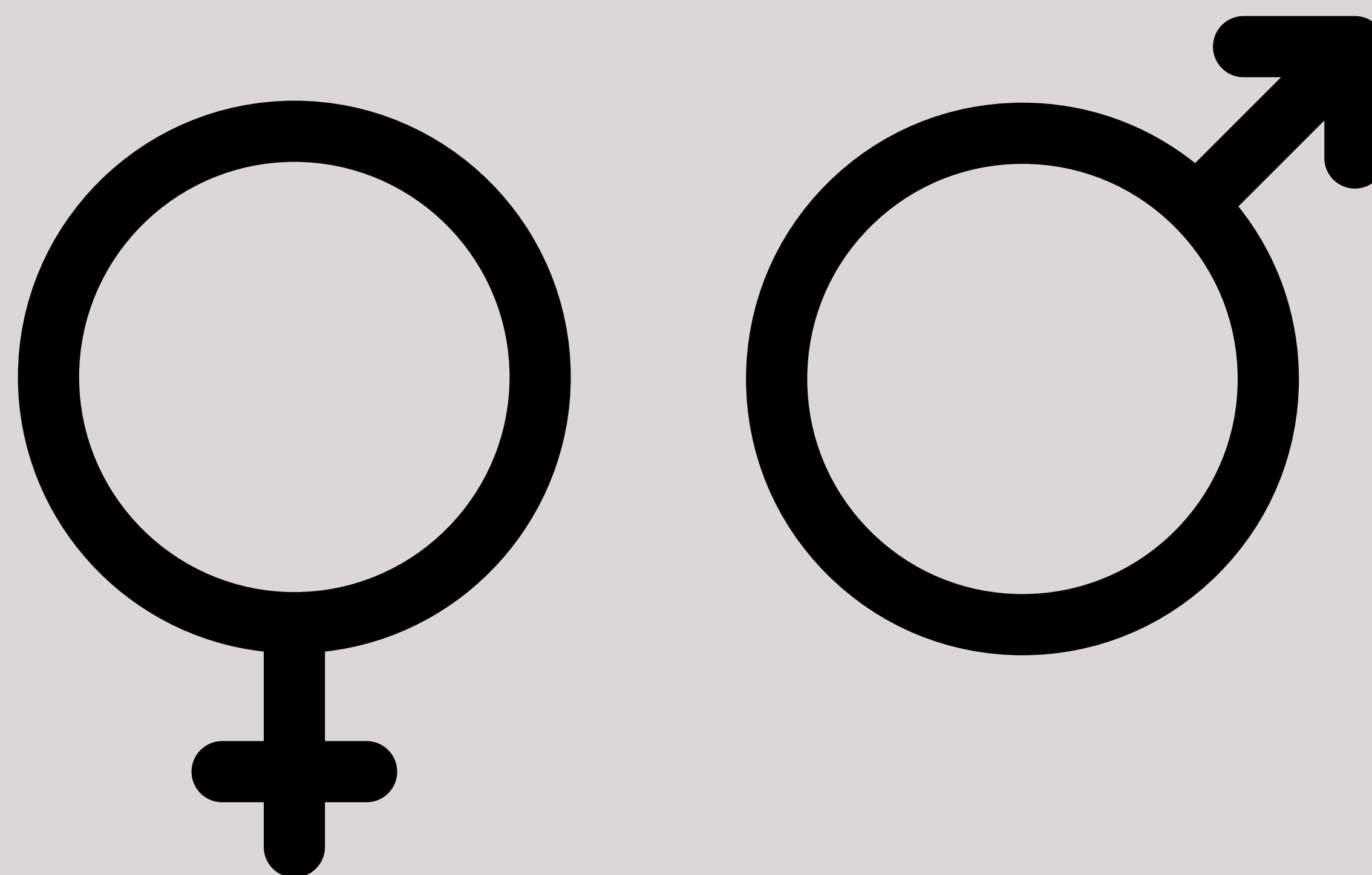


and transgender men to the joys of clothes that help them present their gender.

But there are all sorts of ways to “present” as a cisgender male, too. As jocks, preps, hipsters, metrosexual, etc. When we see men with their hair in “man buns” – so prevalent that there’s an Instagram account called Man Buns of Disneyland – or “man braids”, they’re presenting as men who are comfortable with slightly more feminine styling.

“Having something custom made reintroduced me to my body. I think people see me in a way that aligns with how I see myself.”

-Rae Tutera, The Handsome Butch



Odds are, you'll be hearing cisgender a lot more frequently



GENDER SPECTRUM

Cisgender

When a cisgender person hears the category “cisgender,” they’re probably surprised to be categorized in the first place. Before the transgender tipping point brought transgender and genderqueer terminology into the mainstream, “cisgender” was generally used only among those in the community or in university women’s studies or gender studies departments.

So what is it? Cisgender means that your gender identity aligns with the gender you were assigned at birth. Heterosexual is to homosexual as cisgender is to transgender, which means that as new as it might sound to some ears, you’ll probably be hearing “cisgender” a lot more often.

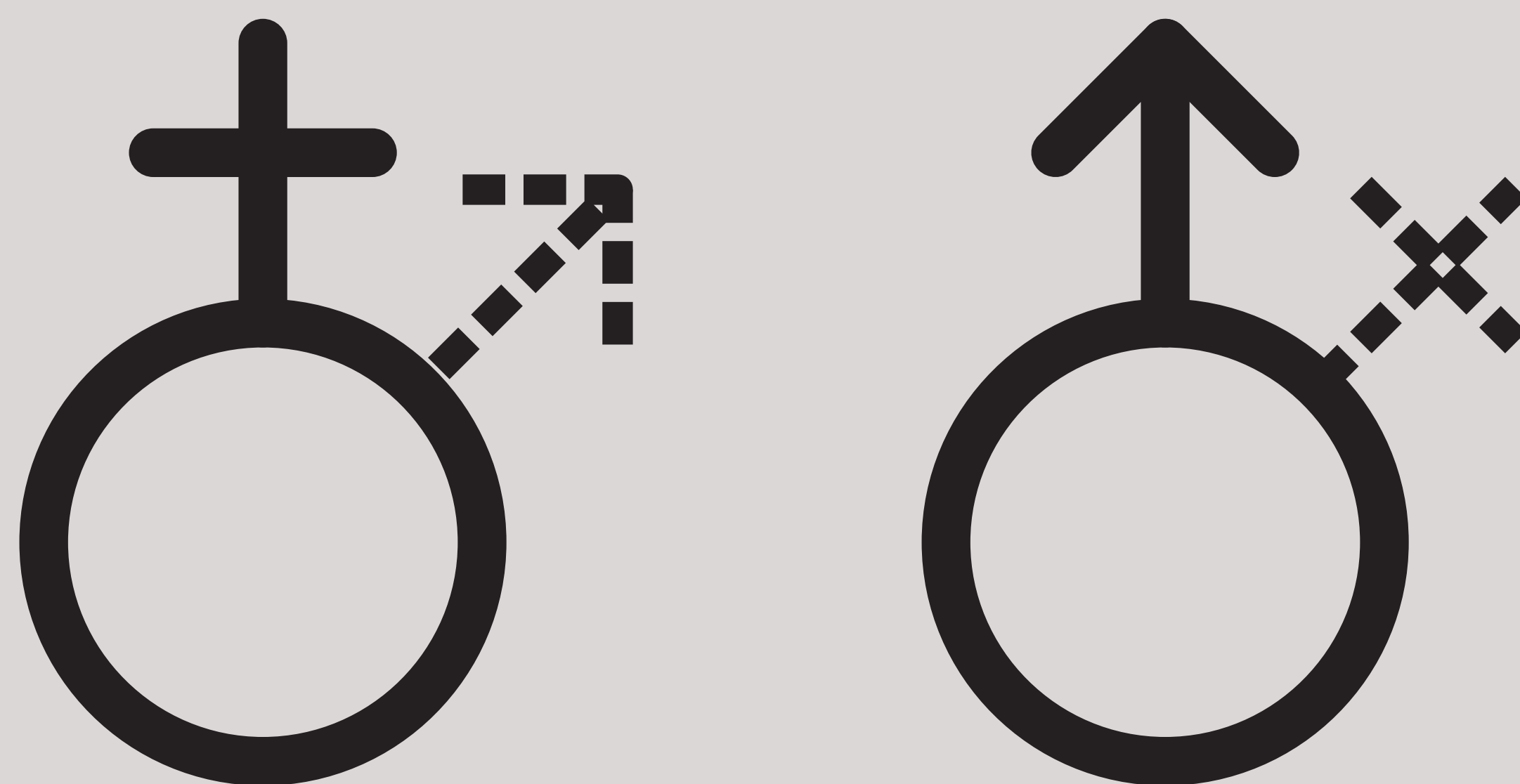
Like other categories – race, class, and sexuality – to have a gender identity that is sanctioned

