

RESPECT GUIDE

A GUIDE TO
TREATING
OTHERS
RESPECTFULLY



i-PAD

Initiative intersektionale Pädagogik

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A guide to treating others respectfully

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RESPECT GUIDE – A GUIDE TO TREATING OTHERS RESPECTFULLY

DISCRIMINATION ISN'T ALWAYS INTENTIONAL

When we talk about discrimination, it is impossible not to take a person's individual actions and statements into account. A lot can happen between people, regardless of whether they have just met, or they have been friends for 20 years. With this Respect Guide, we want to provide guidelines and suggestions to help you avoid (unintentional) discrimination.

Most of the time, our goal is not to hurt, embarrass, or offend anyone. Nevertheless, it frequently happens that the mood suddenly shifts during a conversation or an interaction. We want to demonstrate with some examples that not all of these uncomfortable moments happen by accident.

What's important is to become aware of the fact that certain people constantly have to go through the same situation. We are often unaware that there is a system underlying our actions, one we frequently fail to see, or simply ignore. Discrimination isn't always intentional! Even if I ask someone something for the very first time (Where are you from? Why are you in a wheelchair? Are you a boy or a girl?), it may well be that the other person is extremely irritated by it, since they have been asked this same question numerous times.

This brochure seeks to address all people – those who identify as women, men, trans*, inter*, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, twospirit, neither*, both*, and everything in between.

Sometimes we need to make an effort to expand our own view: What kind of a situation is the other person in? Why do I want an answer to this particular question? What would the answer mean to me, and what would it mean to the other person?

Some people react dismissively when we try to discuss discrimination on a personal level. For example, a lot of people say they do not want to be told how to talk to others and what to do. After all, they live in a free world, and they are free to do as they please. There are three things we want to say in response:

1. Yes, it would be nice if all people had the freedom to do just as they pleased. However, discrimination functions as an obstacle. People who experience little discrimination often have more freedom to do as they please. In order to create more freedom for all, every person should be considerate enough not to make the lives of others even more limited and difficult.
2. We do not, in fact, believe that everybody is able to say whatever they want, whenever they want to. Whether they actually do this depends on whether they are in the position of power. For instance, a person at a job interview will not ask their superior about the length of their penis. After all, they require the superior's approval, and they know that according to societal rules, such a question would be inappropriate. Surprisingly enough, a lot

of people don't find it inappropriate to ask trans* people (whom they barely know) about their genitals or their bodies. On one hand, this happens because people don't really feel like they have broken any rules by doing it – they are, after all, in that moment in a position of power in relation to the trans* person; on the other hand, they have no reason to expect any negative repercussions for their behavior. The position of power in this particular instance means the power to force a trans* person to explain themselves, or to pass judgment on them; an experience alien to people who are not trans*. (This example works with other types of discrimination as well.)

3. We internalize an enormous catalogue of societal rules during the course of our life. There are countless rules that we have to abide by in our interactions with others. Unfortunately, the rules concerning discrimination are not among these. This is why we want to share a few tips and rules in this brochure – in addition to, or rather in contrast to what we usually learn. Perhaps this will inspire even more interesting conversations, or situations which one wouldn't otherwise encounter. Or perhaps new friendships will be formed based upon respect and viewing each other as equals, etc. etc. etc. There is so much potential!

Though we have collected some of the most pertinent examples here, our list is by no means complete and can always be expanded. Not every interaction with a new person

will lead to such intimate topics upon the first/ second/ third meeting. Some questions are simply rude and hurtful when first getting to know someone.

These questions often have little to do with one's interest in another person, but instead have to do with the need to put labels on people and satisfy one's own curiosity.

Sure, sometimes there are questions that one sincerely seeks an answer to, but this is what the internet is for, for example. Many people on the internet are more than willing to share their own personal experiences. Don't irritate your acquaintances by using them as an encyclopedia!

«I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY...» JUST DOESN'T CUT IT ANYMORE!

We have summed up some of the hurtful and discriminatory statements and questions here. We won't go further into statements that are explicitly discriminatory. These include swear words and derogatory phrases, e.g. «fag», «fucking immigrant», «fat cow», «cunt», «old hag», the «n-word».

