The Fight for Our Lives

Protecting Trans and Gender-Diverse People in Healthcare

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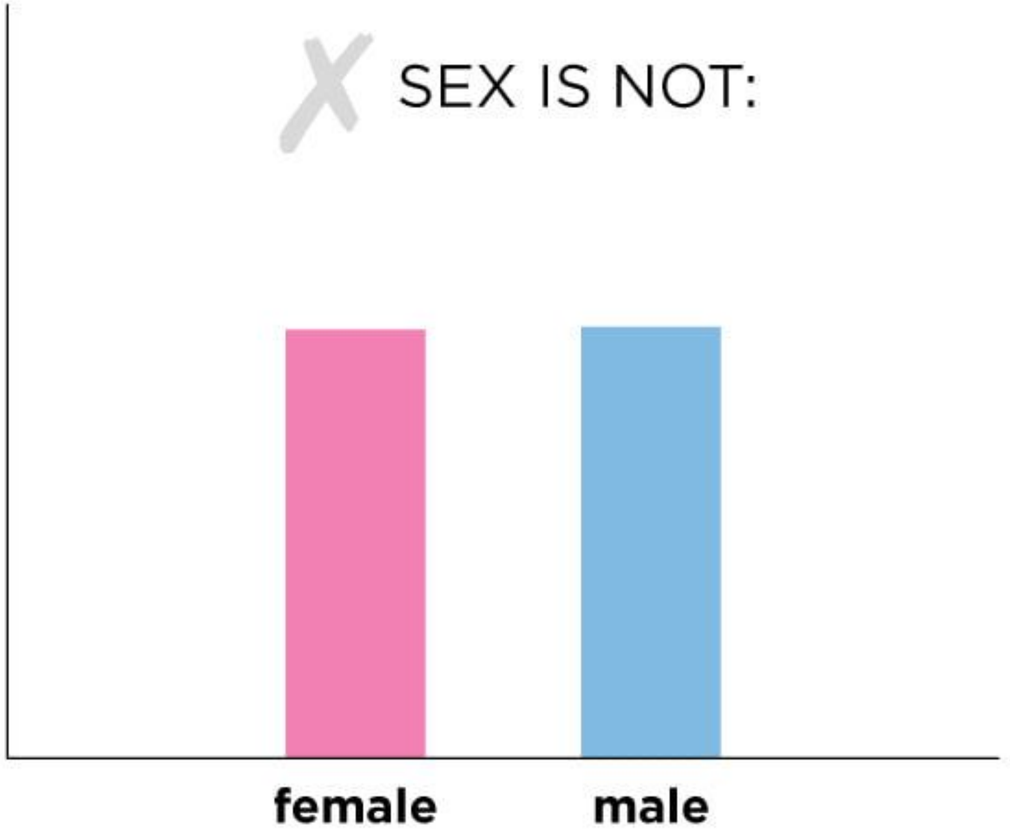
she/her/hers
CEO and President, Transhealth

An Intro to Gender Diversity

Gender identity and gender expression are defined differently in cultures throughout the world