by the dominant culture has its privileges. But just because you’re cisgender doesn’t mean that you accept the gender norms that come your way. Twitter hashtag #FragileMasculinity mocks the kind of gendered marketing that defines masculinity as phobic of anything feminine; manchocolate and man-branded throat lozenges being standouts.

32/52



STATES WHERE IT'S LEGAL
TO DENY SOMEONE HOUSING
BECAUSE THEY'RE TRANS



Affirming transgender



**GENDER SPECTRUM****Transgender**

A transgender or trans person is someone whose gender identity does not conform with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Some trans people who are transitioning refer to themselves as “female to male” (FTM), “male to female” (MTF), or even transsexual if they use hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgery, or sex-reassignment surgery.

“Transsexual” is an outdated term that places too much emphasis on the medical part of transitioning. Generally, the preferred term is transgender. But it’s important to find out what someone wants to be referred to before making assumptions. Some people may find this emphasis on a “before and after” not representative of their experience. They may have always felt like one gender, and transitioning just helped affirm it.

“Most harmful is the myth that trans women are not ‘real’ women or trans people are inauthentic.”

-Janet Mock



Although trans people have been more visible and given more of a voice, they still face discrimination. Only 10 states prohibit exclusions for transgender health care. And one in five transgender people has been discriminated against while looking for a home. Multiple “bathroom bills” have spring up attempting to prohibit trans people from using bathrooms that correspond to their affirmed gender – and a Twitter campaign was started with the hashtag #WeJustNeedToPee with the image of transmen in women’s bathrooms and transwomen in front of urinals.

41%

OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE SURVEYED
HAD ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

1.6%

OF THE GENERAL POPULATION
HAD ATTEMPTED SUICIDE



TRANSGENDER BY THE NUMBERS

THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER

4X

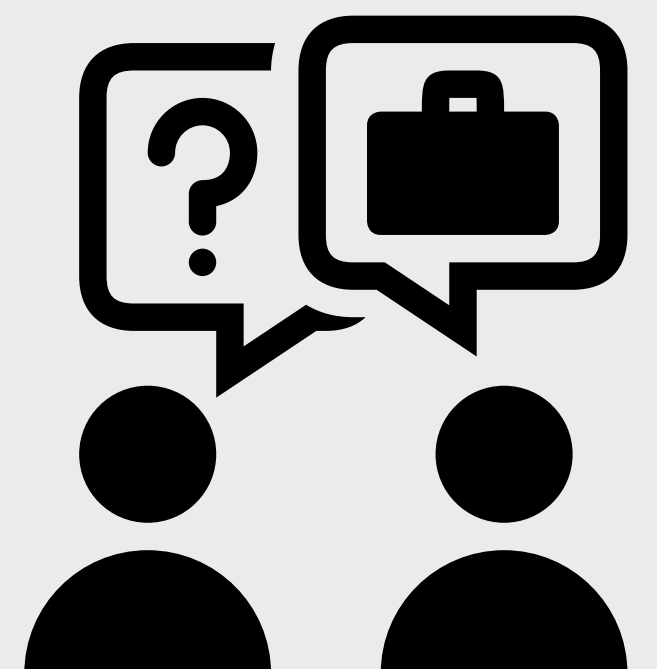
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A HOUSEHOLD
INCOME OF LESS THAN \$10,000

