How we use language can reinforce or counteract stereotypes about who is best suited to a field. Research shows that using masculine forms for mixed-gender groups (e.g. the German masculine “Wissenschaftler” to refer to all scientists) evokes a male bias in mental representations.¹ This mental bias influences, e.g. perceptions of women and non-binary individuals belonging in a field, their responsiveness to job ads, likelihood of their being suggested as candidates for positions, and evaluations. Thus, using gender-inclusive language can help reduce stereotyping and discrimination.¹

Further, we can support greater inclusion of LGBTQ+ colleagues, e.g. by using people’s correct pronouns² (he/she/they or neo-pronouns) and symbols acknowledging a non-binary spectrum of gender identities (e.g. women*, Wissenschaftler*innen, Wissenschaftler:innen, etc.). Moreover, the symbol *, while not completely barrier-free, is currently the most accepted gender-inclusive symbol among people who use screenreaders, including those with disabilities.³

Below are some tools supporting use of inclusive language in German and English.

**Selected resources:**

- Regelungen zur geschlechtergerechten Kommunikation an der Charité (Charité, German)
- Geschlechtergerechte Sprache am Berlin Institute of Health (BIH, German)
- United Nations Guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English
- Transgender Glossary: Terms You Can Learn (Kathy Katella, Yale Medicine, 2022)
- Gender-Neutral Pronouns 101: Everything You’ve Always Wanted to Know (Devin-Norelle, Them, 2022)

**Recommended reading:**


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