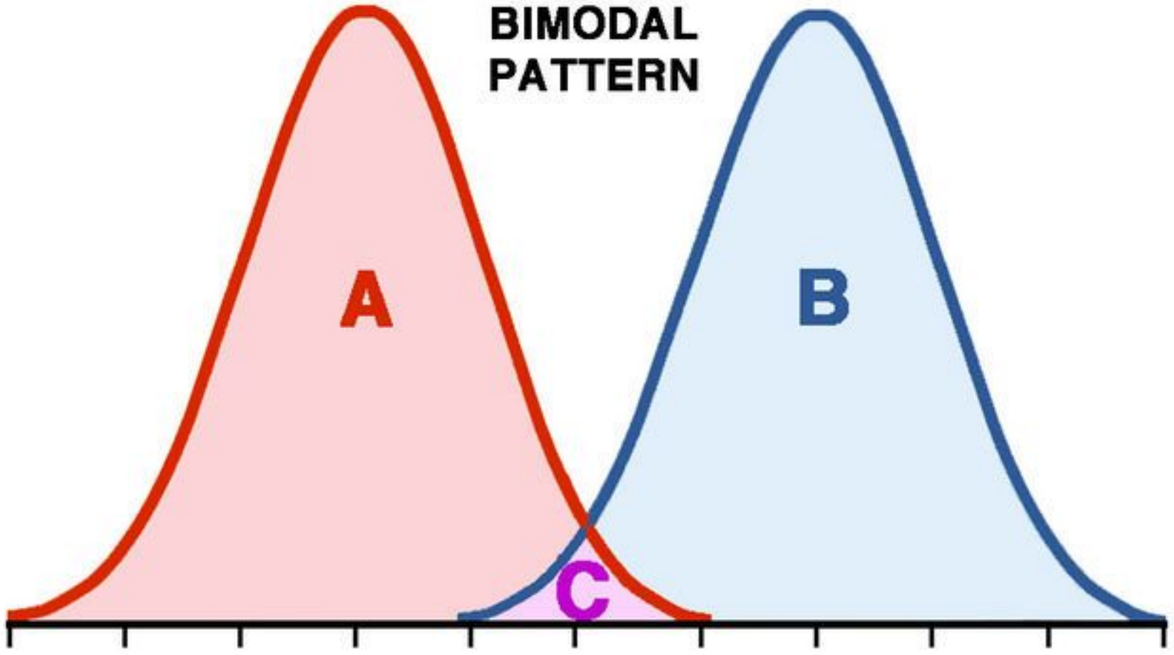
BIMODAL DISTRIBUTION

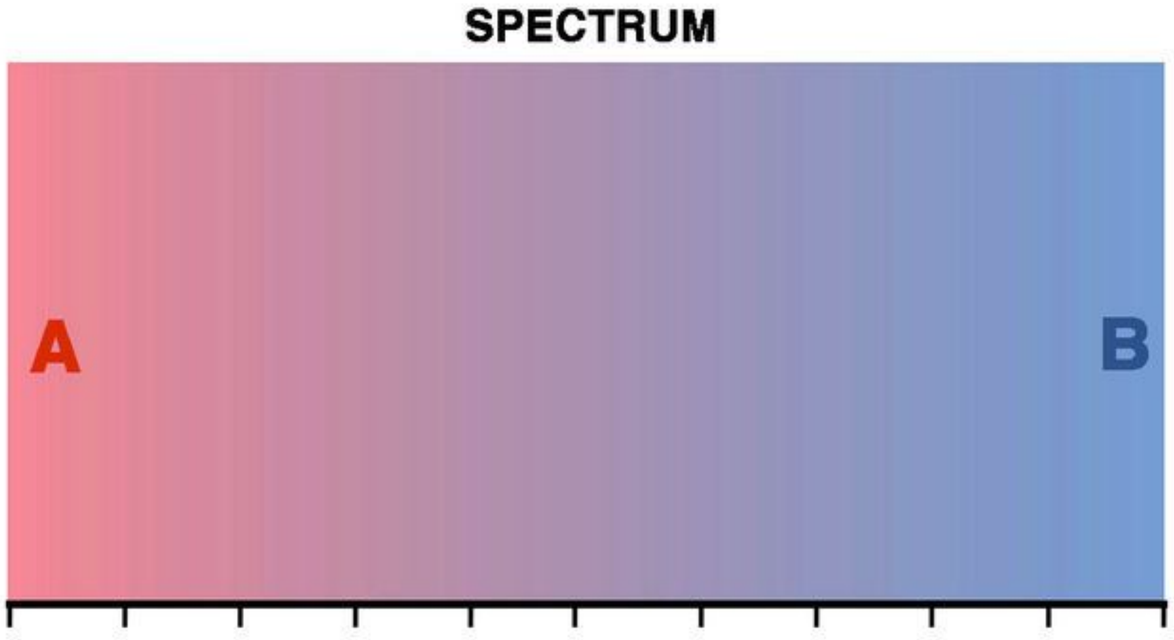
✗ SEX IS NOT:



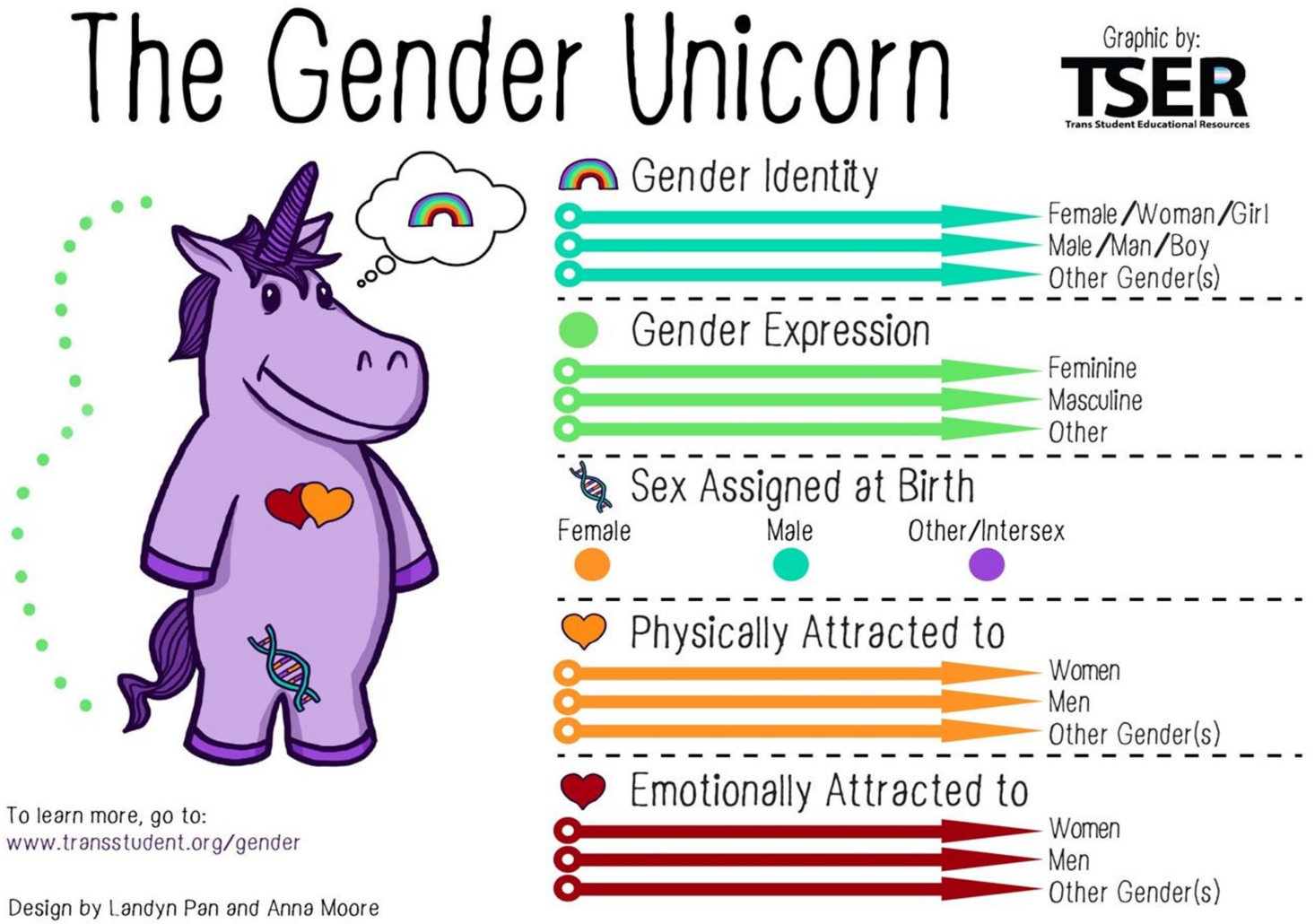
✓ SEX IS MORE LIKE:

© Fifty Shades of Gender 2021


BIMODAL
PATTERN
A
B
C


SPECTRUM
A
B

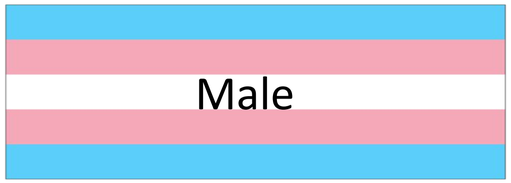
Humans are diverse, multi-layered, fabulous individuals!

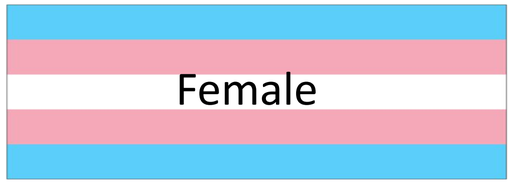


Femininity
Masculinity, something else?

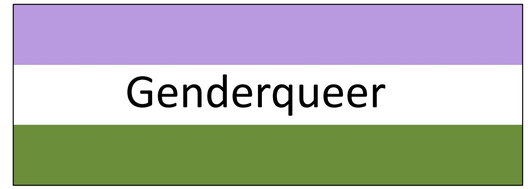
Gender Diverse

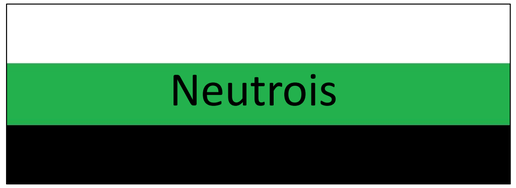
Binary

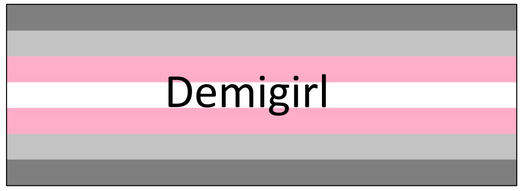


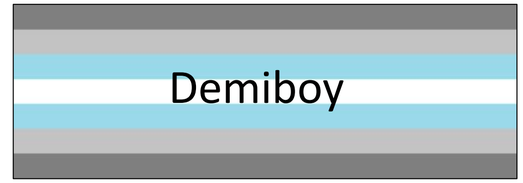


Non-Binary









More…

Note: Not everyone who is on this slide will identify with the word transgender.