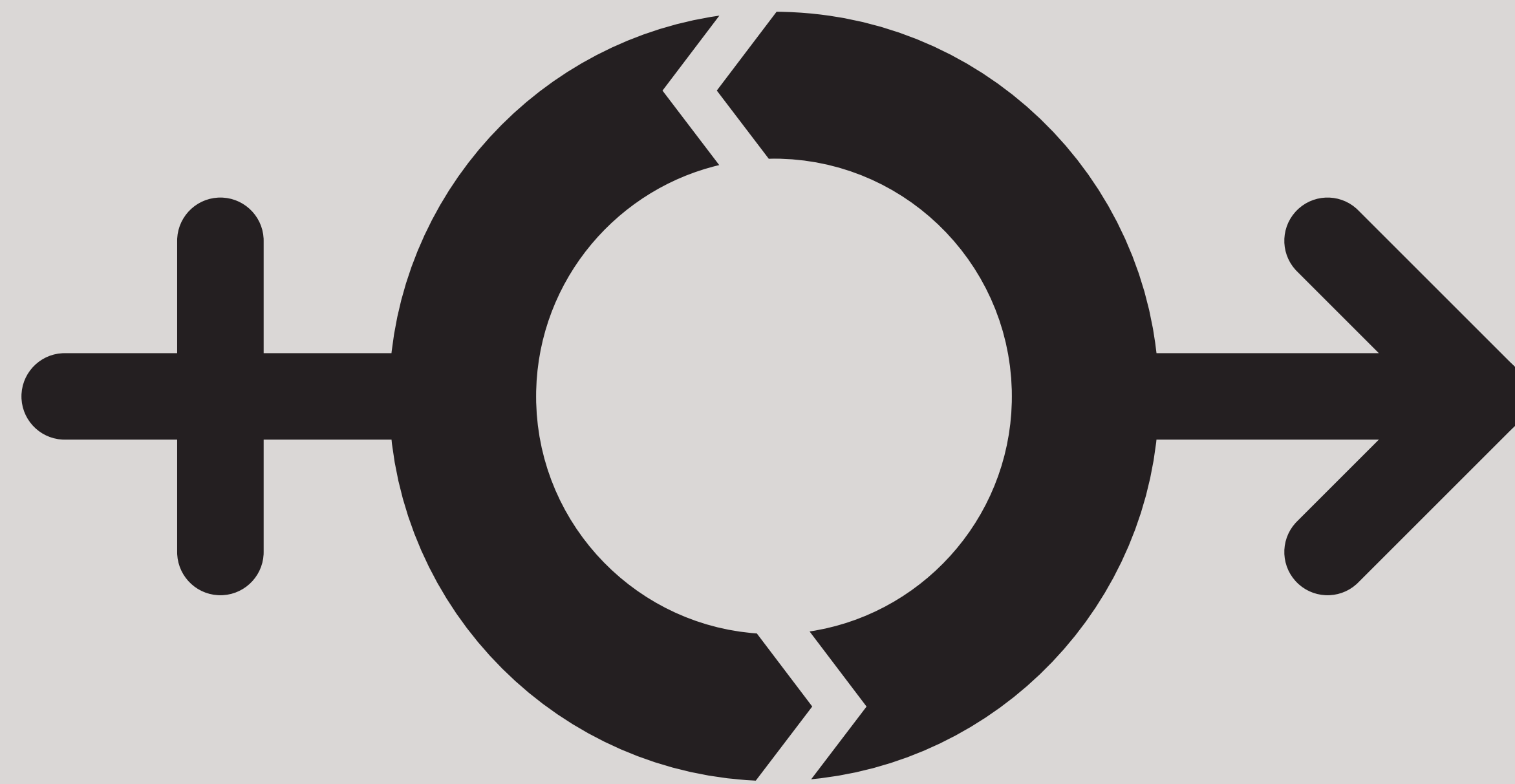
25%

REPORTED LOSING A JOB BECAUSE THEY
DID NOT CONFORM TO GENDER NORMS

28%

SAID THEY HAD BEEN HARASSED
IN A MEDICAL SETTING.





Transitioning is different for everyone



GENDER SPECTRUM**Transition**

Not every transgender person's transition, or move from their assigned gender to their affirmed gender, is the same.

They may start out by wearing clothes that align with their affirmed gender, change their names and their preferred gender pronouns, or begin presenting as their affirmed gender.

Some trans people take hormones or have sex reassignment surgery so that their bodies align with their affirmed gender, but a trans person can still be trans without them. For some trans people, being able to live in their affirmed gender identity and be recognized as that gender is what is most important.

Trans people often face great difficulty having their gender changed on legal documents like driver's licenses and birth certificates, and for some, the transition isn't complete until this

happens. Some states, like New York, only require that a trans person bring in a certified letter from a psychologist that indicates they are transgender or have gender dysphoria. Other states require proof of sex reassignment surgery. Tennessee is the only state that doesn't allow trans people to change the gender designation on birth certificates.

50%

OF TRANS PEOPLE SAID THEY HAD TO
TEACH THEIR MEDICAL PROVIDERS
ABOUT TRANSGENDER CARE

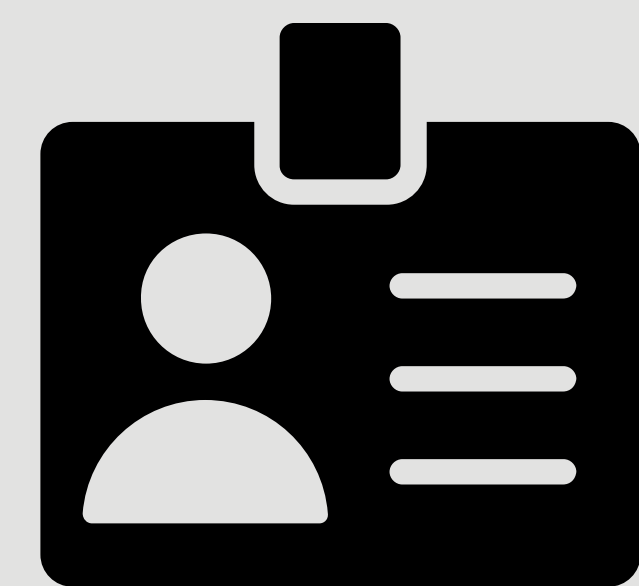
GENDER SPECTRUM**Dead Name**

When Paige Abendroth was interviewed on the popular podcast *Invisibilia* in 2013, she identified as bigender, a controversial term that means a person sometimes identifies as female, sometimes as male. Today, she identifies as transgender.

When the podcast aired again two years later, Abendroth accused the host of dead-naming her. Dead name is what some trans people call the name they were assigned at birth before they chose one that better reflects their affirmed gender. The host apologized and Paige's dead name was later redacted.

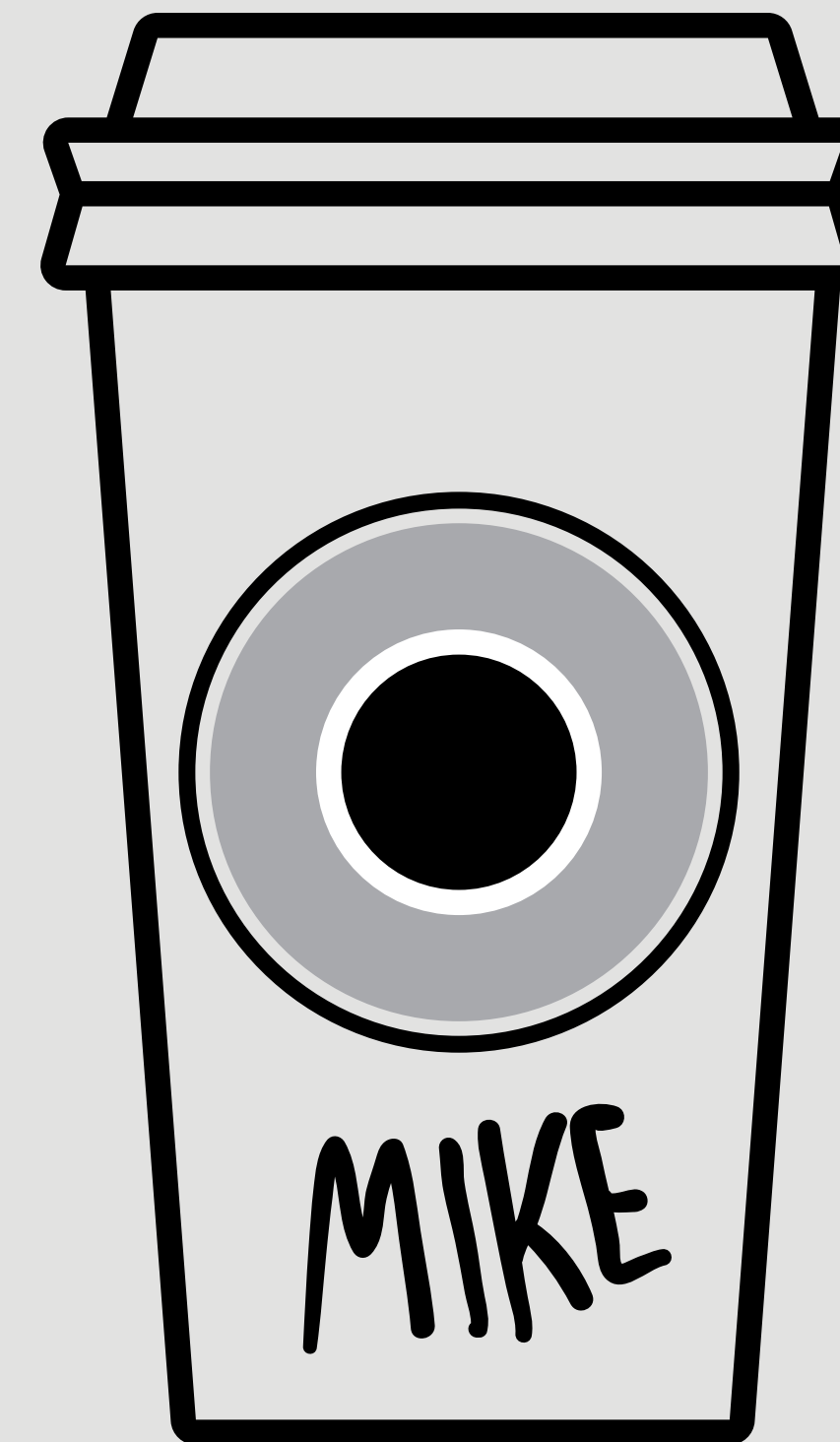
Dead-naming happens so casually that many people don't even realize they're doing it, but it can cause significant distress. Facebook first gave users more than 56 genders to choose from before eventually providing an open field

