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Postgender World: Is It Possible?

Sheridan Lantz
slantz21@uw.edu

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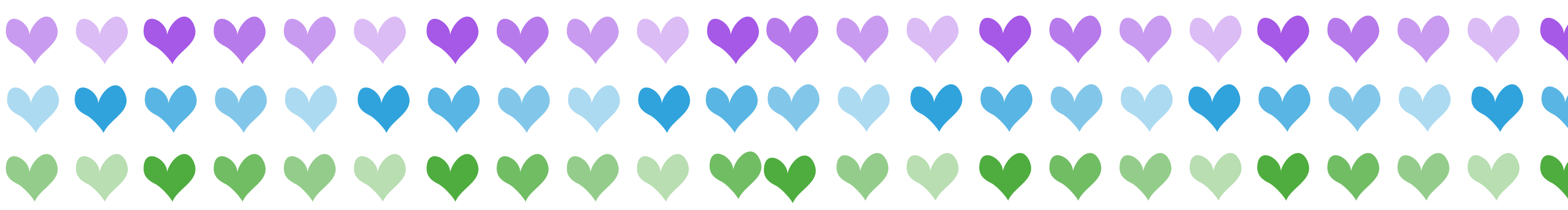


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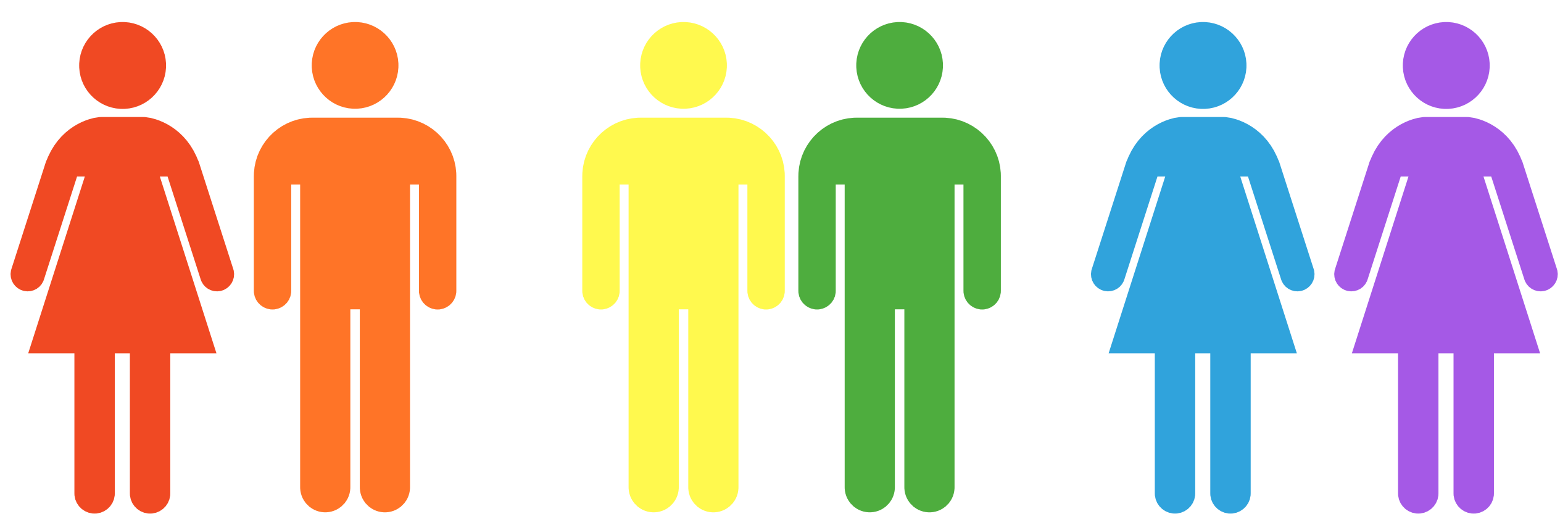
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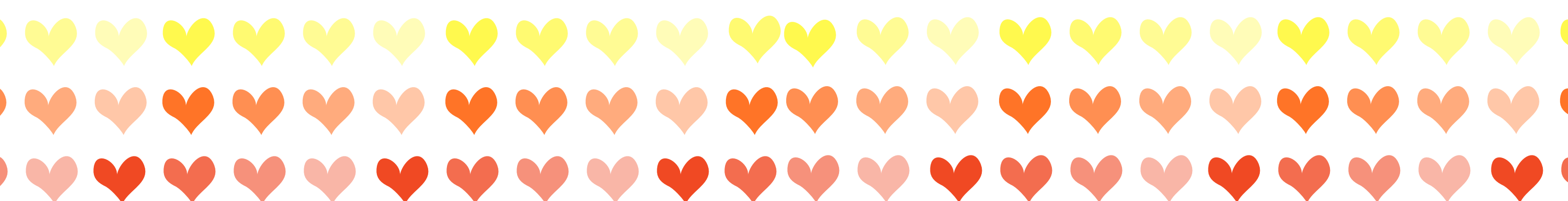


