Gender Wheel Training

Implementing the Gender Wheel Approach

Resource Packet







Thanks for attending!

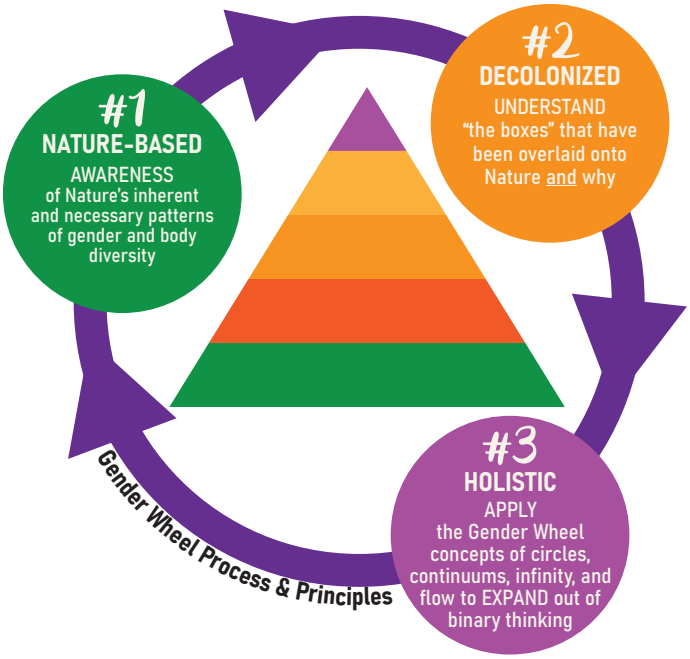
Here are a few handouts to that we reviewed in the training including:

- Gender Wheel Approach Action Plan
- Pronoun Protocol
- Reading Protocol Bookmark

  *(*ideally print pages 7&8 double-sided if you want the full bookmark)*
- Awareness of Environment Checklist
- GenderFREE Criteria
- Pushback Strategies
- FREE to BE Tips

Find even more resources on our website for bringing in a Nature-Based, Decolonized, and Holistic perspective of gender:

WWW.GENDERWHEEL.COM



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Nature-Based, Decolonized, Holistic

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Gender Wheel Approach

Action Plan



5 Areas to Address

We apply the 3 Principles/3 Steps of the Gender Wheel Approach (Nature-based, Decolonized, Holistic) to each of these areas in order to create effective change.

Mindset

Personal Assessment

- Gender Wheel Educational Tool
  - *Expand into Holistic Thinking*
- Playing with Pronouns Card Deck
  - *Uncover and Dismantle Assumptions*
- Gender Wheel Books
  - *Change the gender narrative*

1 Awareness of binary thinking and our own biases, assumptions, & attachments

2 Explore how to use language to be more inclusive and expand our understanding

Address immediate issues but always with awareness of how those solutions must also interrupt larger systemic oppression

3 Assess and take steps to remedy verbal/ nonverbal binary gender messages in environment

4 Interrupt the formalization of binary thinking, stereotypes, and implicit bias in media

5

Language

- Pronoun Protocol
- Reading Protocol

Environment

- Awareness of Environment Checklist

Media

- Media, Books and Educational Materials - Genderfree Criteria
- Prioritizing Voices with Lived Experience

Systemic

- Prepared for Pushback
- Larger Implications

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Gender Wheel Approach

Action Plan



	Assessment Notes	Action Items
1 Mindset		
2 Language		

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Gender Wheel Approach

Action Plan



	Assessment Notes	Action Items
3 Environment		
4 Media		
5 Systemic		

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THE PRONOUN PROTOCOL

They · She · She & They · My name · He · Ze

The Pronoun Protocol is 12 agreements with the intention of creating a way of speaking that fundamentally includes everybody all the time and interrupts the cycle of gender stereotypes and assumptions. These agreements are designed to support adults in modeling gender-inclusive practices for kids.

Read more about these agreements: www.pronounprotocol.org

Remove Assumptions/ Reclaim Fluidity

1. As a foundation, always use gender-inclusive words like *people, person, kid, relative, sibling, parent*, etc.
2. See people as people first without gender assumptions.
3. Don't assume you know someone's pronoun based on their name or appearance.