Facebook's "Real Name" policy would have forced transgender users who had not legally changed their names to use their dead names

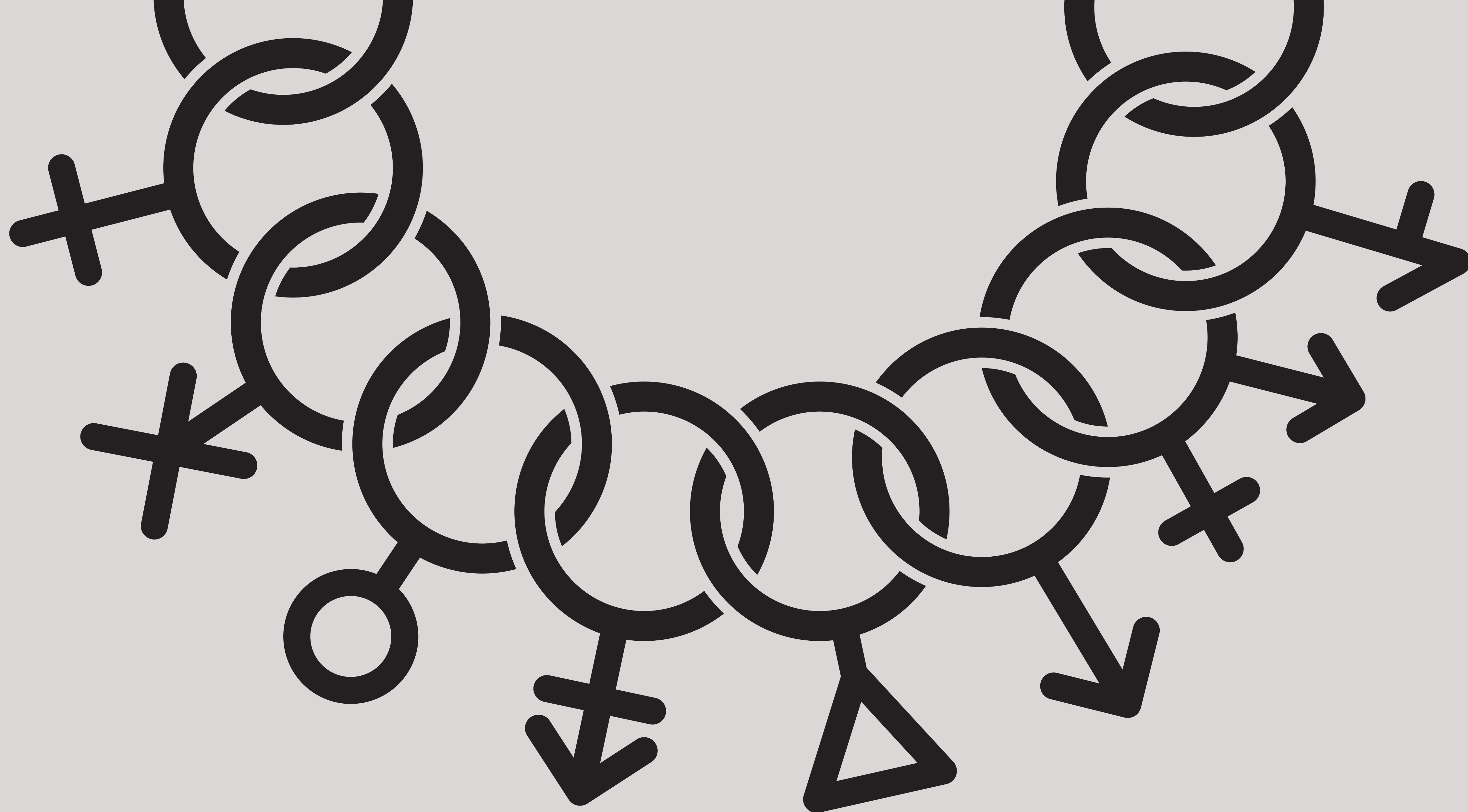


for that profile line, but it also started a “real name” policy insisting that long-term users either go by their real name as it is listed on a credit card, driver’s license, or student ID – or risk having their account deleted. For Facebook users who were trans and had not legally changed their names, this was a radical form of erasure.

And when a Starbucks barista scrawled a transgender customer’s dead name on an order after copying the name from their credit card, an online uproar ensued. Some people might see this complaint as an extreme case, but it’s shedding light on issues trans people face, and big brands will feel the brunt.



**Dead-naming
happens so casually
that many people
don't even realize
they're doing it**



Genderqueer: You do you



**GENDER SPECTRUM**

Genderqueer/ Gender Nonconforming/ Queer

Genderqueer and gender nonconforming are umbrella terms for gender identities that aren't strictly masculine and feminine. They could be a blend or no gender at all.

Like genderqueer, queer is used for someone who doesn't identify exclusively (or at all) as gay, straight, or bisexual. Often, it refers to sexual orientation, but queer is sometimes used interchangeably with genderqueer.

Because “queer” is a reappropriation of a slur, not every LGBTQI person appreciates the term, and some believe it should only be used to self-identify or quote someone who self-identifies.