More specifically, we want to describe situations where discrimination happens unintentionally, without (explicit) malicious intention. Frequently, people who observe such situations find it «excessive» when the person being discriminated against defends themselves. After all, it «wasn't really

meant that way». Precisely these situations are very difficult for people who do not regularly experience discrimination to understand. However, they may be just as hurtful as deliberate insults.

In addition, the slighted person is often pressured to justify themselves and also struggle to have their experience of discrimination acknowledged.

Here you will find answers from people who have experienced such discrimination. Through our own experiences, both personally and professionally as counselors, we have compiled a list which includes various forms of discrimination. We elaborate on some statements in detail, but leave others uncommented, as in some cases we found them to be self-explanatory.

With this brochure we want to provide an opportunity for our readers to self-reflect, either as a person perpetrating discrimination, or as a person facing discrimination.

Everyone can give this some thought: How would I have reacted to this statement/ question? Have I ever asked someone this question before? Could I use some of these answers myself in a similar situation?

Was this intrusive? What could I do in the future to support a person being discriminated against?

We want to encourage everyone to acknowledge and listen to people when they feel discriminated against. If a person says they feel discriminated, it doesn't matter whether it «was meant that way.» The person being discriminated against decides whether discrimination took place or not.

All of us can sometimes express and act on our prejudices about someone. Just because we experience a certain type of discrimination ourselves, does not mean that we can never discriminate against others. We should all take responsibility for our own actions, and come to terms with issues we know little about, in order to treat others with the respect they deserve.

Some people are lucky enough to experience such uncomfortable situations less often than others, appear less conspicuous, and frequently be perceived as just a regular member of society. This often gives them the power over «other» people, who do not fit that mold.

We are all capable of treating others with respect and discriminating less.

It is also important to resist our impulses and be patient, for example sometimes choosing not to ask or say anything at all. Even when you feel like you might burst if you don't immediately get an answer. Or perhaps there's something you're dying to say, but in fact, it might better be left unsaid.

Sometimes you might not directly offend one particular person, but instead simply perpetuate the discrimination that a certain group constantly faces. Even if you know a gay person who, for instance, takes no issue with being called a «fag», this is certainly not the case with all gay people.

The following types of discrimination often occur in different combinations (the overlapping of different types of discrimination is called intersectionality).

Experiences of racism vary depending on whether the person is a man, a woman or trans*. The sexism which women of Color and Black women experience is different from the sexism experienced by *white* women. Racism and sexism rarely operate alone. Women of Color are consequently subjected to a certain type of racism which often draws on sexual stereotypes. There is a great number of such combinations, and each has a different effect and impact.

SEXISM

«You can't do this, you're a girl.»

«Let a man deal with this!»

«Girls are better at languages anyway.»

Even in a society which is supposedly free of sexism, women and girls are reminded every day of what their proper place is (based on sexist ideas) – far away from hard labor (be it football or construction work), science, and activities that require technical skills. They really have no business pursuing leadership positions either. This is frequently justified by citing the «natural» differences between boys/men and girls/women. We learn from a very young age that boys and girls occupy different roles in society. The idea of gender roles is deeply embedded in our consciousness.

Those who want to advocate equality between women and men should pay attention, both in speech and in action, to create equal opportunities which are not tied to traditional gender roles. These include, for example, encouraging children to pursue activities that do not fit in with the traditional ideas of how a specific gender should be (e.g. girls can play as construction workers, and boys can pretend to work at a hair salon).

A person's interests are not determined by their sex, or gender. Children are more likely to enjoy activities they are praised for. So if a boy is told from an early age that playing with dolls is for girls, he is likely to prefer a different hobby, one which wins him

more approval and incites fewer conflicts. Similarly, if all the girls in kindergarten wear pink, your daughter will also soon want to wear a pink tutu. However this has less to do with how girls are «by nature», and more to do with a feeling of belonging and their need for acceptance.

