**BEST PRACTICES**

**Big Picture**
- Try to not assume gender
- Treat others as they want to be treated
- Consider whether you need to know someone’s gender to provide great service
- Assume everyone selects facilities appropriate to their gender

**In Practice**

**Greetings**
Practice ways to greet and call on people without using a pronoun. (This can be especially tricky with “sir,” “miss,” or “ma’am,” which many of us were raised to think of as showing the utmost respect. For customers who don’t identify as male or female, however, these can be loaded terms.) For instance, instead of “ladies,” or “guys,” try “folks,” or “everyone”

- *Hello folks!*
- *Welcome, everyone!*
- *Hi friend (great with kids)*
- *Hello, welcome to the library*
- *Thank you!*
- *Have a good day!*

Calling on someone in an audience: *The person in the purple shirt*

**Customer IDs and Accounts**
- If you can’t identify a customer from their ID photo, avoid calling attention to it. Be discreet and use other identifying info, like a birthday, to verify the account.
- DPL’s Integrated Library System, Polaris does not currently have an option to capture names outside of what’s on a customer’s ID (but we’re exploring this!) If that’s the case at your library, welcome new card registrants by introducing yourself and asking their name. End with “nice to meet you” and the name the customer gives.
- Polaris defaults to “N/A” for gender and this is not information DPL uses or is required to capture.

**Privacy**
- Do not disclose that a customer or coworker is transgender.
- Do not speculate with colleagues about a customer or coworker’s gender identity, body, genitalia or medical history.
Recovering from Mistakes
If you accidentally call someone by the wrong name or pronouns, simply apologize quickly, move on, and find a way to address the customer properly a few seconds later. Like this:

Staff: Hello, sir may I help with anything?
Customer: It’s actually not “sir”
Staff: Oh, my mistake, I’m sorry. [Smiles] What pronouns do you prefer?
Customer: I go by “she, her, and hers.”
Staff: “She/her/hers,” got it! I go by she/her/hers too. What can I help you find today?

Restrooms
- When giving directions, avoid saying “the women’s/men’s room is there.” Instead, direct folks simply to “restrooms.”
- Per the Colorado Anti Discrimination Act, it is illegal in Colorado to discriminate against transgender people who use the restroom that matches their gender identity. People also cannot be asked to “prove” their gender when using a restroom.
- In response to complaints, you might say “people are allowed by Colorado law to use the restroom that matches their gender identity. Is there a behavior taking place that violates library use guidelines?” then follow your library use policies if there is a behavior issue.
- Transgender customers and employees should never be required to use a separate restroom from other people.

Harassment
- Interrupt transphobic slurs, teasing, or harassment by reminding customers that everyone is welcome at the library.
- Be visible to and near the targeted person to be available if they feel threatened.
- Approach the targeted person to communicate they are welcome. Use phrases like “Can I help you?” or “Welcome to the Library” to indicate they have been seen.
- Redirect attention of people doing the harassing, addressing the behavior if necessary, according to library guidelines.

Youth
- Avoid referring to “girl books” and “boy books.” If a customer requests this, ask open-ended questions to clarify what interests their child. If a child does express an interest in reading about characters of a certain gender, try language like “books with girl protagonists” or “books featuring boy characters.”
- If a young person discloses they are trans, do not out them to their family or peers.
- Maintain personal and professional boundaries. Offer to connect youth with a local or statewide LGBTQIA organization.

Welcoming Workplaces
- Use your colleagues’ names and pronouns correctly. (Practice privately so you’re prepared to address them respectfully.)
- Avoid relying on a transgender colleague to educate you about trans issues or to speak for all trans people. Seek out your own learning, starting with the A to T: Transgender Resources folder.
- For transgender staff transitioning at work, supervisors and HR should work with them to provide support in coming out should they wish to, updating employee records, and educating work groups. Refer to Valuing Transgender Applicants & Employees to update your practices.
- Keep in mind that trans people often face high levels of verbal or physical harassment and assault. “Outing” a colleague or customer inadvertently by using the wrong name or pronouns is not only disrespectful, it can be a safety hazard.