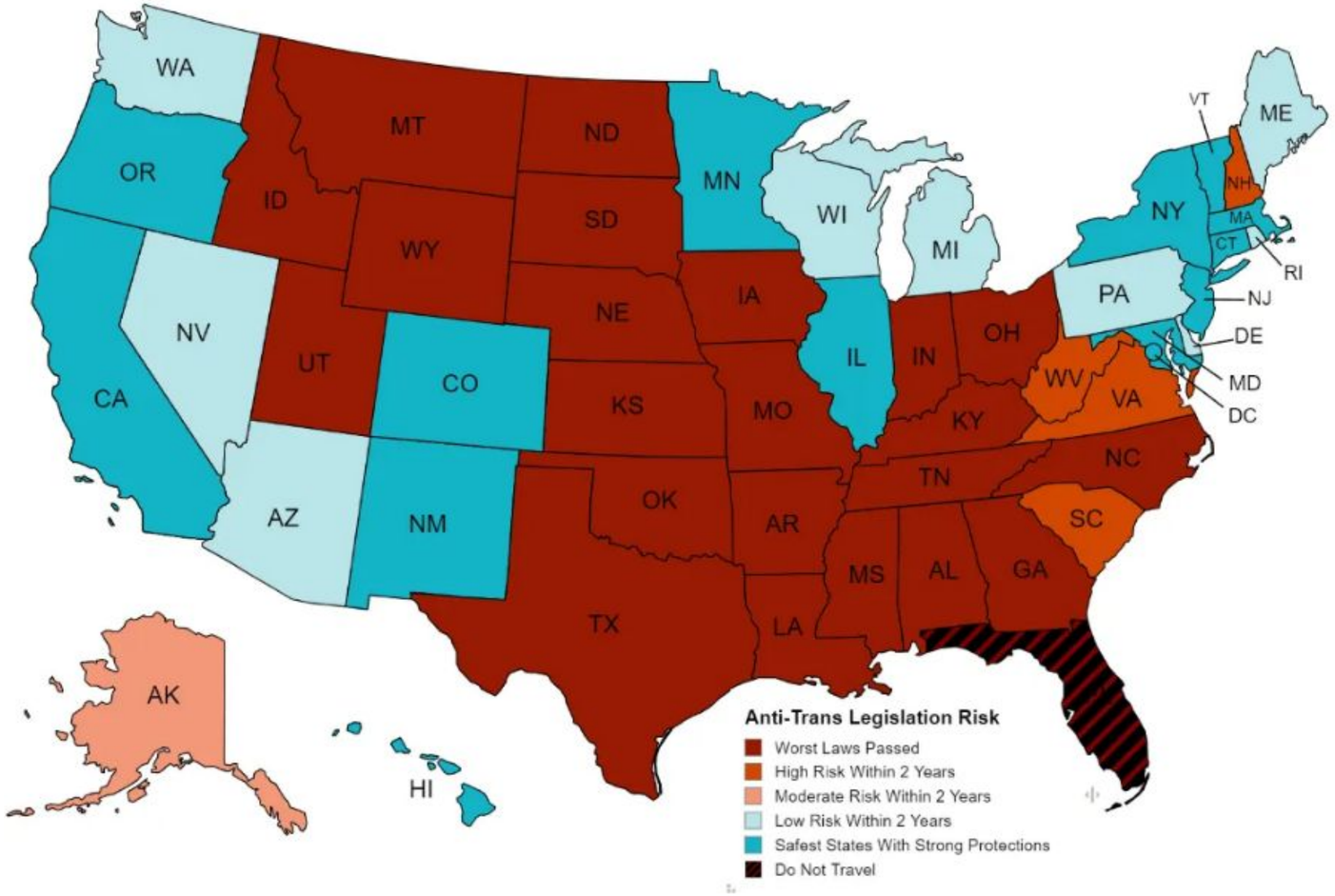
The Landscape Now

Countering The Spectrum of Attacks on Trans Lives

Disinformation Vilification Ostracization Legislation Violence

Youth: Anti-Trans Legislative Risk Assessment Map: March 2024 Update

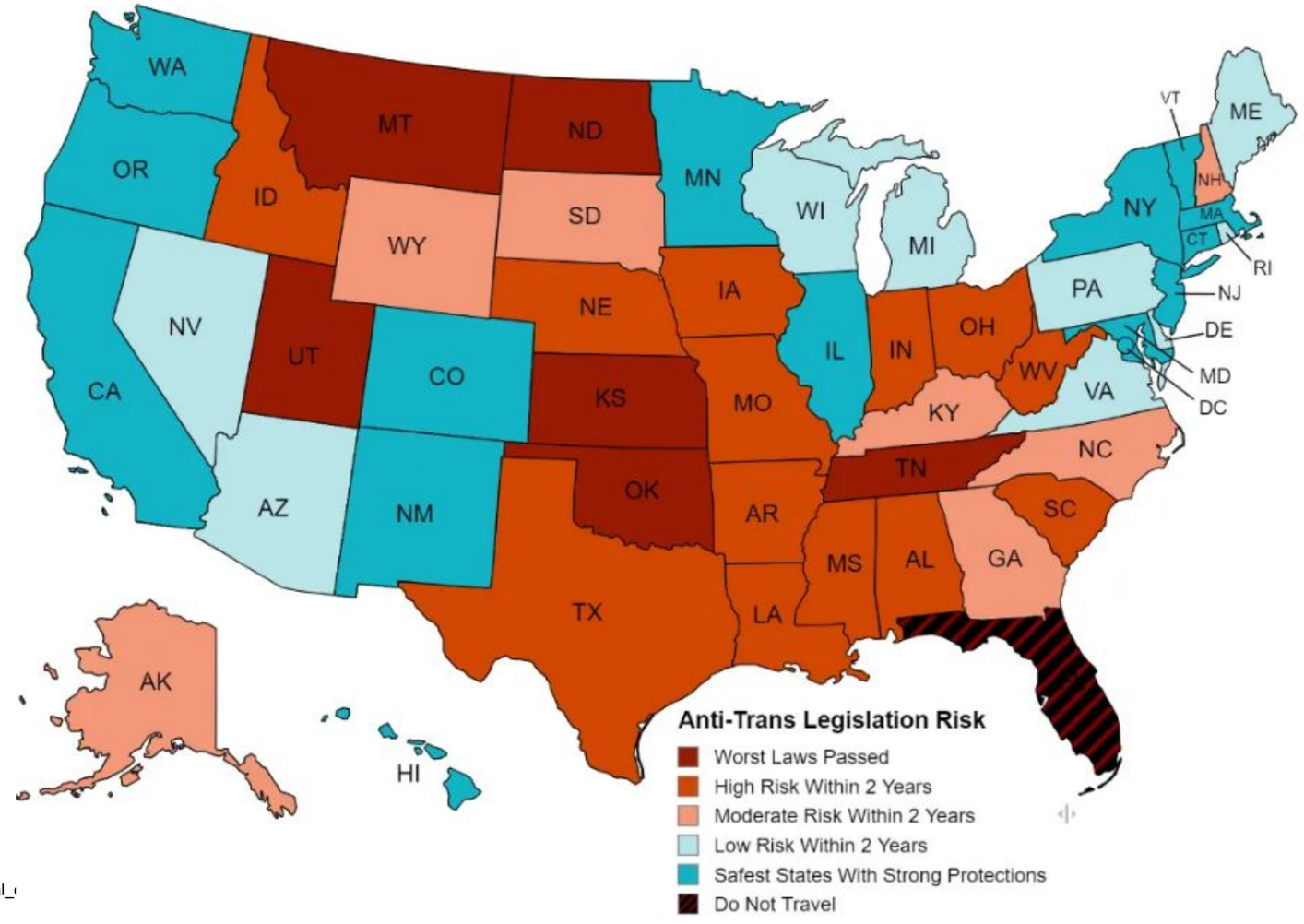
***From Erin Reed**



https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps

Adults: Anti-Trans Legislative Risk Assessment Map: March 2024 Update