Catcalling: From «Hey, beautiful» to «Great rack»

Women are not sex objects. And as much as the media, institutions, our families, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends etc. may want us to believe this, women do not exist simply for the pleasure of men. Sexual harassment can start verbally, and it should be taken seriously as a form of abuse. It is exhausting for a many women to constantly need to defend themselves from sexual insinuations and harassment. Most of the time, hearing that «it was just a joke» doesn't make it any better.

Men also suffer under gender expectations. Still, it is women who primarily experience physical assaults and are put under enormous pressure regarding their appearance, or their perceived gender.

«Those are men's pants.»

So, I'm in the men's aisle and the saleswoman is following me in panic, trying to tell me that women (how does she know that I identify as one?) can't wear men's pants. What's the problem, really? Will I implode if I put them on? Is she the guardian of gender-specific clothing? Can somebody please explain this to me? Please, relax! The world surely won't end just because I decided to wear «men's pants».

RACISM

«But, where are you really from?»

Many people whose families haven't been *white* and German for the past five generations are perceived as being somehow less German than others. They don't really belong. If on top of that, they have a name that indicates they might have a family member who is a ->Person of Color or ->Black, this is reason enough to completely dismiss their German background. If they answer the question «Where are you from?» with «Hamburg» they can usually expect some follow-up questions: Either «But, where are you really from?» or «And where are your parents from?» And if the parents turn out to be German, the research into family history will be continued until their non ->*white*-German appearance or name is accounted for.

Apart from the fact that it's a little too intimate to immediately inquire about the migration experience of four generations of a stranger's family, usually this is followed by even more unfortunate questions, such as:

«Aaaah, you're from Turkey? You must eat a lot of doner kebab!»

Nope. First of all, I never said I'm from Turkey, I said my parents are. Secondly, not all *white* Germans eat Bratwurst all of the time, do they? Have I really just recounted the origins of my family to you, just so you can unload all of your stereotypes onto me? And this is what you call «getting to know someone?»

«I know a girl who's also from Iran. Shirin is her name, do you know her?»

Right. Iran has a population of approximately 75 million citizens, and I know every single one of them. I met this girl Gabi recently, she's German. Do you know her?

«So, when are you going back?»

Where to? Hamburg? I go once a year to visit my parents. Are you content with that? This question is a product of the fantasy that migrant workers are requested to come to Germany and are simply meant to go back once they have helped boost the economy. It stems from the fantasy that to be German means to be *white*.

«It must be better for you here in Germany, right? Being a woman, and all.»

There is a predominant perception that German society is free of sexism. At the same time, the pay gap between men and women, and the number of reported rapes and domestic violence cases paint a very different picture. Sexism is present in every patriarchal society, and Germany is no exception in this regard. It's even more difficult for women of Color and Black women, since in addition to dealing with sexism, they are also confronted with racism, which makes it harder for them to get a job, among other things. There is also a particularly German phenomenon of *white*, middle-class women successfully combining family and career – not by fairly dividing domestic responsibilities with their part-

ners, but by being able to afford hired help. Usually these are migrant women who have little to no chance in the job market and have to take up physically demanding, severely underpaid jobs as care workers. *Everything is better in Germany, yes.*

Reducing ->Black People to the African continent and asking tons of «Africa»-questions

Africa is a continent containing 54 countries with over 2000 separate languages and at least as many ethnic groups. Considering all this, it's almost crazy to expect a person to provide answers on unspecific Africa-related questions.

How much do you know about table manners in Southern Europe? I mean, in the west, maybe Greece, but also Portugal... Down there, I mean... If you want specific information, grab a book or get on the internet. Ask other people about it only after you have become better acquainted with them.

Touching someone's hair

Human bodies have boundaries. As simple as this concept may be, a lot of *white* people don't seem to consider this when interacting with PoC or Black people. Questions about the texture of their hair, «Can I touch it?», whether a specific hairstyle «was painful to get» or if this type of hair needs to be washed in the first place – these are a daily occurrence for PoC and Black people.

Bodies of PoC and Black people have been exoticized, sexualized and dehumanized since forever. This means that, time and again, we (PoC and Black people) have to deal with racist projections that label us as «dirty, wild, savage, etc.», but also as «exotic, hypermasculine or hyperfeminine, hypersexual, etc.»