Inclusive Ways of Speaking/ Respecting Privacy and Safety

4. Use the singular pronoun *they* as a default in public for people you don't know, instead of assuming *he* or *she*.
5. Use a person's name if you don't know their pronoun. If you must use a pronoun, you could use *they*.
6. Unless it is confirmed safe space, don't ask someone's gender or pronoun, it is theirs to tell or not when ready.
7. If someone shares their pronouns with you, use them.
8. Remember that people can have more than one pronoun and pronouns can also change.

Doing the Work to Create Systemic Change

9. There are more than two or even three pronouns. Learn about and practice *ze, xe*, using a *name*, and more.
10. If you slip into assumptions, apologize briefly if necessary, and simply return to the Pronoun Protocol.
11. Establish this as a standard to include everybody, whether or not there are non-binary people present.
12. Always use the Pronoun Protocol in public settings.



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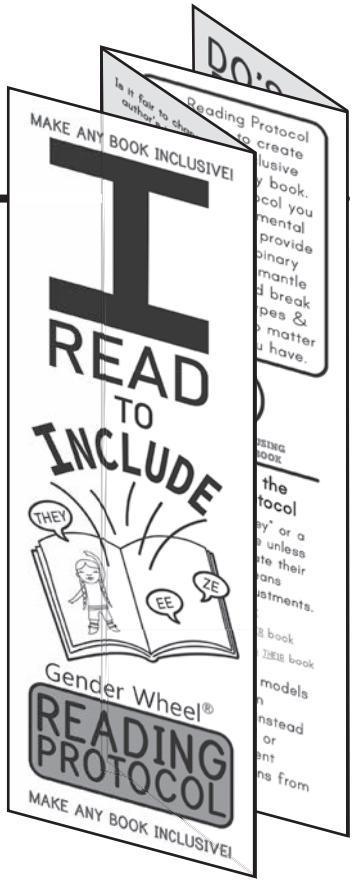
READING PROTOCOL



BOOKMARK



Here's a handy bookmark reminder that you can place in ANY book that you'd like to expand with the Reading Protocol to create new inclusive stories!

MAKING YOUR BOOKMARK:

1. Print the following 2 pages double-sided.
   (flip on the short side for double printing)
2. Fold in an accordion format along the dotted lines so it makes a bookmark similar to the image shown to the right.
3. If you want, you can check the box on the protocol you'd like to use on the book. This is especially helpful if you have multiple people reading the same book to kids as a way to keep everyone on the same (gender-inclusive) page!

Watch some examples in action:
WWW.GENDERWHEEL.COM/PLAYING-WITH-PRONOUNS-IN-BOOKS

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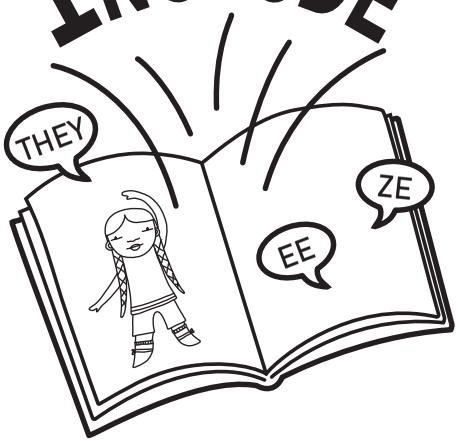
MAKE ANY BOOK INCLUSIVE!

I READ TO INCLUDE



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READING PROTOCOL

MAKE ANY BOOK INCLUSIVE!

Watch it in action: WWW.GENDERWHEEL.COM/PLAYING-WITH-PRONOUNS-IN-BOOKS

The Reading Protocol is 3 ways to create a gender-inclusive reading of any book. With this protocol you have an opportunity to provide queer, trans & nonbinary reflection, dismantle the binary, and break down stereotypes & assumptions no matter what book you read.

PROTOCOL #1

☐ CHECK IF USING FOR THIS BOOK

READ with the Pronoun Protocol

- Use singular "They" or a character's name unless they explicitly state their pronoun. This means making verb adjustments.

EXAMPLE:

HE is reading HIS book

THEY are reading THEIR book

WHAT THIS DOES:

Models using "they" as an inclusive default instead of assuming "he" or "she." Helps interrupt binary assumptions from forming.

