

**FROM A TO T:  
WELCOMING  
TRANSGENDER  
CUSTOMERS IN  
THE LIBRARY**

# Introductions and Objectives

- ▶ Build a foundation for fostering gender inclusivity at their library
- ▶ Give empathetic and equitable service to all customers
- ▶ Have knowledge of social and legal issues impacting transgender customers
- ▶ Challenge assumptions and discuss ways to encourage inclusivity in language and action.

# Norms

- ▶ Assume good intent
- ▶ Call people back “in” rather than “out”
- ▶ Step up, step back
- ▶ When in doubt, use “people first” language





You are here.

# Assumptions

- ▶ When has someone made an assumption about YOU that made you uncomfortable?

**Coffee or tea drinker?**

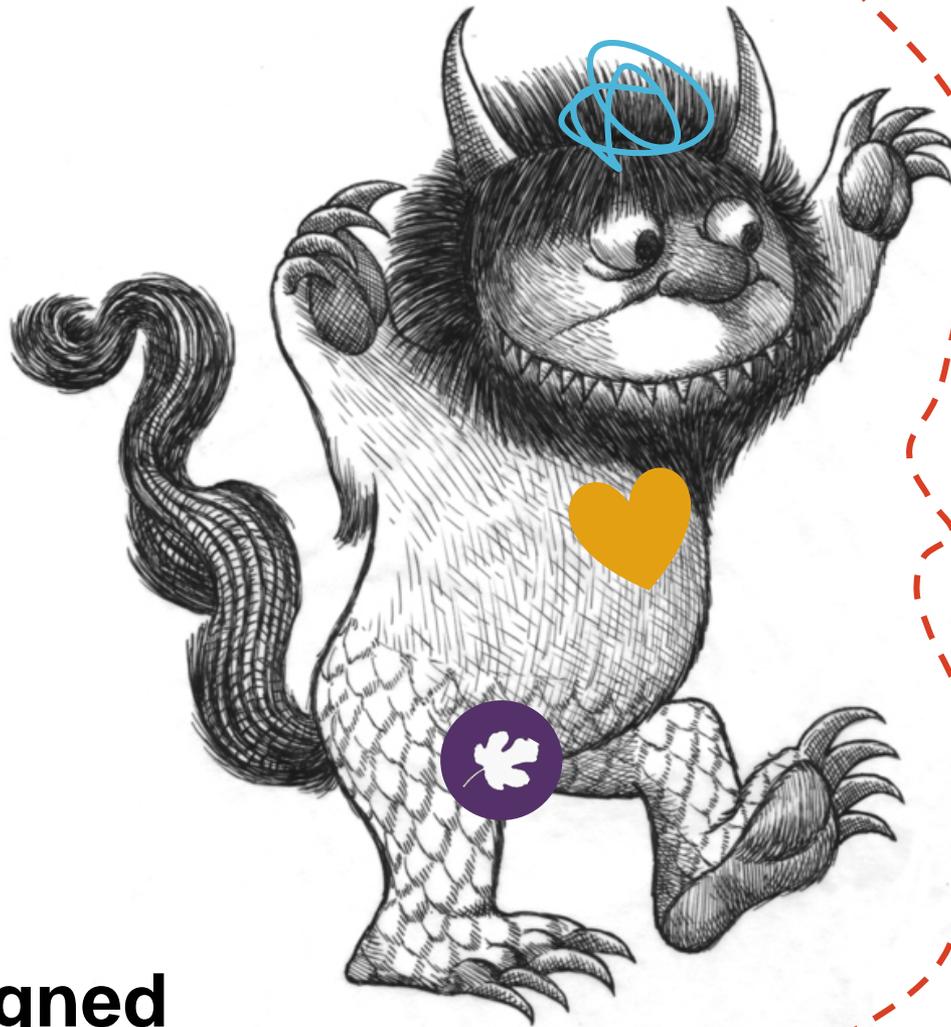
**Saver or spender?**

**Religious or nonreligious?**

**Democrat or Republican?**



**Gender  
identity**



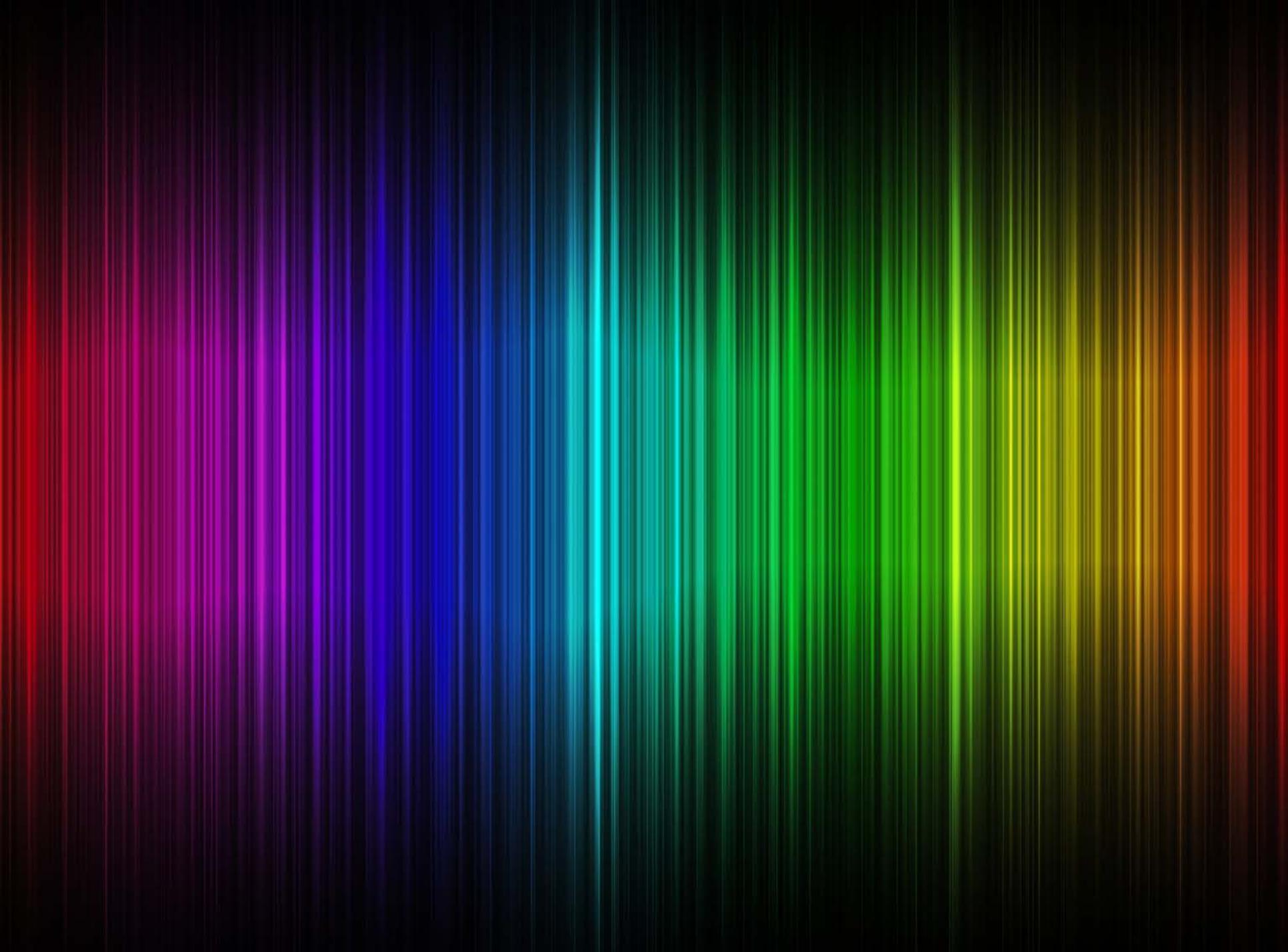
**Sexual /  
romantic  
orientation**



**Sex assigned  
at birth**



**Gender  
expression**





NEWS > COLORADO NEWS

## Colorado to allow use of X as sex identifier on driver's licenses starting this month

The state also is considering a third option for gender on birth certificates



NEWS > HEALTH

## It's now easier for Coloradans to change their gender identity on their birth certificates

State birth certificates will now include 4 options: female, male, intersex and X

[transequality.org](http://transequality.org)

“

Transgender people face extraordinary levels of physical and sexual violence, whether on the streets, at school or work, at home, or at the hands of government officials.

**National Center for Transgender Equality**

<https://transequality.org/issues/anti-violence>



# Why is this a library issue?

*We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.*

Code of Ethics of the American Library  
Association



# Welcoming Spaces

# Inclusive Environment

- ▶ Represent trans topics across collection
- ▶ Display trans resources
- ▶ Offer programming on trans issues
- ▶ Develop a welcoming workforce



# Interactions

A customer walks up to a staff person for assistance and staff refers to the customer as “sir.” The customer tells staff that they do not go by sir and does not offer an alternative. Staff is visibly embarrassed and goes on to make assurances about the customer’s appearance. The staff member then assists the customer, asks for their name, and addresses them by their name when they leave.