These attitudes are reflected in questions about hair and trying to touch it. What do you expect? That you'll be transported directly into the «heart of Africa» upon touching our hair? Or that we live our whole lives without ever washing our hair even once? How disgusting!

What is the purpose of answering your questions, besides putting us into the position of the «other» once again?

And just for the next time you see a person with artfully interwoven corn rows: YES! It probably did hurt to get it done, but it's none of your business! And if you still absolutely have to know more about it: Go find a hairdresser who knows how to work with African hair and make an appointment, maybe they can help you...

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANS*PEOPLE

«Did you already have your surgery?»

«Yes, I had my nose enlargement surgery a week ago! It doesn't even hurt anymore!

First of all, there is no such thing as «the» surgery for trans* people. There is not one specific surgery for each body part. There are many different methods to amputate or implant breasts and even more ways to alter, remodel or remove genitals. The internet can be helpful if you are looking for information. The search function of your computer browser will definitely be a better way for you to get answers than the trans* person standing in front of you.

«So, what are you packing down there?»

«Are you a man or a woman?»

Trans* people often have strangers on the street/at the club/at work ask them questions about their sex or genitals. The real question is: What will the other person do with this information upon receiving it?

We live in a society that accepts only women OR men. The experiences of trans* people are rendered invisible, and they are treated as a curiosity which others can freely gaze upon and question.

No person is entitled to know anything about the body of

another, unless the other is willing to discuss it. The same is true for gender identity. An answer such as: «I have a penis and I'm a woman» would probably provoke confusion further uncomfortable questions, or even hostility.

Ignoring the preferred pronoun (when a person prefers to be addressed as «he» or «she»)

«Is that your real name?»

Often, the way we define ourselves isn't taken seriously by the outside world. Unfortunately, this is a widespread practice which doesn't only apply to discrimination of trans* people. Sure, it can happen that we use the wrong pronoun by accident when addressing a person. But as soon as we learn what their preferred pronoun is, we should put in the effort necessary to respect their choice. This is the case with a person's name of choice as well. Many trans* people choose their own first name, because their birth name doesn't accurately represent their identity. In this respect, their chosen name is often much more «real» than their birth name. They probably don't necessarily feel like sharing their birth name anyway.

OUTING SOMEONE

Should you find out that someone is -> trans* – either from the person themselves or from a different source – this doesn't mean that you can simply disclose this information to just anyone.

Trans*people usually experience a great amount of discrimination, and have their identity constantly scrutinized and questioned. Leave it to them to decide when they want to disclose that they are trans*.

HOMOPHOBIA

(DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND ->MULTISEXUAL PEOPLE)

«Are you a lesbian?»

Answer A : «That's none of your business.»

Answer B : «Are you always this intrusive?»

Answer C : «No, I'm -> queer. But you probably don't know what that means.»

Answer D : «Yeah, you're not?»

Answer E : «Why? You're not heterosexual, are you?»

OUTING SOMEONE

Repeatedly and needlessly bringing up someone's sexual orientation

Similar to outing trans*people, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people should decide where, when and to whom they want to disclose their sexual orientation. Because of homophobia, many people who do not live a heterosexual lifestyle often experience discrimination, whether in form of hostile comments and behavior, or well-meant but excessive attention. Some heterosexual people seek recognition for having ho-

mosexual friends, or think it would be «cool» to hang out with them and have them as their shopping assistants. Even this attitude is discriminatory, because it regards lesbian, gay, bisexual and -> multisexual people as «other.»

«You're gay? Great! That means you're surely good at...»

...insert some kind of a trait or ability that you are convinced every single homosexual person possesses exclusively.

Now, how does this sound to you: Heterosexuals are better friends, they can party harder and you can go shopping with them, they always have fun... Strange, right? Immediately, what comes to mind is: Well, there are so many different heterosexual people, and their sexual orientation doesn't reveal anything else about them. EXACTLY! Why should it be any different with homosexual people? As a general rule, most sentences that start with «All of... are ...» are discriminatory. To attribute uniform traits to existing or imagined groups of people can be convenient, but rarely represents reality.