PROTOCOL #2

☐ CHECK IF USING FOR THIS BOOK

REFRAME and ADAPT with Playing with Pronouns

- Make a list of characters in the book and a range of pronouns then decide with the kid (or kids) your reading to what pronouns to use for each character.

character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun
character's name	new pronoun

WHAT THIS DOES:

Opportunity to practice using lots of pronouns. New diverse adaptations that un-erase those who are often STILL left out of books. Expands creative thinking.

PROTOCOL #3

☐ CHECK IF USING FOR THIS BOOK

REINTERPRET to Fully Disrupt Assumptions and the "Girl Boy Lie"

- Switch out pronouns and use "she" for a "he" character and "he" for a "she" character.

EXAMPLE:

SHE is playing with HER dolls

HE is playing with HIS dolls

- The *Playing with Pronouns* card deck can be a great resource. For example, if a character is wearing a dress, there are several characters in the card deck that are wearing dresses and use "he" and can give faces to these reinterpreted stories.

WHAT THIS DOES:

Interrupts formalization of stereotypes for what "he" or "she" looks like. Breaks down binary gender roles. Expands our thinking and encourages complete acceptance and respect for everybody to freely be who they are.

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DO'S & DON'TS

DO include kids in the process in age-appropriate ways.

- when younger, reading in these ways can be done as a matter of course, as kids age tell them what you are doing and why.

DO stay aware when reading and keep thinking fluid in order to stay consistent.

- rote reading becomes a thing of the past as you learn to translate in the moment like you would another language.

DO start small and build up with practice.

- Begin with simple books then you can expand your awareness to use all of these methods with older and more complicated books.

DON'T hide or lie about what is actually written in a book.

- helping kids see through binary ideas of gender is the point. This means always being honest with kids about what you're doing.



Some simple responses to common Pushback

"Is that really what it says?"

"That's not a boy, that's a girl."



I'm changing the pronouns/words to include everybody, especially people who are often left out by old ideas about what it means to be 'boy' or 'girl.' There are lots more people in the world than just two. Let's practice including everybody and creating new stories together.

"You can't read a book that way!"



Reinterpretations of books and movies happen all the time. I'm reinterpreting this story to include real people that I know and love who rarely have stories that reflect them.

Is it fair to change the author's intent for a character?

This is a way of extending the creative process for personal and/or educational purposes. Un-erasing the many people who are still not included in nearly ALL narratives is a valuable and powerful practice for kids to be involved in. Especially kids from communities that are often erased like queer, trans, and intersex people.

It's also worth noting that comic books and movie remakes often take great liberties in "reinterpreting" characters, also going so far as to change genders at times to make stories more contemporary or inclusive.

These are not unimaginable people. In fact, by simply using this protocol **you would reflect many real-life nonbinary, queer, trans and intersex people.** Beloved FICTIONAL characters from favorite classics can expand and create even deeper, more nuanced versions that can bring actual relevance and reflection to queer, trans, and intersex kids.

PRONOUN CHEAT SHEET

SHE	Her	Hers	Herself
SHEY	Sher	Shers	sherself
FAE	Faer	Faers	Faerself
EY	Eem	Eirs	Eemself
AE	Aer	Aers	Aerself
THEY	Them	Theirs	Themself
THON	Thon	Thon's	Thonself
ONE	One	One's	Oneself
PER	Per	Pers	Perself
TREE	Tree	Trees	Treeself
VE	Ver	Vers	Verself
NE	Nem	Nirs	Nemself
ZE	Zir or Hir	Zirs or Hirs	Zirself or Hirself
XE	Xem	Xyrs	Xemself
HIE	Hir	Hiers	Hirself
HE	Him	His	Himself
EE	Eem	Eers	Eemself
E	Em	Eirs	Emself

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEARN MORE about the Pronoun Protocol
WWW.PRONOUNPROTOCOL.ORG

LEARN MORE about the Playing with Pronouns Card Deck
WWW.PLAYINGWITHPRONOUNS.COM

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Awareness of Environment Checklist



☐ **1. <u>BEGIN WITH THE FEELING TONE OF AN ENVIRONMENT.</u>** So often it is what is *not* spoken that speaks volumes. To begin establishing an inclusive environment, start speaking about the current world systems that are not inclusive, and the constant pressure to conform to gender stereotypes. It's not necessary to be overly obvious. Inserting small comments at times may be more impactful.