# Interacting

- ▶ Introduce yourself by name
- ▶ Use inclusive language
- ▶ Honor names and pronouns
- ▶ Apologize and move on if you make a mistake



# Card Registration

# Customer Accounts

- ▶ Use welcoming body language
- ▶ Protect patron privacy
- ▶ Capture correct names
- ▶ Avoid collecting gender info



# Restrooms

# Restrooms

- ▶ Assume people choose proper facilities
- ▶ Respond appropriately to incidents
- ▶ Offer all-gender restrooms
- ▶ Wash your hands



# Harassment

You are working in the children's section when you see a group of middle schoolers harassing another child. They are making unkind remarks about the child's appearance. You can tell this is not friendly teasing and the bullied child keeps trying to move away and the others continue to follow.

# Harassment

- ▶ Interrupt harassment
- ▶ Avoid singling out person targeted
- ▶ Redirect people doing the harassing
- ▶ Get backup



# Workplace

A library administrator is speaking with a supervisor about an employee who is in the process of a gender transition. They are doing their best to use the employee's correct pronouns.

The two are discussing what is appropriate to communicate about the employee's transition. They decide to send an email to all staff, thinking it will help the employee from being misgendered. They start talking about how to update the employee record and realize there is no procedure for doing so and will need to ask the employee.

The supervisor also wonders if there is a need to notify customers as the employee routinely leads programs and the supervisor wants to reduce confusion.

# Workplace

- ▶ Respect privacy
- ▶ Use correct names and pronouns
- ▶ Educate yourself
- ▶ Establish supportive policies

# Final Thoughts



# Questions?

Denver Public Library Transgender Action Group

[tag@denverlibrary.org](mailto:tag@denverlibrary.org)

- ▶ Adrian Johnson, Community Technology Center  
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**[From A to T Resource Folder:](https://tinyurl.com/dpltag)**

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