***From Erin Reed**



https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/healthcare_youth_medical_

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ICE
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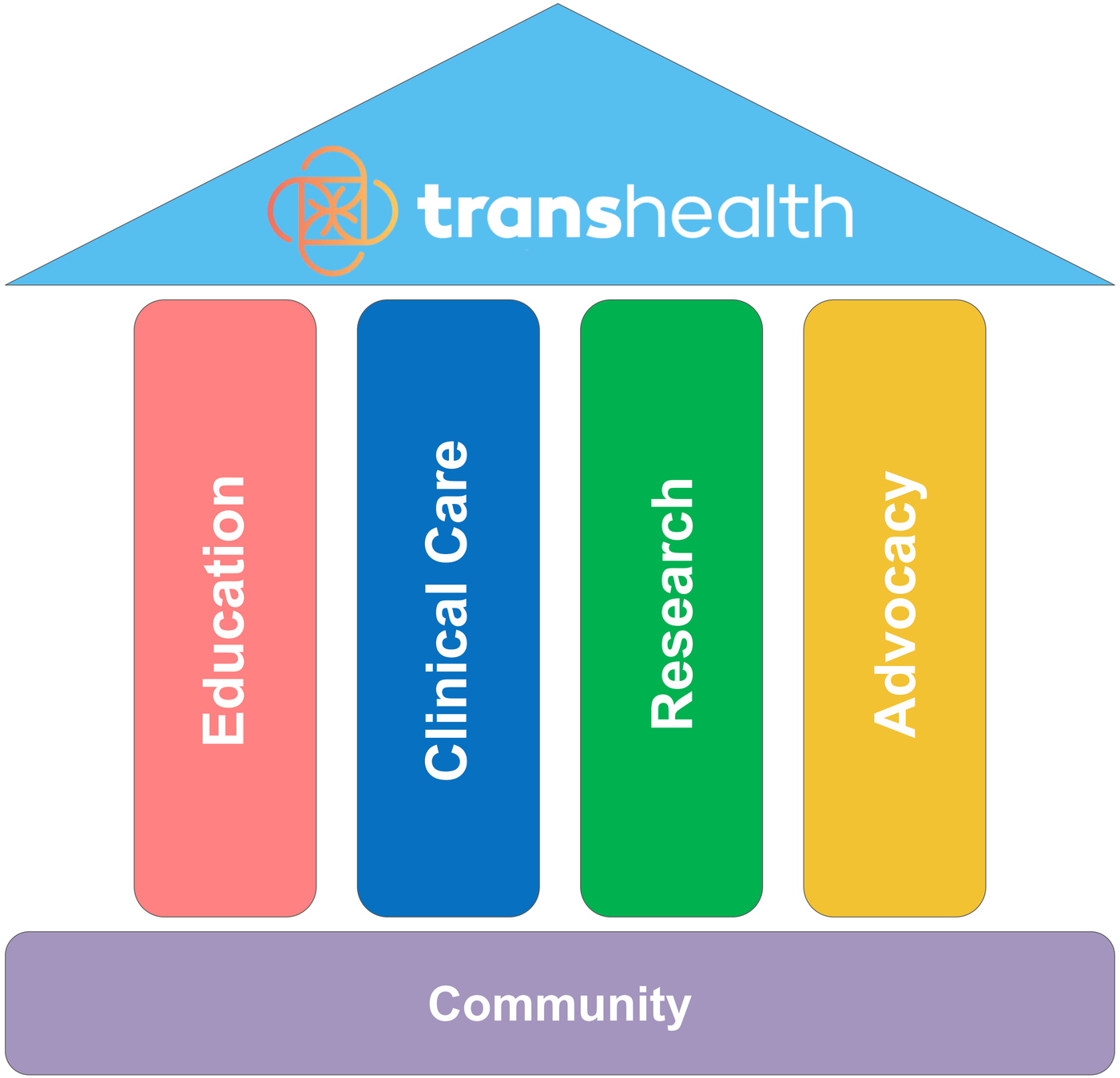
CRIME

Boston Children's Hospital received another bomb threat, police say all clear

The person who sent the threat said they did so because they oppose the gender-affirming care the hospital provides transgender and non-binary youth.