The power of acknowledgement:

- Breaks down barriers created by silence.
- Interrupts isolation by saying, I see it too, it's not ok, you're not alone.
- Brings conscious awareness to something for what it really is, one of the most important steps to changing something.
- Is speaking truth about nature, indigenous cultures, history, current reality and so on. This is calming. Honoring truth is calming.

Notes:

☐ **2. <u>TONE OF DEFENSE OR OPENNESS?</u>** Another important element is whether there is a tone of defense or openness. Having a sense of curiosity, even about one's own limitations and the limitations of systems that do not include everybody is valuable and nurtures trust and honesty.

Notes:

☐ **3. <u>NEXT TAKE IN THE WHOLE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.</u>** An environment should ideally feel fun and relaxing, the perfect place to play and learn.

Notes:

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT CONTINUED:

☐ **4.** **BEGIN WITH AUDITORY.** This would include language, pronouns, music, movies, news, educational materials and other media. It's not only about what words are being used. It's also about what voices are being heard and what is being talked about and how.

- *Is the news or radio on in the background at times?*
- *Are all the voices one or two kinds? Are there trans voices?*
- *What is being talked about? Are trans people included? How are they talked about?*

Notes:

☐ **5.** **NEXT LOOK AT THE VISUALS.** This is an important aspect of the nonverbal. So much can be communicated, even taught, without saying a word. This creates a deeper sense of belonging that indeed goes unspoken. In a world full of erasure, one poster can help bring visibility to a lot of kids.

○ **Look at art, posters, bulletin boards, murals and so on:**

- *What kinds of messages are being given about gender in the visuals in your space?*
- *Are there many ways to be a kid reflected or just two, maybe three?*
- *What kinds of clothes, roles, attitudes do kids see reflected for them?*
- *Are there any trans animals, ancestors, historical figures, etc...?*

○ **Look at magazines, books and other media with the same sense of criteria?**

- *How many books do you have that do not focus on "boy" and "girl" roles?*
- *How many books include more pronouns than he and she?*
- *What kinds of kids are mostly reflected in your books?*

○ **What about movies?**

- *Nature documentaries often heighten drama with stories that are more human projection than documented animal experience. If the human overlay is too stereotypical it is often better to turn the audio off, turn music on and create an inclusive research project instead.*
- *Some movies that use animals as characters outright lie about the truth of nature like Finding Nemo and Turbo. Others include transphobic jokes like The Lorax and The Grinch.*

Notes:

These provide a good place to start and will inspire you having more and more ideas on your own.

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TEN CRITERIA TO KEEP GENDER FREE IN EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS & CHILDREN'S BOOKS



ENCOURAGING PLAY & RELAXATION

CREATING FREE SPACE

PUTTING THE ONUS ON THE SYSTEM

GROW from truth and beauty

Body and gender diversity are a necessary and intrinsic part of nature contributing to the resilience of our species. Books & educational materials should honor and celebrate this as a normal part of learning and understanding the world.

EXPLORE infinity and nuance

We are not now nor have we ever been two kinds of bodies, two genders, or two ways to behave in the world. We were never two. We have always been infinity. Books & educational materials should strive to show the countless ways humans can be and express themselves.

NEST deep in diversity

To gain greater and greater understanding and inclusion of all people, we need to de-center traditional, patriarchal narratives and voices. Diversity must not only be in the visual representation, but also in how a story is being told and who is telling it.

DANCE away from finite labels and definitions

This is about letting kids explore who they are freely without limiting their expression with labels. When it comes to self, encourage inner authority and authenticity.

EVALUATE safety in current systems

Look at how kids are being portrayed in relation to safety in a larger world context, especially in regard to power dynamics. For example, we know that trans women of color are at greatest risk in our culture. Are young trans femmes of color shown in safe, secure ways?

REALIGN with truthFULL stories

Adopting new ways to make books inclusive changes everything! We have the power to choose HOW we read including calling out falsehoods and distortions. We have the power to include everybody right now! Engage the *Gender Wheel* Reading Protocol.

FOCUS on voices from the community

Lived experience cannot be underestimated. Prioritize books and materials written by the Queer/Trans/Intersex community. First/Own Voice authors with lived experience have greater insight into not only their oppression, but also their joy and beauty.