«So, how do you have sex?» (Possibly accompanied by a disgusted facial expression)

It might be difficult for some to believe, but every person has different sexual preferences, regardless of their sexual orientation.

That's why there's no such thing as THE WAY to have heterosexual sex, just like there's no one way to have THE lesbi-

an sex or THE gay sex. For those who are really curious: You should explore the queer porn production, where people don't perform just for the pleasure of a heterosexual audience, and actually enjoy the sex they are having. These are, however, also only representations of some of the sexual preferences one might have.

And another tip: If a person is really interested in learning something intimate about another person, they should approach them with respect, and not disgust.

«You just haven't met the right guy (to a lesbian), or the right girl (to a gay man).»

It seems to be difficult for some people to understand that there are actually people who aren't heterosexual and possibly don't even want to be. They think that heterosexual relationships are the only real thing left in this world. I can only share the advice that I was given: «The next time it doesn't work out with your girlfriend, Uwe, just try it with a man. That must be the solution to all of your relationship troubles.»

ABLEISM

(DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY/ILLNESS)

«Were you always disabled?»

«What's the name of this disability?»

«What's the illness that you have?»

«What are these scars on your neck?»

How about having a conversation about our favorite TV shows, hobbies, or mutual friends to get us started? No person enjoys being reduced to their body, and sharing intimate information about it with strangers. Trust me, even if you get some answers, they won't make you any smarter.

«I feel so sorry for you. Your life must be really hard.»

Yes, just about as hard as anyone's life is, really. What does make it particularly hard are people who are always pitying you and asking uncomfortable questions. People are disabled because they are hindered by their environment, but every person eventually learns to adapt to it. Kind of like how we can learn not to discriminate others. No person is a passive creature whom life just happens to.

«Oh, c'mon, just let me help you. It'll be done much quicker that way !»

Why does everybody need to have the same tempo? Just because something gets done quicker, it doesn't mean that all who were involved are any happier for it, or that the per-

son in question actually got the help they needed. Patience is required here. A lot of people can do things on their own. They just have to do it at their own pace.

«It must be difficult for you to find a partner!»

«So, how do you have sex?»

Answer A : None of your business. You wouldn't ask anyone else this question, would you?

Answer B : Oh, I have a great sex life. I really enjoy S&M and bondage. Gerd and I meet up with Selçuk and Elena every now and then and pierce each other's labia. Any further questions?

«Can you have kids?»

«Poor you!»

What is the real meaning behind these questions/ statements? You assume that -> people with disabilities can't have children, as if the capacity to have children were EXCLUSIVELY the property of people without disabilities/illnesses. It is assumed that their life is unhappy, full of drama, deficient in so many ways, and generally just pitiful. Pity is what prevents one from forming a respectful relationship with a person with a disability; a relationship that isn't informed by power structures reinforcing inequality from the very start.

ADULTISMUS

(DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS)

Touching children and pinching their cheeks

Unfortunately, people think that children's bodies can be touched by adults at any time. Have you ever approached an adult in the subway, told their companion that «They're cute» and gave them a pat on the head? If not, try it! Children often resist by hiding or crying. Then, the explanation for it is usually that they are shy or tired. No person likes to be touched without their approval. And children have their personal boundaries, just like everybody else.

Ignoring a «No!» from the child, because adults know best what's good for them

Children are often taught to say «No.» Usually out of fear that a stranger might approach them and invite them to their home, or similar horror stories. However most violations occur at home between parents and children. When parents ignore a «No» from their child, because they supposedly know better what the child needs. Or often because the parents are exhausted, and lack the will to engage with their child and their perspective.

«When I was your age...»

Every life story is different. Not all people experience the same things when they are 13. Even if there is a tendency in much pedagogy to divide a person's life into phases, this is

not true for every single person. Why do we need to constantly compare?

«Because I want it that way./ Because I say so.»

That may very well be the case. But it's definitely not a good basis for negotiation. It's a showdown that children can never win. Thoughtful explanations and trying to find a compromise always have a positive effect on a relationship. This is how adults can prevent children from leaving a discussion angry and frustrated.