An Affirming Model of Care


transhealth
Education
Clinical Care
Research
Advocacy
Community

Affirming Care As A Model of Care

Healthcare pathologizes bodies and identities.

Gender-affirming healthcare is based on informed consent, it is trauma-informed, and allows for a life of wellness.

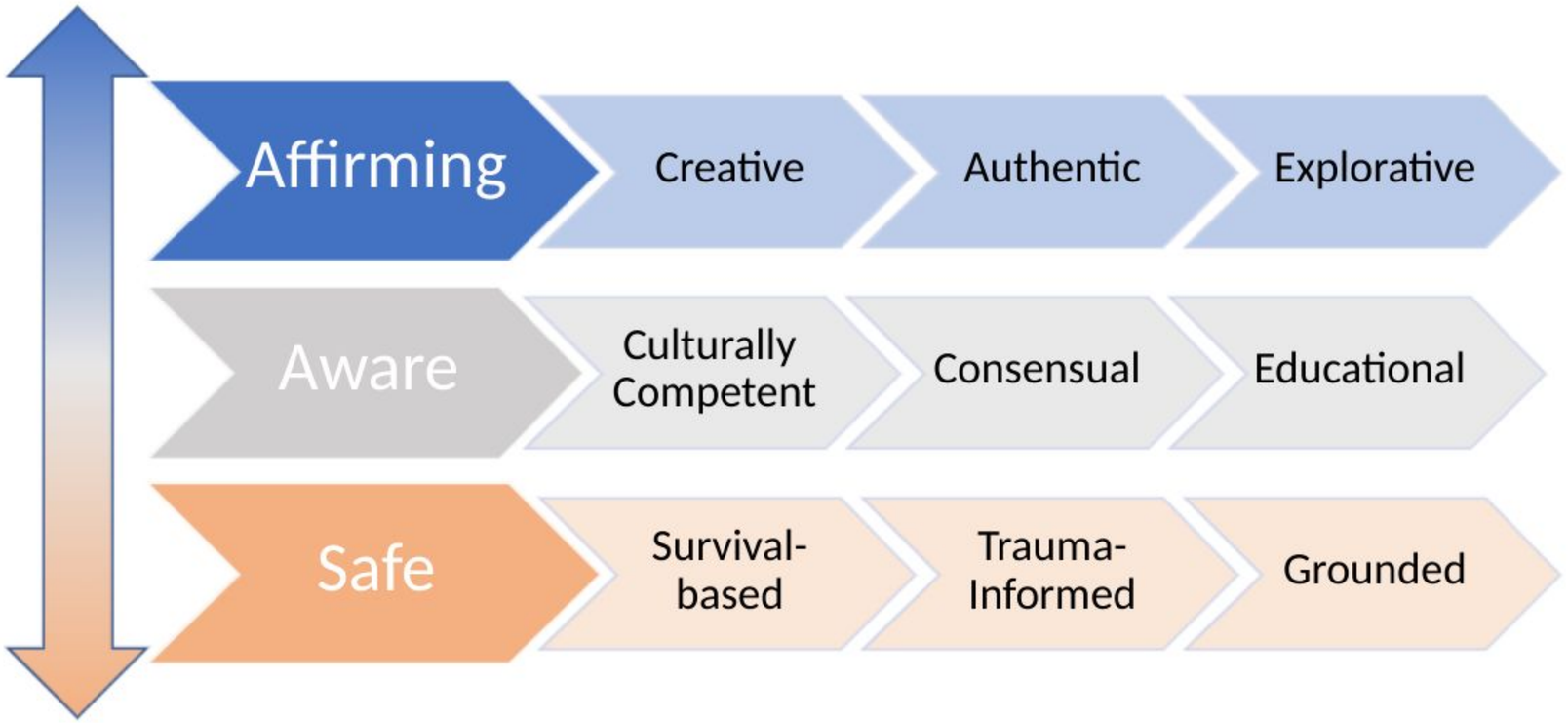
Gender-affirming healthcare puts the patient in the driver's seat.

Care for gender-diverse individuals can be a model for all healthcare.