The categories genderqueer and gender nonconforming open up so many gender possibilities that some people are customizing

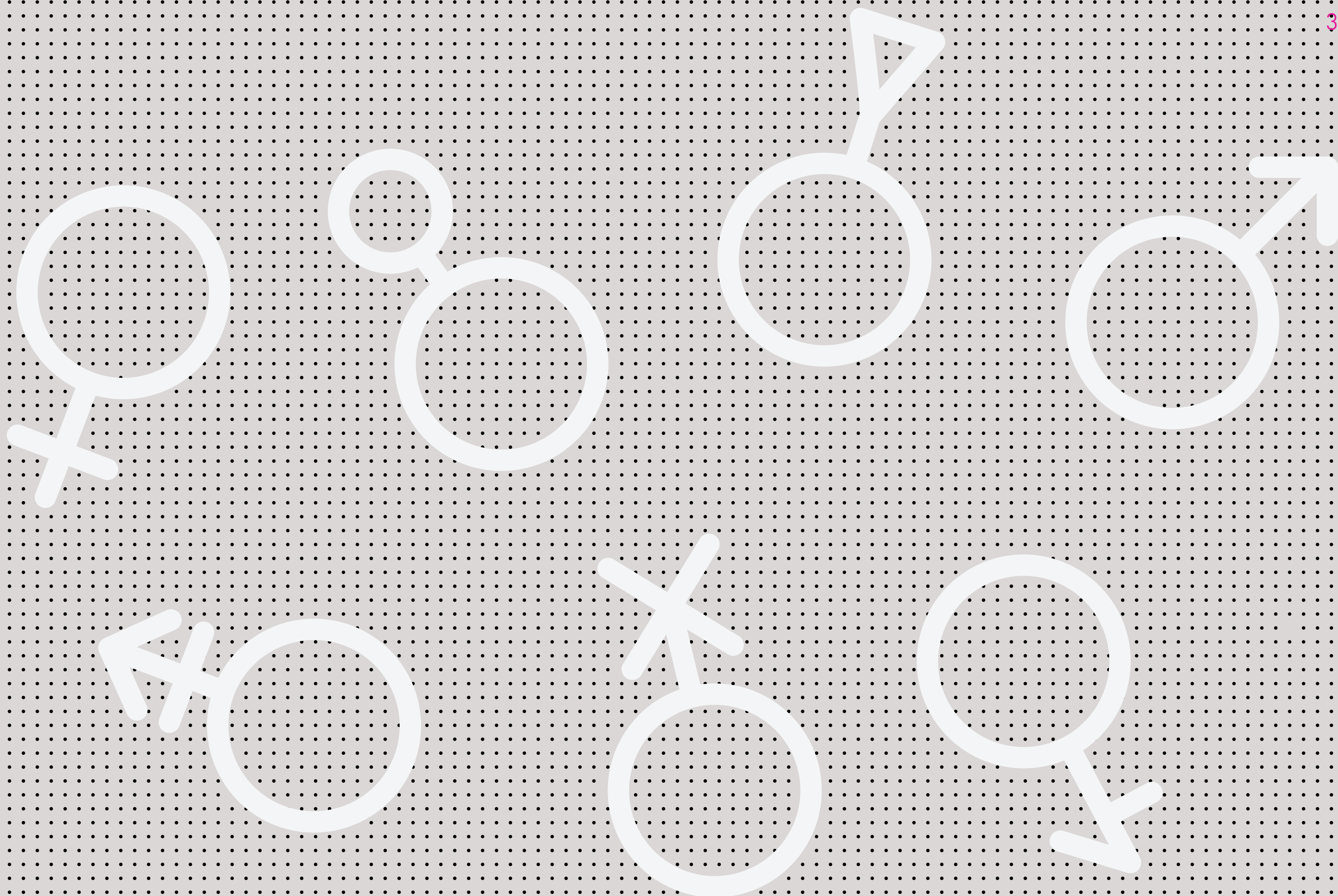
their own specific gender identities. And while genderqueer people would seem to be shunning labels, others are constructing gender identities that are dizzyingly complex.

Not strictly masculine or feminine, genderqueer can be a blend, or no gender at all

“Aporagender is a term recently coined by me and means a gender separate from male, female, and anything in between while still having a very strong and specific gendered feeling.”

– KELLY/ALEX, 18

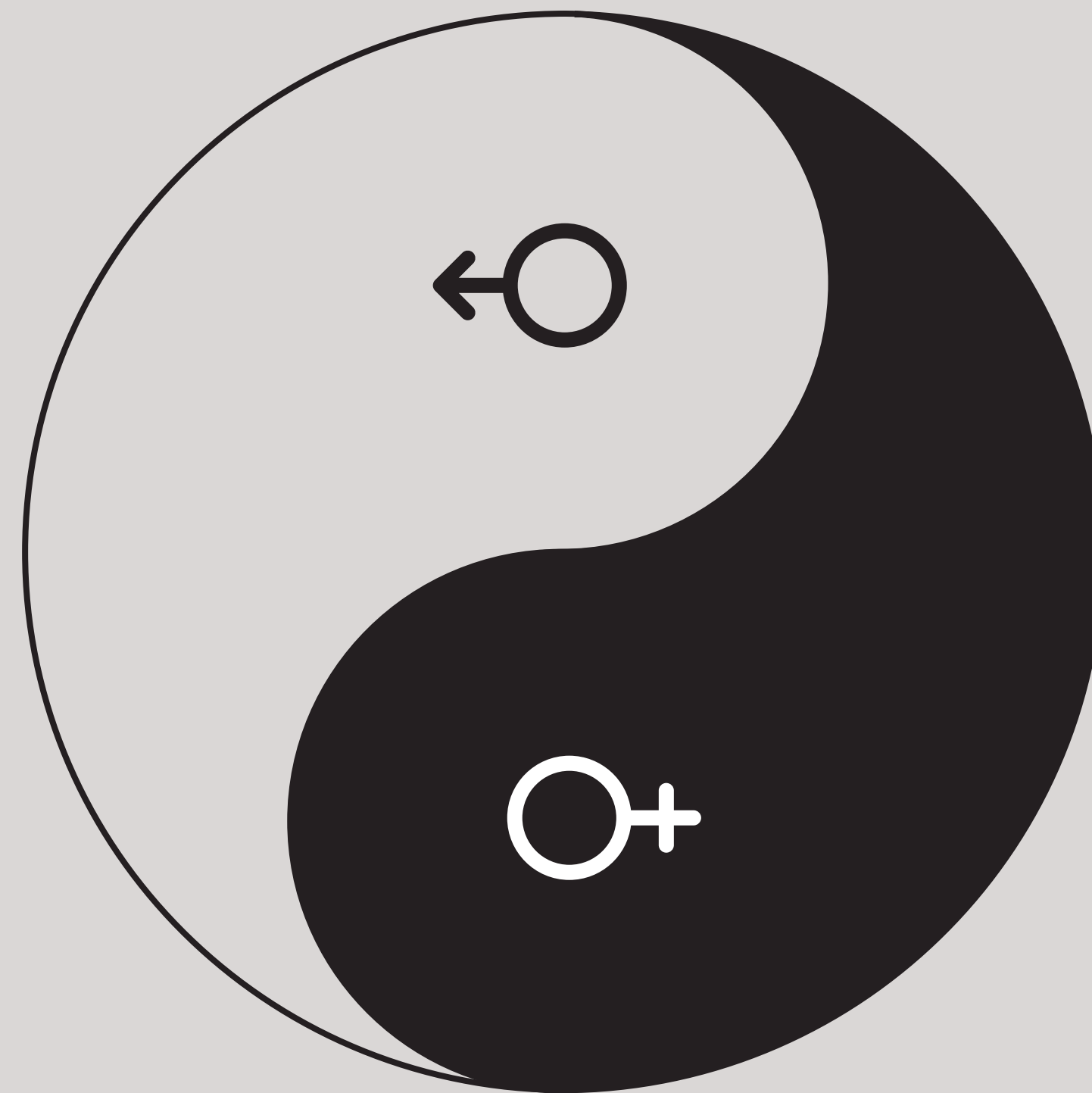




Not everyone wants to fill in the blanks



THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER



Gender ebbs and flows to find its balance



**GENDER SPECTRUM****Gender Fluid**

A color spectrum has gradations of pink, green, yellow, blue, purple and every subtle hue between. Imagine that spectrum representing gender, with woman as one primary color, and man as another. And now you have to choose a primary color to represent your gender identity. For some cisgender people, being solidly red or blue, for example, works out just fine.