«You're too young to understand.»

Does this actually mean: «I don't have the words to explain this to you?» How about you give it a try. Why do adults always think they know everything about children? After all, we are constantly amazed by things that children are able to register, interpret and understand.

CLASSISM

(DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SOCIAL CLASS)

«*White trash/redneck*»

«**Hobo**»

These terms are used to put down people based on their social status, or to insult people who don't live in poverty by comparing them with those who do.

The responsibility for unequal division of resources doesn't rest upon individuals; it's the product of our society. Comments like the ones above demean the realities of people who live in financial poverty, and attempt to valorize middle-class people.

«**Let me get the check!**»

Why, thank you ever so much, you generous benefactor, you! Maybe next time we can go to a place where no one has to feel embarrassed and accept your offer to pay for them.

«**Go get a real job!**»

Opportunities for education and employment in Germany vary dramatically, based on our social class. For instance, it is perfectly natural for a lot of middle-class children to go to a good school, and then to college.

Their parents will then continue to financially support them while they're in school, and help them get their first job

through their social connections. People from lower classes often do not enjoy these privileges. Should they decide to pursue their studies in order to get a better paid job in the future, or work in a field that they are passionate about, they frequently face serious financial difficulties. Even after completing an education, it is difficult to enter the job market without the proper contacts.

«Whoever really wants to work will somehow find a job.»

The job market is neither flexible nor fair. Yes, perhaps it's true that finding a job in a field where no special education is required is easy. But don't all people want to work at a job that meets their qualifications and interests? It rarely happens that we meet a lawyer on a job hunt, and tell them to take up cleaning bathrooms instead of being unemployed.

AGEISM

(DISCRIMINATION OF THE ELDERLY)

«No, no. I insist, let me help you. When I'm as old as you, I'll want people to lend me a hand too.»

No means no. If a person doesn't want to be helped, no one has the right to dismiss their decision.

«C'mon, let the youth take over from here...»

«You had your time...»

According to the age limit for taking up a credit and leasing a car, life ends at 65. For a lot of people this means living 10 to 35 years after their life has officially ended. This period of life is also regarded as a «non-period», because we feel like real life takes place in a person's youth. This denies people over 65 their right to experience new things and fully participate in society. People also often speak about «making room for the next generation». However this means reducing room for the elderly and their lives, which are important as well. Every day is a new day.

LOOKISM

(DISCRIMINATION BASED ON PHYSICAL APPEARANCE)

«But you could get rid of that mole on your chin for quite cheap!»

Answer A : Thank you, thank you, thank you – you lovely creature! I have thought about it so often, and I know that EVERYTHING will be different then. I will be happier, richer and more desirable than ever before! There's a reason why my favorite book is called «Mole Removal as a Way to Happiness»...

Answer B : Can I do it at the same practice where you got your decency removed?

«Have you ever tried losing weight?»

Why is it so difficult for some people not to preach to others, or get involved in their lives? Bodies, body weight and nutrition are a private matter! With nutrition suggestions, health tips and warnings, «thin» simply contribute to the unnecessary comments and hurtful gazes «fat» people are constantly subjected to. Beauty ideals in our society not only exclude «fat» people, but also often explicitly convey that the way they are is not okay, and they should feel ugly. Not all «fat» people want to lose weight, and, as crazy as this may sound: some even love their bodies...

«It would be so nice to see you with some make up on.»

«Please shave your legs!» (to women)

«Why do you even shave?» (to men)

When directed at women specifically, these statements demonstrate a person's sexist tendencies. They imply that all women should shave and use make up, in order to appear «feminine» and attractive. Every person has their own interpretation of their respective gender, and they should decide for themselves what they think is pretty. In addition, the people saying these things often think they'll open up a magical new world for the other person. Kind of like: «I have great news for you: razor blades exist – TA DA!!» We live in the 21st century. We don't all have to look alike, on the contrary: Our bodies belong to us, and they are not here to fit certain ->norms.

«You would look so much better if you would just...»