REMOVE problematic "guessing" narratives

Narratives about gender that say an adult or doctor made a guess about a baby's gender based on their body is not a true statement. In our current culture gender assignments/expectations are attached to sex assignments. These are not guesses or assumptions. "Guessing" narratives fail to interrupt systemic oppression and in fact, continue to affirm it. They also trivialize the pressure of conformity, sidestep systemic and personal responsibility, and preserve privilege.

END Cissexism

While they may not mean to, narratives about gender by cisgender people usually unconsciously have an implicit bias that prioritizes cisgender people.

EXPOSE the *"Girl Boy Lie"*

You can't talk about gender without addressing the elephant in the room: the intense, constant pressure to conform to stereotypical gender roles. This has a huge impact on kids' development and is at the heart of the *"Girl Boy Lie."*



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR BOOKS & EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS THAT KEEP GENDER FREEEEEE! WWW.GENDERWHEEL.COM



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PUSHBACK STRATEGIES



The most important thing when dealing with pushback is staying centered in yourself.

This makes it easier to discern whether a situation is a growth opportunity or someone is seeking engagement with no intention of shifting their opinions or beliefs. Developing emotional intelligence about situations is key.

Here are a number of positions you can use when addressing folks who are open to learn but are still caught in either old systemic structures or emotions. Assessing a situation helps you position yourself in the conversation with conscious awareness and discern an appropriate strategy.

OPEN/Seeding Strategy-seeding basic facts to ponder and explore. Plant the seeds and they will grow!

DEFENSIVE/Context Strategy-calling in the truth of nature and exposing how we have all been profoundly impacted by limited education and social conditioning regarding bodies and gender.

OFFENSIVE/Disengage Strategy-stating your position in the most basic neutral way possible and walking away.

SYSTEMIC/Decolonize Strategy-calling out and making changes to structural dynamics. Generally not toward an individual person but towards the system itself and how it has impacted our thinking and behaviors.

There is a progression to the strategies. One can begin with seeding, especially if getting to know the person or situation. Then can use context and decolonize strategies, and if necessary can use disengage strategy.

1. **QTI BODIES AND EXPERIENCES ARE DOCUMENTED AND (BECOMING) CONSIDERED UNIVERSAL: (seeding/decolonize)** this is not a false agenda, but based on the scholarship of many hundreds of researchers across the globe who are all coming to the same conclusions. (Joan Roughgarden and Bruce Bagemihl provide extensive resources in one place)

   Roughgarden's work shows that the prevalence of QTI bodies and experiences are prevalent in nature to such a degree that they cannot statistically be seen as anomalous. In fact, they can only be seen as necessary to the resilience and endurance of a species.

   The inevitability of Truth:

   "Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." - Cesar Chavez

   "There's no need to defend a person's right to exist when we teach truth that has been suppressed. The fact that gender stereotypes are everywhere, unquestioned, means kids (and grown ups) do not have an accurate context to navigate gender." - Playing with Pronouns Card Deck

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2. **NATURE-BASED: (seeding/context/decolonize)** there is nothing more powerful or fundamental to life than nature. Being in greater harmony with nature supports us personally and planetarily.
(Connected to #1 above.)

3. **MODELING: (seeding/decolonize)** this one can be particularly useful with kids. Must determine sense of safety to use with grown-ups. Use yourself as an "expansive model." Take the pressure off gender assumptions by purposefully doing or saying things that expand what kids (or grown-ups) think they know about your gender or gender expectations. Notice if being seen differently brings anything up for you. Imagine what it might feel like for a gender nonconforming kid to come forward.

   "Yeah, it's really cool, huh? (when a kid looks to a grownup about how to respond to another kid's gender expansiveness)

   "I don't feel comfortable with using boy and girl to choose teams, etc...when I was a kid I didn't really feel like I fit into boy or girl. Let's think of a different way to choose our team that includes everybody."

   If you hear a gender stereotype from kids, purposefully wear or do something to break that stereotype (for example wearing a pink shirt if you hear "boys don't wear pink")

4. **ACKNOWLEDGE SYSTEMIC TRAINING: (context/decolonize)** we have all been impacted by this. May be useful to share some of your own "awakenings" to the history and state of oppression in the US.

   The United States and Western culture has a long history of gender oppression and trauma. Sexism oppresses assigned females. Cis-sexism oppresses QTI people and racism oppresses Indigenous, Black and POC. As we know from news headlines, all of these oppressions are actively being grappled with in our country.