But for a gender fluid person, who feels that their gender identity varies over time or in certain circumstances, a primary color doesn't tell their whole story. What if they feel pink on Tuesday, and celadon green in March, or several iridescent colors over the course of one day?

Gender fluid people may feel a mix of genders, no particular gender, or other times, more of one gender or another.

**Gender fluid
people may feel
a mix of genders,
no particular
gender, or other
times, more of one
gender or another**

“I have a lot of characteristics that would normally be present in a guy and then less that would be present in a woman. But then sometimes I’ll put on a skirt – like today.”

– RUBY ROSE





Yes, you're being genderfucked with



GENDER SPECTRUM**Genderfuck**

When you see a bearded man wearing lipstick, a dress, high heels, his low-cut dress displaying a thickly haired chest, congratulations. You're being fucked with – genderfucked, if you will.

Genderfuck is a style, the act of mixing masculine and feminine clothes, hairstyles, or behavior to mashup the binary code of gender and break the gender norms that say you should look either feminine or masculine.

Unlike “passing” as the opposite gender, genderfuck makes the gender mix deliberately visible. Take Ladybeard – the stage name of an Australian man who has taken genderfuck to interesting places. Bearded and buff with his hair in pigtails with bows, he dresses like a five-year-old, and if asked will say he is a five-year-old girl. He also happens to be a pro wrestler and lead singer in a Japanese heavy metal

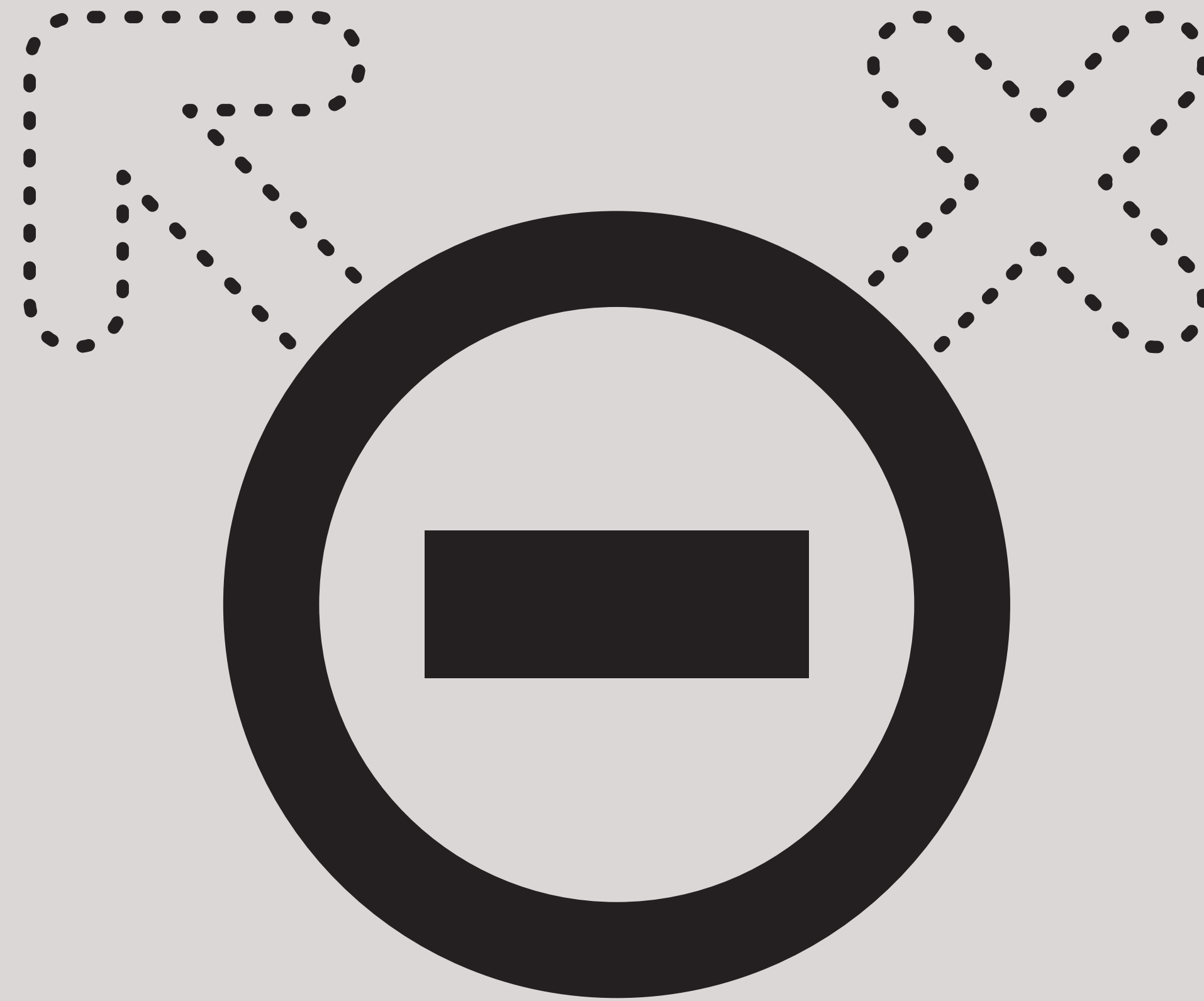
band called Ladybaby, where his death-metal growl is juxtaposed with his little girl outfits. A new iteration of genderfuck, but genderfuck nonetheless.

Genderfuck is a style that mixes and mashes visual representations of gender

“When I started with drag – and you can still see pictures of me this way on YouTube - I had smeared lipstick and combat boots and torn wedding dresses, like ‘Fuck you!’ That’s genderfuck.”

– RUPAUL





Agender, full stop



GENDER SPECTRUM**Agender**

When we're born, the doctor assigns us a sex (boy or girl), and gender norms tell us how we should express femininity or masculinity. Some people experience their assigned gender comfortably (cisgender). Others identify with the opposite gender to the one they were assigned at birth (transgender). Some are a mix of both (genderqueer). And some people don't feel as if they identify with any gender at all. Those people are agender, which means "without gender."