Unless it's called upon and you've been asked for your opinion, it would be better to keep your opinions and ideas about someone else's appearance to yourself. Not everybody wants to hear what you have to say. Besides, it's pretty presumptuous to comment on someone's body without being asked.

GLOSSARY

***(asterisk):** This symbol makes it possible to represent all individual gender identities in written language. The term trans*, for instance, acknowledges that no trans* identity is exactly the same as any other.

genderqueer: People who either cannot or do not wish to identify with one of the heteronormative stereotypes («man», «woman»).

skin color: Here a short digression on skin color, since it is an essential part of racist ideology. Racism treats a person's skin color as a surface upon which racist ideas can be projected. This means that a person's skin color becomes a marker by which their level of privilege (with regards to racism) is measured. They may enjoy many privileges, fewer privileges, or none at all. Racist ideologies have been used ever since the onset of European colonization to «classify» people, and attribute or deny them certain characteristics. These differences are constructs, however, and do not represent reality, but instead function to maintain a racist system. This is the only way the exploitation, abuse, and murders of people during colonialism could be justified, both then and still today. It is also difficult for many people to comprehend that racist ideology is not based on literal skin color. For example, if we observe the development of the concept of whiteness over time, it quickly becomes clear that not all people who nowadays considered to be *white* were perceived as such in the past. For instance, dock workers in New York in the 19th century demanded their neighborhoods

should remain *white*. This meant excluding not only African-Americans, but also «no Irish» and «no Germans.»

people with disabilities/people disabled by their environment: A self-chosen term used by people who, because of society, experience disabilities in everyday life. For example, a step in front of a restaurant can make it difficult for a person in a wheelchair to enter, i.e. to enter without someone's assistance. It is therefore important to understand that people are not disabled as such – it is society that disables them. In general, the idea of a disabled body itself should be called into question. The term «people with disabilities» should emphasize that a disability is just one aspect of a human existence, and does not constitute a person. Similar to other forms of discrimination, ableism often reduces people with a disability to their disability alone.

people without disabilities/people who aren't disabled by their environment: People whose physical and mental capacities conform with the societal notion of normalcy, i.e. they fit the norm. They can freely move in their daily lives without experiencing disability, and can enter all public facilities without having to rely on anyone's assistance.

multisexual: «Multi» is a Greek prefix meaning «many.» Multisexuality is based on an idea that there are more than two sexes, genders and gender identities. Multisexual people are not only attracted to «men» and «women» (as with bisexuality),

but also to people whose identity is in between or outside of this binary system (e.g. trans* people).

Pan means everyone and is a word often used in the context of emancipatory movements like Pan Africanism. In the context of gender and desire, pan stands for a diverse range of gender identities. This is why it is sometimes called pangender. Pansexual desire requires a deconstruction of gender itself into an unlimited number of desired genders. This means that people do not only come from the binary notion of «male» and «female,» but they are aware of many marginalized gender identities such as trans*, inter, gender-nonconforming etc. The rejection of a binary idea of gender makes it possible to wonder about one's own gender identity and individual desire. If I fall in love with a genderqueer person, my sexual orientation is no longer based on an either-or notion. It goes beyond the binary gender system. This is what pan and multisexual are about. Pan* can be used in order to describe non-heteronormative life-realities and discourses.

Neurodiverse: Neurodiverse is an emancipatory self-description for people who face stigma and are excluded because of their bodies, movements, feelings and/or social behaviour. The counterpart of neurodiverse is called neurotypical. Neurotypical describes the present or pervasive privileges of a person who is constructed as „normal« by society. The term neurodiverse both includes the constructed norms of the health system, and is used as an emancipatory approach towards identity by people in the neurodiverse movement.

norm: A norm is what is considered natural, or standard in society. Because it is so natural, we rarely feel the need to explicitly define it. We talk about what «deviates» from the norm instead. Thus we more often label someone as Black than *white*, since being *white* is perceived as the norm in our society. Homosexuality receives more attention, since it is expected that everyone is heterosexual. Norms shape our whole environment. They are reflected in behaviors and expectations which are imposed upon us from an external source, and which we constantly reproduce. Norms influence architecture, for example when houses are designed for people without disabilities. They make it possible for whiteness to remain unnamed by the media. Everything aims to meet and comply with constructed norms, even though they do not represent the reality of society. For many, it is a painful experience to not be represented or have their needs acknowledged by society.