Trust Underpins Good Healthcare

Trust	50-70% of all trans or gender-diverse patients are discriminated against, large-scale mistrust in medical community
Care	We can offer a different model, one that is patient-centered, trauma informed, and holistic in approach leading to high patient retention and satisfaction
Access	Direct access to affirming care can be life-saving for all patients and change the relationship to healthcare

Affirmation is an interpersonal process; the floor is a safe space, the ceiling is the ability for the individual to be authentic and curious



The patient interaction becomes a space for co-creation and recognition of bias – this relationship is the platform for healing and growth.

you made
me whole
for the first time!
Thank you!
HERCULES
ERASER

Moving Forward and Showing Up

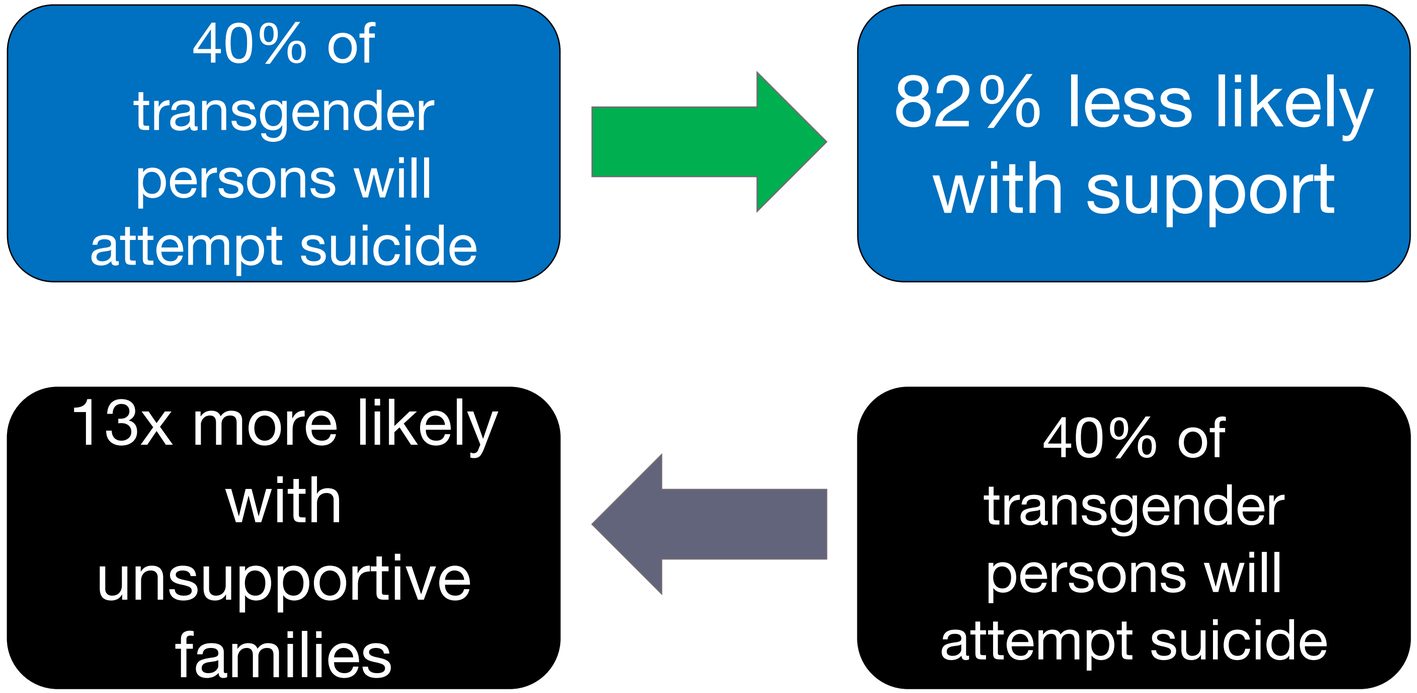
Dispelling Misconceptions: Transgender People Do Not Enjoy Special Privileges

Discrimination: Nearly half including 68% of transgender people of color.

Postponing/Avoiding Care: More than half, including 60% of transgender respondents of color.

Insurance Denials: 46%, including 56% of transgender respondents of color.

Dispelling Misconceptions: Suicide Attempts are Not Intrinsic to Being Trans



These are those who live to report suicidality.