Agender activist Tyler Ford was assigned female at birth, transitioned to male with hormones, but stopped taking testosterone when they realized they didn't identify with a gender. And though it may sound incorrect to use "they" for one person, Ford doesn't want to use the gendered pronouns "he, him, his" or "she, her,



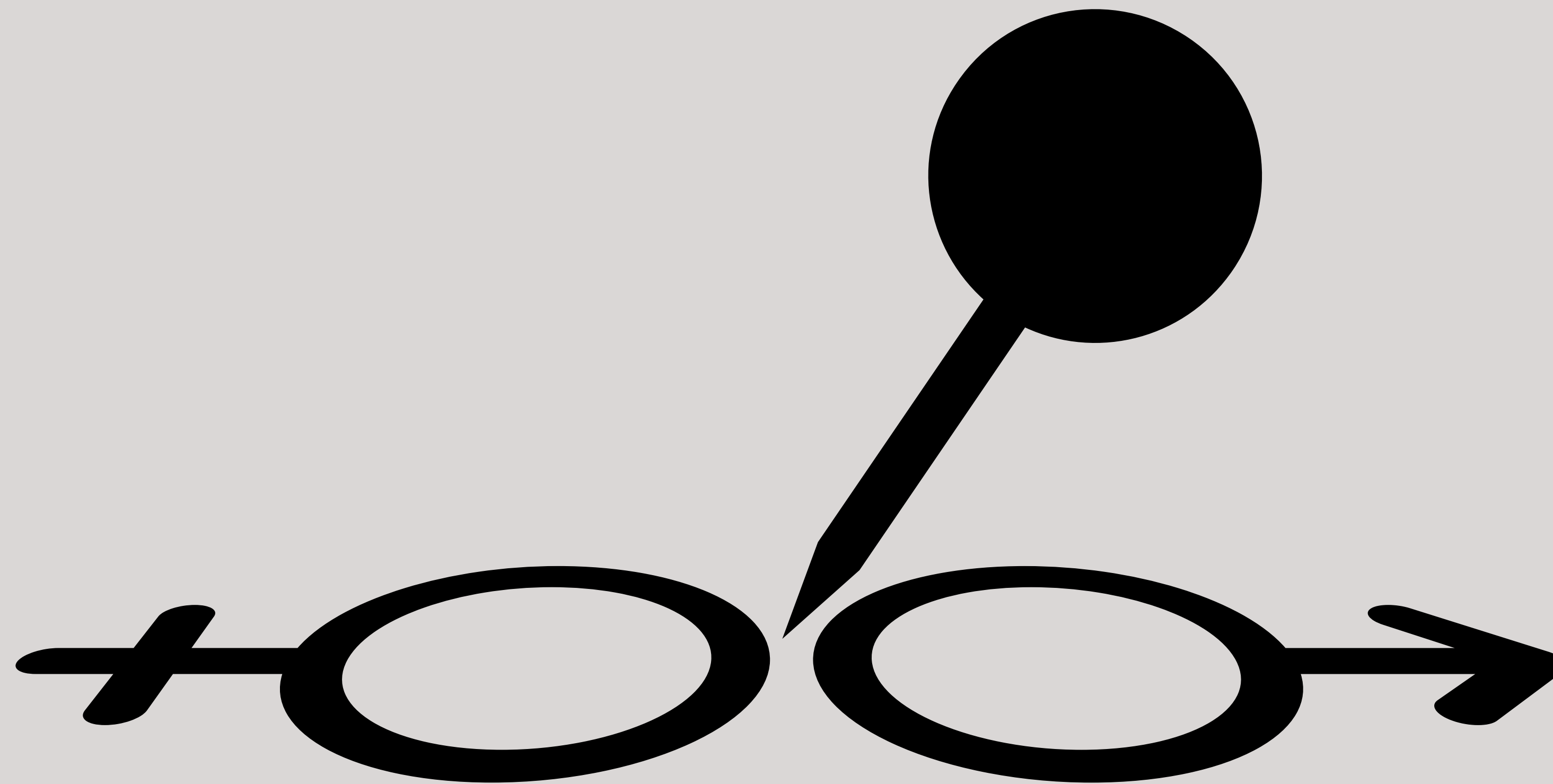
**Some people
don't feel as if
they identify with
any gender at all**

hers". Instead, they use plural, gender-neutral pronouns. Ford now self-describes as "an out, visible, non-binary, trans person."

**“The pronouns I use are not ‘he’ or ‘she’
but ‘they,’ ‘them’ and ‘their.’
These feel as neutral as I do.”**

- TYLER FORD, AGENDER ACTIVIST





Drop a pin on neutral

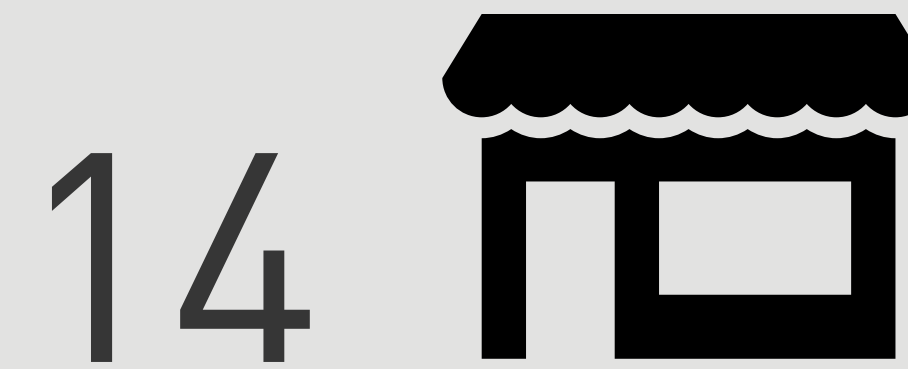


**GENDER SPECTRUM****Gender Neutral**

Can the color pink be gender neutral? By now, the notion that pink is for girls and blue is for boys is something we should all be over, but cultural conditioning and the fear of doing gender “wrong” is powerful.

Take the launch of Apple’s Rose Gold iPhone 6. The color is so beautiful that it was selling out, and it turns out that men were its primary buyers. People started calling the color “Bro’s gold”, either mocking men for buying the color pink or mocking the gender norms that make pink a gendered color in the first place. Perhaps Apple deliberately avoided calling their iPhone pink to make it gender neutral. If so, the ploy worked.

British fashion retailer Selfridges debuted a gender-neutral fashion line called the Agender project, whose stated aim was to to explore



14 MAJOR RETAILERS TOOK DOWN THEIR BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ SECTIONS IN FAVOR OF MARKETING TOYS AS GENDER-NEUTRAL



GENDER SPECTRUM

the interplay between masculine and feminine fashion. Target went gender-neutral, taking down signs announcing sale items for boys and girls, and eliminating the girls and boys sections after customers complained about gender stereotyping.

In Sweden, gender-neutral parenting is an on-going experiment. Now, there are signs of American culture catching on to this parenting style. Paige Lucas-Stannard, author of the book *Gender-Neutral Parenting*, honored her 6-year-old daughter Aellyn's request to shave her head like her father did. And let's not forget cool dad Mikki Willis, who shared his delight over his son's joy at choosing a Little Mermaid doll.

“Girls can have their hair any way they want [even shaved bald like dad].”

-Aellyn Lucas-Stannard, 6



Are you a he...a she...I'm so sorry, I don't know what I'm saying



**GENDER SPECTRUM****Misgendering**

Referring to someone with the wrong gender pronoun is going to happen, but at least you can be aware of this potential problem.

Many genderqueer and trans people are “misgendered” by others. For the trans person who is trying to pass as their affirmed gender, this can feel frustrating. If it’s done deliberately by people who don’t respect their gender identity, it can feel like an assault.

When Caitlyn Jenner gave an interview with Diane Sawyer, Jenner told Sawyer she could still be referred to as “Bruce” and “he.” Jenner gave Sawyer permission. But after Jenner revealed her new name as Caitlyn, many conservative news programs continued to refer to Jenner as “he” and Bruce.

