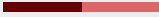# Welcome!

Take a moment to respond to the following prompt in the chat:
In three words or less, answer: what is gender?

Trans Justice in Career Services and Employer Relations

Z Nicolazzo, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Trans* Studies in Education

Thanks and Gratitude

Session Aims

1. **We will not discuss what you "should do," but we will discuss how you re/think what you do do...**
   the focus, then, is on epistemes of gender -- how does one come to know that which we know?

2. **We will recognize, but not get stuck in, the low-hanging fruit of trans justice...**
   yes, trans people need trans-inclusive healthcare, restroom access, and to have our names and proper pronouns used without fuss. And also, these are fairly well-established realities now (not that people follow through, but folks really should know by now). We need to push past these, while not forgetting their utter necessity.

3. **To recognize the connections across gender/race/class/indigeneity...**
   these are not the same, and yet, they have resonances across all that require we think about them as always already intertwined realities.

"[Gender] is a figuration, a fake, made-up thing with material, crushingly real consequences."

~Leigh Patel, 2015, *Why Racial Justice is Not What We Need at this Moment*

What does this mean for your work?

The point is to not to engage "best practices," but to re/evaluate how you continually invest in how you keep coming to know gender...

That we are socialized around gender is axiomatic; what is more interesting, I think, is how we keep re/invested in how we keep coming to know that which we know...and what effects that has for trans students...

What does this sound like?

How does our own "stuff" around gender get in trans students' way?

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What does this mean for your work?

Practice what Dean Spade refers to as "trickle up activism," and what I have modified in my work as "trickle up education."

The pandemic provides an intense(ly important) moment for pause and reflection. We cannot "go back to normal," because normal was never working for many in the first place. Instead, we need to focus on how we orient our services, environments, and ways in which we come to un/know how we keep coming to know gender.

In other words, we need to think through a lens of what allows us to best do our work alongside those who experience heightened vulnerability (e.g., trans women of color).

What does this sound like?

How is our environment (not) set up to support the diverse talent pool we seek to work alongside?

How do we confront, disentangle, and be honest about the class, race, and gender illogics of career services and employer relations in community with people who face heightened vulnerability?

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    these are not the same, *and yet, they have resonances across all that require we think about them as always already intertwined realities.*

What does this mean for your work?

One cannot address gender without addressing race (in particular, anti-blackness), class, disability, indigeneity, and various other systems and illogics of oppression.

In other words, to re/think gender necessitates a re/thinking of how oppressions move in tandem, influence each other, and mediate our worlds in deeply asymmetrical ways.

For example, when we think about work (re)entry for women given the realities of the pandemic, we likely need to think about:
- *Who our definition of women leaves out…*
- *How Black women have always already made less than white women, and therefore have differential social realities in relation to work…*
- *Some women (largely women of color) never "left" work because they work in service industries deemed "essential" (and yet, always underpaid and undervalued)…*
- *How we expect professionalism to show up on the body (as in, the bodies we expect to see as women [see bullet 1] as well as how we unevenly equate hair, speech patterns, and clothing with "professionalism."*

What does this sound like?

How does our day-to-day work preclude thinking oppressions as interlocking and experienced on individual, group, and structural levels?

How can we ask better questions across marginalization to do the work of trickle up education?

Goal setting

- Short-term (1-6 months; *a good place to address the "low-hanging fruit" if you haven't already*)

- Mid-range (6-12 months; *a good place to address deeper structural things*)

- Long-term (12+ months; *a good place to be in community with people for accountability…both in* and *beyond your office*)

Many thanks for the time

Contact information:
(e): znicolaz@arizona.edu*

*and yes, I am a faculty member when it comes to my email...meaning, I am not the most prompt