   The impact of these oppressions spreads across all disciplines and has been internalized in one way or another by most individuals.

   This has created an Emotional/psychological/physical dynamic of domination/violence/submission for generations in our country.

   Multiple systems impacted
   a. Medical
   b. Psychological
   c. Legal
   d. Social
   e. Political
   f. Educational
   g. Economic

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5. **COMPASSION FOR ALL OF US TRAINED IN THE SYSTEM**: **(context/decolonize)** trauma, heightened emotions and insecurity are fundamental to oppressive systems. Maintaining this larger perspective helps keep compassion present for ourselves and others.

What's key to understand when shifting fundamental beliefs about gender oppression is that it will involve letting go of privilege for most people in some way. This impending sense of loss for some people can trigger deep emotional responses, for many reasons. Knowing this can help you stay calm and grounded in the truth while allowing space for people to have their feelings.

Make room for patterns of healing and emotional processing. The old adage, time heals all wounds is a good one to remember. New perspectives take time to integrate. A judgmental stance is an impediment. Do your best to acknowledge that we have all been impacted by this and we all can heal through it in our own unique ways.

6. **CHOOSE TO BE RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE OF ALL:** **(seeding/disengage/decolonize)** this is a social justice and reparative framework. What does a social justice framework mean? It means inclusion and equity for everybody on a social and systemic level.

"Real inclusion is about creating a culture that includes all genders all the time. By taking the focus off the child for not conforming to gender stereotypes and expectations, we can see the system for what it is: one based on excluding people."

- from "What's Inclusive" in Playing with Pronouns Card Deck

The first step is to include everybody.

What does a reparative framework mean? Reparative means to attend to damage done. The next step is to center those who have been marginalized. This shifts the power dynamics and allows time for reorientation until everybody is in more equitable positions.

7. **RESPECTFULLY REFLECT BACK:** **(disengage)** everyone will have their own views based on their life experiences. The truth is this shift in sex and gender perspectives will take time to expand and evolve. What is important is to leave space for people to stand in their choices. Reflect back what they are really saying if it feels appropriate in the moment.

"So what you're saying is you're not ready to include everybody all the time, yet?" or

"It sounds like you need more time to accept what's actually true about nature and humans. That makes sense. Let me know if you need any resources."

CALLING IT WHAT IT IS when kids stare, exclude, give weird looks and/or make faces.
"Looks like they don't want to (or don't know how to) include everyone. Best to walk away."
Say loud enough to be heard.

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FREE TO BE

8 STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THE GENDER WHEEL® APPROACH



BEING
SOLID IN THE SELF

FACE your Self

Look at your willingness and comfort level to step forward in different situations. This is not an all or nothing call to action. This is about understanding your strengths and limitations as you grow on your path.

RAISE your Self-Awareness

Many of us have to negotiate some level of implicit bias. The more awareness you have of yourself, the easier it will be to see through it. This goes for any systemic privilege you may carry. If you're committed to making greater change, this is highly valuable.

EMBODY the Truth

Know in your bones the strategies for pushback. In a sense this is a shorthand exercise to bringing all the truth of the Gender Wheel® Approach into your memory, into your body. Truth will support you from the inside out.

EMBRACE the nonverbal

Integrating all of the truth in the materials is meant for everyone to feel on an essential level *Free To Be*. This is everybody's birthright. You too. Do you feel free to be fully who you are?

TEACHING
TOWARD TRUTH

TAP into the immense richness of gender diversity

In order to balance the constant messages in the world at large, it is valuable to provide as diverse an array of gender and bodies as possible. It doesn't have to be in one book. It can happen across materials.

OWN creativity as a remedy

Sex and gender are currently relegated to external authority figures. Medical, psychiatric, scientific and so on. Creativity is about inner authority. Using it as a teaching tool helps reinforce inner knowing.

REACHING
TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

BROADEN your teaching scope

By including the truth about nature, indigenous cultures, global and US history you can be part of bringing more truth and inclusion into our kids' world.

ENTER the circle

The Gender Wheel is a reflection of the whole self within the larger community. The Gender Wheel is also a reflection of the whole Earth, of which we are an intrinsic part. In every way this is about belonging, about wholeness, about oneness. Here, you belong.



VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE RESOURCES, DOWNLOADS & TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GENDER WHEEL® CURRICULUM!
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