POSTGENDER WORLD

IS IT POSSIBLE?



BY: SHERIDAN LANTZ





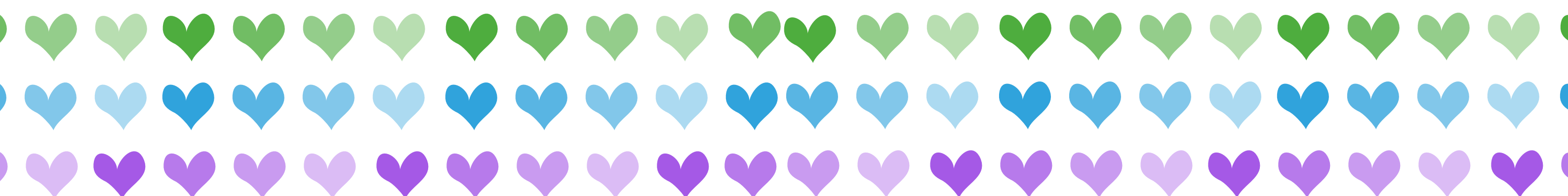
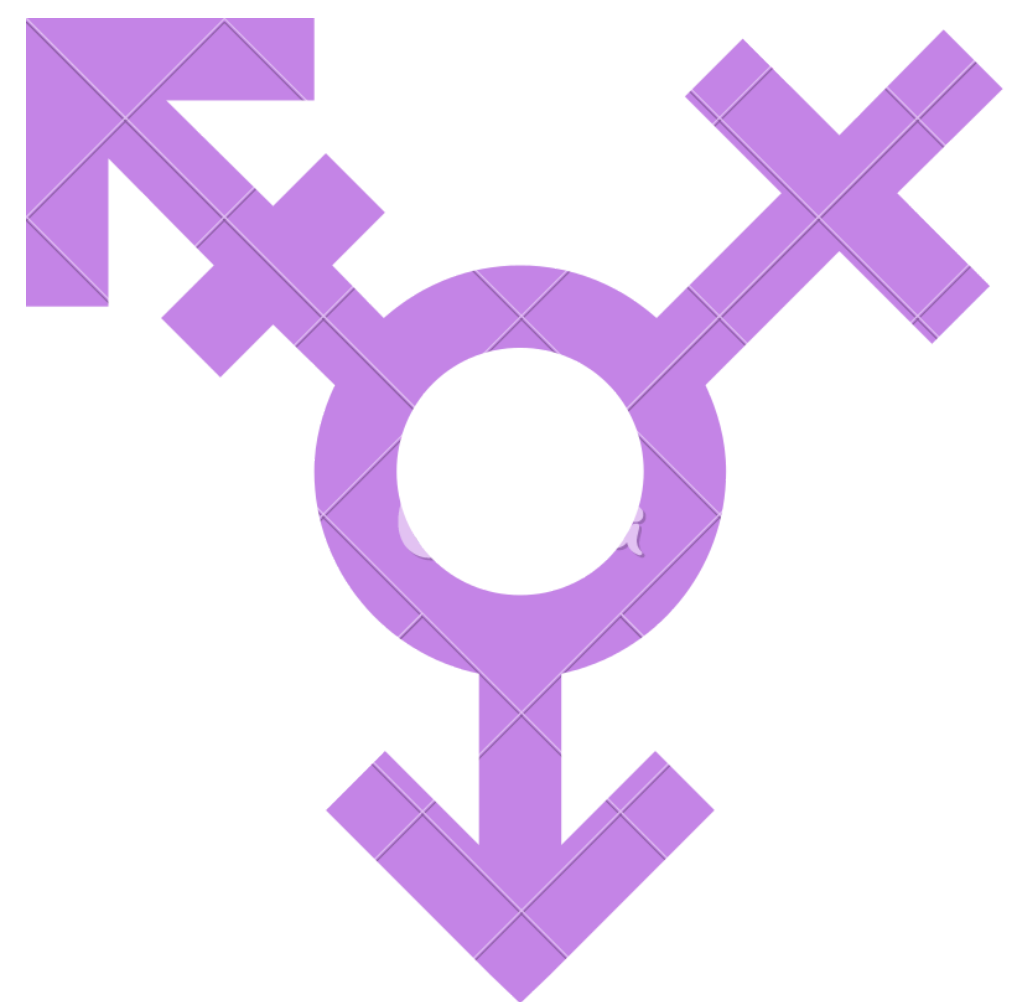
What Is Postgender?

