

# Navigating Gender at Sea

**Recommendations for Making Seagoing Work Safer for  
Transgender and Gender Diverse Scientists**

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Scientists are trained to recognise  
and challenge hidden assumptions

That mindset is necessary (but not  
sufficient) for EDI work



## COMMENTARY

10.1029/2023AV000927

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## Key Point 1:

Limited attention has been given to the challenges faced by transgender and gender diverse (TGD) scientists



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## Key Point 2:

TGD people face harassment, gendered berthing issues, and other legal and physical barriers while working at sea



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## Key Point 3:

Improvements to increase equity can be made at the individual, chief scientist and officer, and institutional levels

# Everyone

Who

Do

Example

Avoid

Refer to everyone the way they ask you to refer to them (e.g. names, pronouns, identities)

Handle misgendering incidents briefly, directly, and on your own

Introduce yourself using the name you prefer and your pronouns, to set the precedent for others

"Where's Jason?  
She went for lunch.  
They went for lunch?  
Right, yes, they did"

Requiring everyone to state their pronouns. This can force people to either misgender themselves or out themselves to others

Telling the misgendered person about the incident or expect them to handle it later

## Chief scientists and ship officers

**Who**

**Do**

**Example**

**Avoid**

Include respect for transgender people in safety / harassment training.  
Include indigenous genders (e.g. two-spirit)

Ask for berthing preferences from all scientists onboard

Assume questions around berths, bathrooms, and pronouns will arise. Prepare all authority figures aboard

Our berthings have 2 bunks.  
What individuals or genders would you prefer to share with?

Avoiding the topic. At least 1% of the US is trans / nonbinary. 0.1-2% are intersex

Assuming you can pair people by gender based on names, appearance, or gender markers on legal identification

Who	Do	Example	Avoid
<b>Chief scientists, ship officers, and institutions</b>	<p>Collect inclusive data on TGD people that go to sea</p> <p>Adopt inclusive ethics and codes of conduct, disseminate best practices</p>	<p>Collect demographics data on both gender and (separately!) transgender status</p> <p>Share relevant codes of conduct and best practices with scientists and crew</p>	<p>Use inadequate sets of identifiers such as 'man or woman or other' and male / trans male or female / trans female'</p> <p>Assuming that everyone already knows appropriate conduct and best practices</p>

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