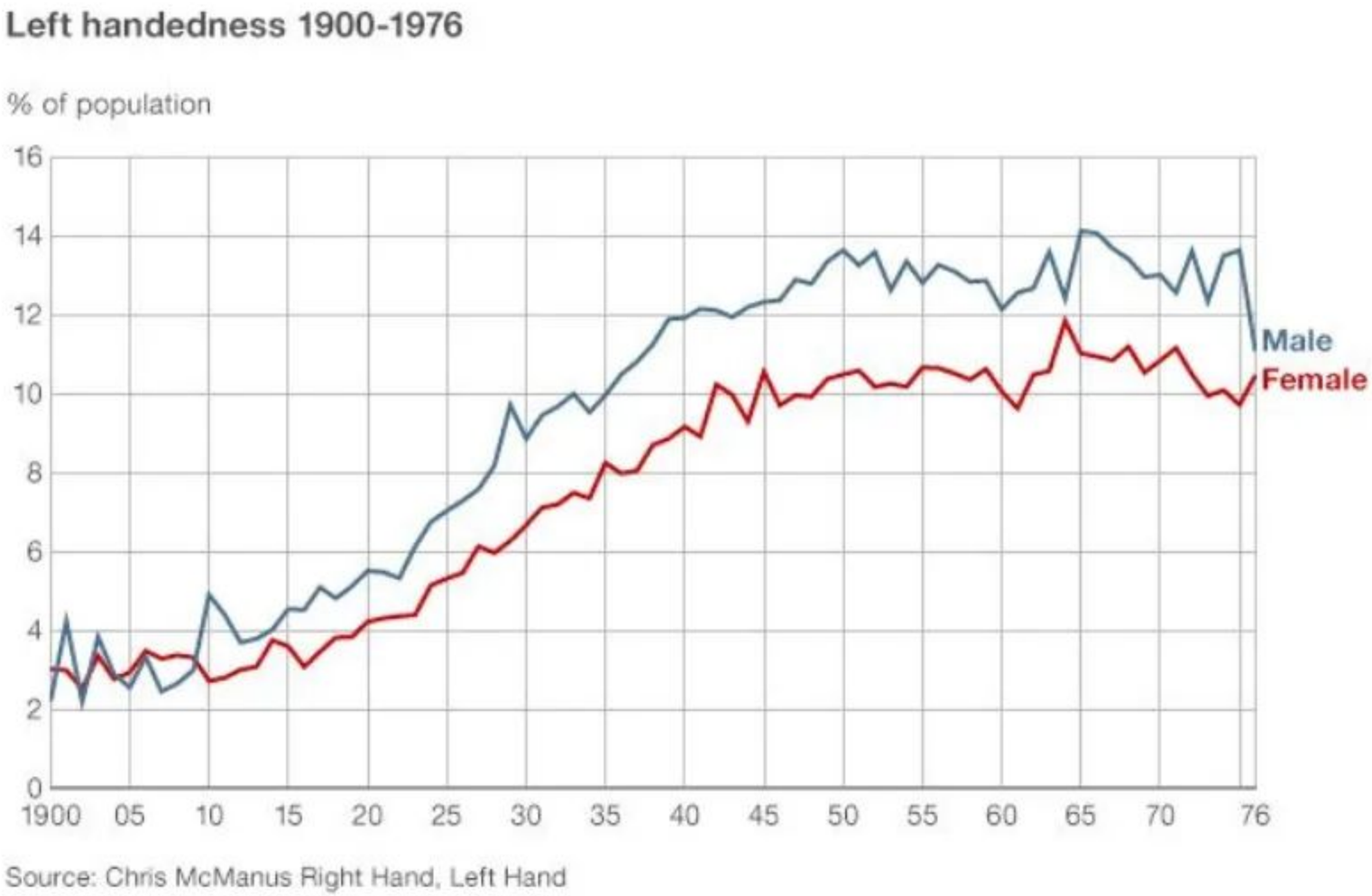
Dispelling More Misconceptions

1. **Fact:** Puberty is irreversible – the choice to do nothing is a permanent one.
   a. Blockers are not just about pause, but preventing unwanted irreversible choices.

2. **Fact:** This is an assessment, not a conveyor belt - including multiple mental health providers in pediatric care and parents at every stage before any decision is made.
   a. Assessment and treatment planning according to the expert standards of care.

3. **Fact:** No two transitions are exactly alike. Transition is a very individualized, age-appropriate process that is a long-term partnership between providers, their patients, and the patient's parents.
   a. One commonality: The rate of regret is incredibly low, lower than knee replacements.

Countering Disinformation



A Changing Landscape

- 8/10 Americans support nondiscrimination
- 2/3rds of Americans oppose bills limiting trans rights
- Fox News poll (2023) 83% believe trans children are wrongly targeted by political attacks
- Five percent of youth now identify as gender-diverse, 20% of Gen Z identify as LGBTQ+
- An overwhelming majority believes the government should not intervene in medical decisions regarding gender-affirming care for transgender youth, provided parents are involved in those decisions (2024 Mason Dixon Polling & Strategy poll among registered voters in South Carolina)

Professional Organizations Support Gender-Affirming Care

Professional associations have clear policies in support of advocacy and activism, and many explicitly require advocacy as an ethical principle for patient advocacy.

- ANA
- AMA Declaration of Professional Responsibility
- APA Commitment to LGBTQ Rights
- AAP Policy Statement
- AACAP Code of Ethical Principles
- NASW Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

Emphasize Shared Values

- Common values: liberty, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness
- Parental rights, keep government bans out of family decisions
- Emphasize shared experience
- Illustrate concrete harms
- Avoid reinforcing negative beliefs

What We Can Do Together

Adopting Universal Precautions - no assumptions, introducing oneself with one's name and pronouns

Having conversations with those who we may not agree with - the moveable middle - values based language

Changing institutional policy

Recognizing our own power and the importance of action within community

Showing up authentically at work

A Novel Model

- Shift from Treatment to Community
- Leveraging Telehealth When Possible
- Longer, Patient-Led Encounters
- Real-World Concerns Over Insurance Dictates
- Staff Well-Being
- Community Engagement

The Future Ahead

- A person-centered, community-focused model is **value based healthcare**.
- It starts with rebuilding **trust** in healthcare.
- The clinical encounter can be a **sanctuary** and a vehicle for **community**.

What is one action that you can commit to when you leave here today?

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