Gender affects every aspect of an individual's life. It is applied to their social life, work, and relationships. It affects how an individual acts around others in public places or even at home.

As Knudson-Martin and Mahoney noted, "***in this gender-as-culture view, women and men come from different worlds, see the world through different lenses, and develop different styles of relating. This perspective, as it has usually been articulated, can reinforce and perpetuate gender differences.***" (1999)

In today's society, the gender perspective of only two genders is bending and twisting. An individual can now decide what they want their sexual orientation and gender identity to be and it does not have to fit into the western culture gender ideal. However, gender still has a tremendous influence on everyone.

This is where the **postgender** approach steps in and challenges the existing gender stereotypes and constructions. In the postgender approach, "*gender is disengaged from norms based on heterosexuality and power differences between women and men, and relationships are thought of in terms of equality rather than gender differences.*" (Knudson-Martin & Laughlin, 2005)





In the Community

Lincoln Public Schools are promoting an agenda to help all students succeed and feel safe at school. Their agenda is about gender inclusiveness. They used a postgender approach handout to incorporate gender inclusiveness in the classroom.

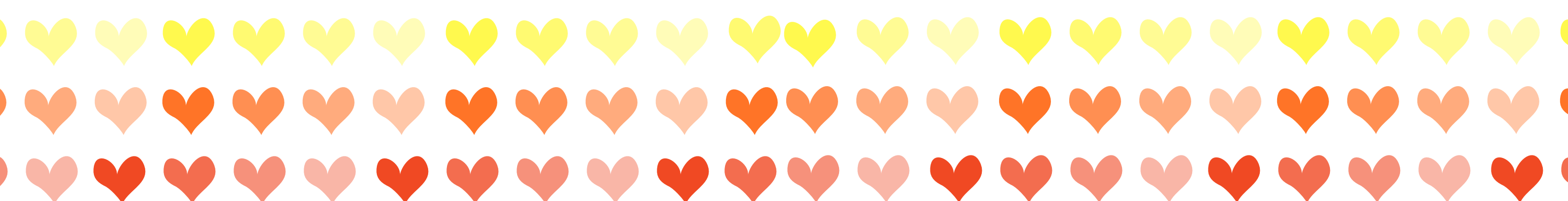
According to Nameberry, a popular baby naming website, the hottest trend for 2016 is postgender baby names (Williams, 2016).