Referring to someone with the wrong gender pronoun is going to happen – just be aware it could be a problem

**GENDER SPECTRUM****Mx. And “Ze, Zir, Zirs”**

The creation of “Ms.” in the 1970s reflected what was happening in the world: the emergence of a new category of woman undefined by marriage. “Ms.” socially sanctioned this category and carved out a linguistic space for her, recognizing her as a social subject.

So when the *Oxford English Dictionary* included the word “Mx.” – pronounced “mix” – to refer to transgender people and people who don’t want to be identified by gender, it was saying the same thing. By including “Mx.”, the *OED* is declaring that there is a new, socially-sanctioned way to be a person in the world: undefined by gender. It replaces Ms., Mrs., and Mr. for the genderqueer set.

Mx. has been in use for years in the U.K. by the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Department for

**Only 77 mentions
in 6 months –Miley
said it, but zhe
hasn’t taken off in
social conversations**

Work and Pensions, the Royal Mail Group and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

So much of our language is gendered, including pronouns. So for trans and genderqueer people who don’t want gendered pronouns, plural pronouns often take their place. We may reach a place in language where we’ll feel comfortable



GENDER SPECTRUM

and natural referring to someone with the gender-neutral pronoun “ze” instead of “he” or “she,” but it’s more likely that we’ll settle on “they, them, or their”.

Trans performer Justin Vivian Bond or Mx. Justin V. Bond uses “v” as v’s preferred pronoun. Sometimes, you just have to ask what a person’s preferred gender pronouns are, or just listen to how they refer to themselves.

The fact is, unlearning ways of speaking that feel automatic are some of the most difficult parts of learning the new language of gender. But doing so can also mean remaking a new, more inclusive world.

Unlearning ways of speaking that feel automatic are some of the most difficult parts of learning the new language of gender

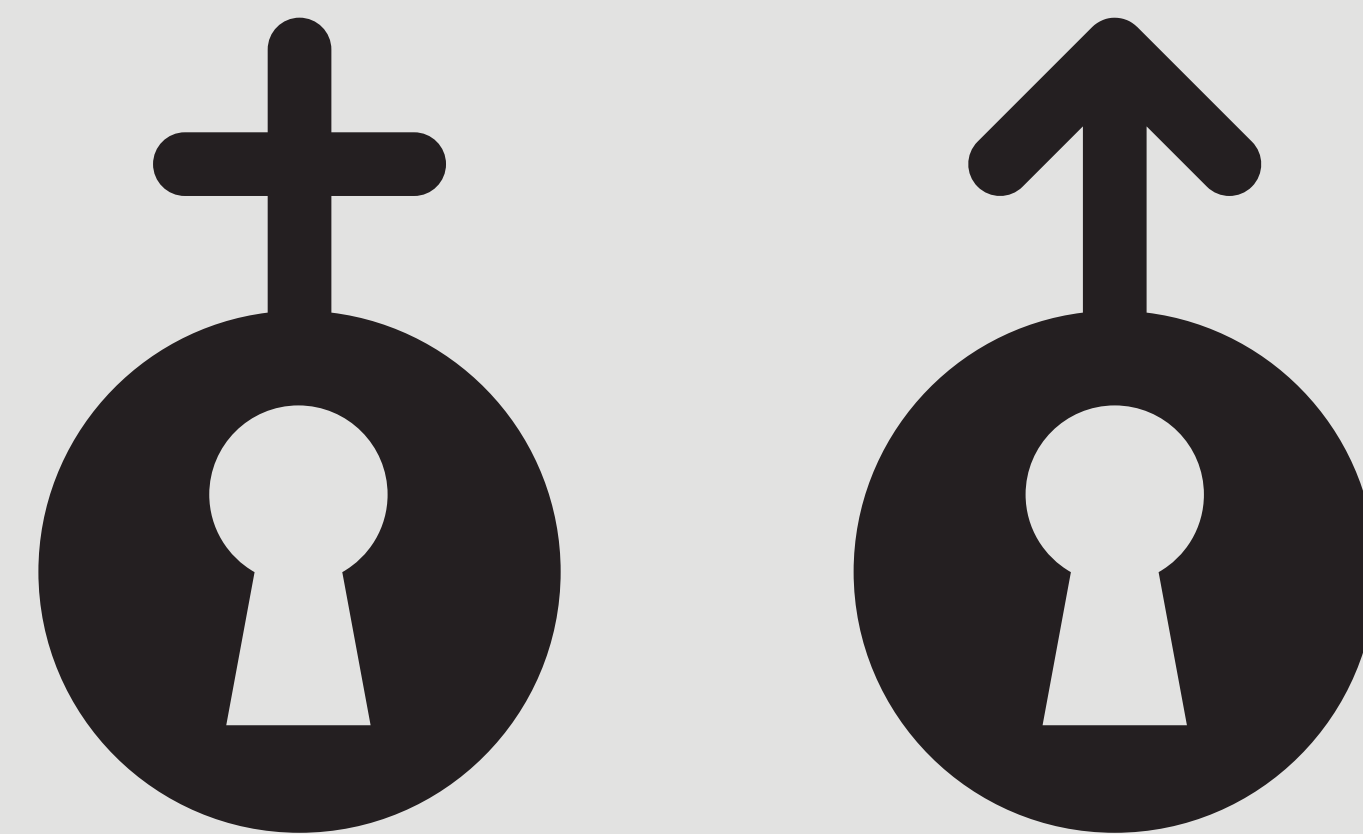
CONCLUSION**The new normal**

Not since the women's rights movement in the 60s and 70s have we as a culture so collectively questioned how gender defines the way we view our ourselves and our relationships to one another other.

Transgender and genderqueer voices have begun to take control of their own narratives, telling stories, describing injustices, and remaking gender and the language of gender to reflect them rather than the other way around.

The culture at large has been listening and has become inspired. Cisgender people have also been prompted to ask if the gender binary that has dictated how they are supposed to behave as men or women has not in fact been too constricting for them as well.

As a result of this cultural shift around gender, we're seeing the rise of gender neutrality seeping into design, language (pronouns and titles), products and retail spaces, fashion, and even parenting. And for gender hackers who still want to be playful with gender but not be confined to it, there's an opportunity to mashup gender signals to suit their tastes.



**There's no master
key to gender**



CONCLUSION

Laws are changing that allow transgender people to change their gender designation on official ID's, to use the bathrooms that correspond to their affirmed gender, and if the zeitgeist is going in the direction of all civil rights movements – towards enacting laws that forbid discriminating against people for their gender identity. This can only be good for everyone, cis and trans alike.

The stubborn idea that there's a normal way to be gendered, and everything else is “other” persists, of course, and won't disappear overnight. But we are increasingly inspired by difference, rather than fighting it or patronizingly accommodating it.

As we all move into the future we'll continue to question gender – and answer it – together.

The new normal, is that there is no “normal”



THE NEW LANGUAGE OF GENDER
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METHODOLOGY

For *The New Language of Gender*, sparks & honey reviewed important texts, films, and legal milestones. Using new social listening tools, we gauged energy and sentiment across media channels around the language of gender. And using our proprietary cultural intelligence system, we identified the most current mainstream and fringe signals to learn how the cultural shift caused by gender will determine how we'll be communicating, living, and remaking gender now and in the future.



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