PoC (Person/People of Color): A self-chosen term used by people who experience racism. This term originated in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement/Black Feminist and Womanist movement, and seeks to unite different groups of people who experience racism, in order to join powers and fight together against racism.

queer: Originally stood for «strange, singular, suspicious.» It was used as an insult against people who deviated from the heteronormative standard, until it was reclaimed as a part of the lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans*-inter*-empowerment movement. Today, the term describes people who do not identify with traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and question

the supposedly binary gender system. Queer also stands for people whose way of defining themselves (trans*, multisexual, lesbian, etc.) opposes heteronormativity.

Black: This is the appropriate term for Black people of African or Afro-diasporic descent. The term Afro-diasporic relates to people who have historical family links with the African continent. In order to emphasize the character of resistance this word carries, the «B» is capitalized. In the German context, one can also use the term Afro-German («Afrodeutsche_r»).

trans*: The prefix «trans» comes from Latin and means «beyond.» Accordingly, trans*people live beyond the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Trans* is an umbrella term for numerous different trans*identities.

trans* identity: An alternative term for transsexuality, and a term we much prefer, as it emphasizes the importance of gender identity, rather than sexual orientation. A person with trans* identity experiences a gender identity that is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. This is often described as «a man who identifies as a woman.» However it would be more appropriate to articulate it the following way: «A woman was assigned the wrong sex at birth.» In this respect, it is important to respect the term the person has chosen for themselves, instead of emphasizing the sex they were assigned at birth. People with trans identity, ->transsexual or ->trans* people may wish to change their bodies to correspond with the gender they feel fits. This often has to do with being perceived as belonging to the sex and gender they are most comfortable

with. Hormone therapy or a gender confirming surgery may be helpful in this case (however this is not necessary in order to be trans*).

Frequently heard comments include: «A man was born in the wrong body and has to undergo a sex change.» Operations are not magic tricks and our bodies are not wrong. Instead, the way others perceive our bodies is wrong. This is why we prefer the statement: «A man was assigned the wrong sex at birth and he will undergo a sex reassignment surgery.» People with trans identity may also identify as being in between genders, or identify as both, or neither.

«**white**»: Unlike the terms ->Black and ->PoC, *white* is not a self-chosen term, but rather a factual description of a reality. To be *white* means enjoying privileges and power, such as not being subjected to racism. Because of their whiteness, *white* people have a much easier time finding a job or an apartment, or receiving health care or political representation, than PoC and Black people. Of course there are other criteria for exclusion, for example class status, through which *white* people are excluded from enjoying privileges when they are from a lower social class. The difference is apparent, however, in the following scenario: The Müller family and the Yilmaz family both apply for the same apartment in Charlottenburg. We can assume that both are able to afford the apartment, but many landlords often favor names which are considered «more German-sounding.» Whiteness is an established ->norm in our society and as such, it is never explicitly labeled. However these terms do not describe skin color, but instead are political terms which describe access to power within society.

IMPRINT

Publisher

This brochure was published by the Initiative for Intersectional Pedagogy (i-PÄD) for the project i-PÄD – Courses for Teachers and Students of Social Work Programs in Berlin», as part of the initiative «Berlin Supports Self-Empowerment and Acceptance of Sexual Diversity» funded by the Senate Department for Education, Youth and Science. It has been slightly expanded for the project «MSO Inklusiv!».

Both projects are sponsored by Berlin-Brandenburg Migration Council.

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Project sponsored by:

MIGRATIONS RAT
Berlin & Brandenburg **mr**

Migrationsrat Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.
Oranienstr. 34 | 10999 Berlin
www.migrationsrat.de

Bank details: Bank für Sozialwirtschaft
IBAN: DE09100205000003314000 | BIC: BFSWDE33BER
Purpose of transfer: Initiative i-PÄD

Funded by



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

as part of the federal programme

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Senatsverwaltung
für Arbeit, Integration
und Frauen

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