Linda Murray, the editor in chief of BabyCenter, stated: "**today's parents have moved beyond the dichotomy of boy and girl names.**" She also noted that parents "**want their children to grow up and be themselves, free from stereotypes.**"

(Williams, 2016)



Chelsea Marsh, a mother of a 6-month-old daughter, weighed in on this postgender name trend. Marsh stated, "my goal is to allow her to experience the world without the barriers of pink girly things. I want her to be strong, play in the dirt and challenge herself to try new things, even if it's not 'what girls do.'"

She also added, "I would do the same for my son, if he wanted to be a dancer instead of a basketball player." (Williams, 2016)



How Is It Being Applied?

Family therapists are now using the postgender approach. Knudson-Martin and Laughlin state, "*despite rapidly changing gender and relationships ideals, inequalities between the genders persist.*" (2005) This approach "*challenges, rather than reinforces, existing gender differences and helps clients move beyond them.*" (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1999)



How Is It Being
Applied?

In the Community (continued...)



Universal Steps To Becoming Gender Inclusive

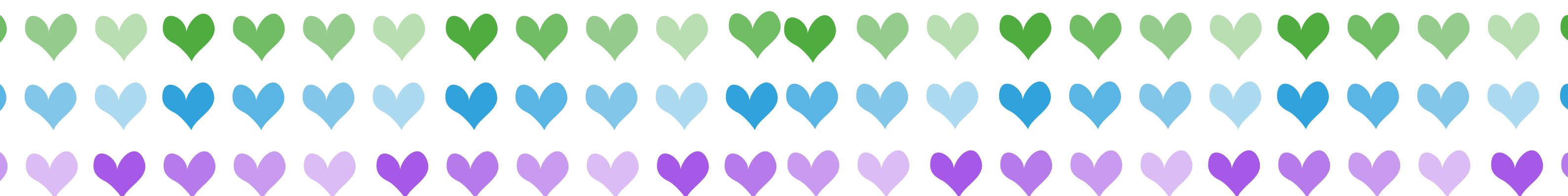


- Look for examples in the media that reinforce gender stereotypes or binary models of gender (it won't be hard; they're everywhere). When with others, call it out and interrogate it.
- Share personal anecdotes from your own life that reflect gender inclusiveness. Even better, share examples when you were not gender inclusive in your thinking, words or behaviors, what you learned as a result, and what you will do differently next time.
- When you find it necessary to reference gender, say "Boy, girl, both or neither." When asked why, use this as a teachable moment. Emphasize to students that your classroom recognizes and celebrates the gender diversity of all students.
- Do the work yourself. What are your own experiences with gender? What might be some of your own biases? What assumptions do you make about the gender of others? Share reflections about your own evolving understandings about gender.

(Wright, 2014)



These steps are just four out of the twelve steps that are from Gender Spectrum website, that Lincoln Public School utilizes for their gender inclusive agenda. These four steps that are noted above can be universal. The steps can be used in a classroom setting, boys&girls club, a counselor position or even a mentor position.



How Is It Being Applied?

In different parts of Europe, advocates are pushing for more of a postgender world. Billboard ads in Berlin have to abide by new rules that ensure that the ads do not display stereotyping of gender. Advocates "are pressing for policies and laws ensuring that everything from bathrooms to boardrooms to street signs are gender neutral." (Faiola, 2015) The German language is also under consideration to reconstruct the gender-based masculine phrasing.

In downtown Vienna, Austria there are street lights with same-gender pairs.

(Faiola, 2015)

Around The World

There are five preschools in Stockholm that are part of a gender-neutral policy in Sweden's Education Act. The Act required all Sweden schools to work against gender stereotyping, which meant implementing gender-neutral strategies. One strategy that is utilized is the use of "'hen' as a gender-neutral alternative to he or she" (Leach, 2016).

The schools' coordinator, Frida Wikstrom, noted, "***we don't say, 'Come on boys, let's go play football,' because there might be girls who want to play football. We say 'friends' instead because it puts yourself on an equal level.***"

(Leach, 2016)

