Why the term transgender and identify as is transphobic:

The term transgender is transphobic is because is stems from the idea that we were one gender and are transitioning to another gender.

Someone who is trans, unless otherwise identify, was not one gender and becoming another gender.

As a trans person and non-binary person, I have always been trans and I have always been nonbinary.

Before I go any further, I want to provide to some definitions for some terms that I will be using.

**Internalized transphobia** is the feelings and messages we all have inside that we are not aware of. It is a common attitude and/or belief that we have learned from our culture, society, family, social circles etc. An example of some common internalized transphobic messages are: Girls have vaginas and boys have penises. Pink is for girls and blue is for boys.

**Societal constructs** is ideas that have been created as well as accepted by the society we grew up in. The society constructs the beliefs and messages that we accept and relabel as “normal”. Any time you think to yourself, that is “normal” or not “normal” that “normal” you are basing it on was constructed by society and you internalized it as your normal. An example of how this differs is that in Scotland men wear kilts and that is “normal”. In the United States, a man wearing a kilt would be called a man wearing a skirt and often labeled as not “normal”.

What I was not aware of was the language for my identity. Just like many others do, I turned to the people who I trusted in my life to help educate me on the parts of myself that did not make sense to me.

Unfortunately for me, and many others, my trusted people did not have awareness of their own internalized transphobia. They did not know what it meant to be trans because they believe were so deeply rooted in our systems transphobia (the societal constructs) that there must have been something wrong with me versus unpacking our societal constructs. Creating space for people to exist as they are creates freedom and self-acceptance versus internalizing these messages that communicate that there is something wrong with me and I am not “normal”.

I was never a gender and became another. I have always been me. It has been others around me who had to challenge their beliefs (internalized transphobia) to create space, language, interaction, behavior and much more that was affirming and supportive of me. I spent most of my life trying to change me to fit in with everyone else at the cost of my self-esteem, my physical health, my emotional health and much more.

Why the term identify as is transphobic is because it is not a choice. The only choice one has with certain identities is how open they are about it. Just like we do not identify to be left handed, we are left handed. So, rather than asking someone how they identify as, ask them to share with you their identity. Or if talking about someone, you can say that they are trans or part of their identity is that they are trans versus the person identifies as trans.

It is vital to use the terminology the person choses to use around their identity and it can be very helpful to many people to assist in their own learning and unlearning around their internalized transphobia. People often make the mistake of believing that just because someone holds an identity that they cannot be oppressive towards these identities. For example, all trans people engage in transphobia just like all cis people engage in transphobia. (explain cis). Trans people are not immune and can be transphobic and engage in transphobia.

No one is immune to engaging in transphobia because our system and society is so deeply rooted in transphobia.

Denying that one is transphobic is a bigger problem than being willing to acknowledge one’s own internalized transphobia and consistently cultivating awareness’s when it shows up AND listening to others when they are willing enough to bring it to our attention.

More terminology before moving on to the next points:

**To gaslit or Gaslighting** is when someone manipulates information (knowing and/or unknowingly) in such a way as to make the other person question their thoughts, actions, and/or sanity. An example is: I am not transphobic; you are being too sensitive.

**Microaggression** can be verbal and/or nonverbal. It communicates a negative message and often unintentional. An example would be I couldn’t even tell you were trans.

**Macroaggression** can be verbal, behavioral and/or environmental and can be intentional and/or unintentional that communicates hostile, derogatory, and/or negative prejudicial slights and insults towards any group, particularly marginalized groups. I have 2 common examples that I consistently experience; 1. I would never date a trans person. 2. I have consistently been pushed out, kicked out of and/or fired from every trans/non binary space for therapists because I bring to the attention that they are engaging in transphobia, the response is always to gaslit me and then engage in macro and microaggressions.

Bringing to someone’s attention the transphobia they are engaging in, can be scary. Most of the time the other person responds from a place of defensiveness and argues with the individual. This leads to the person being gaslit because it would lead them to question and/or believe that the transphobia they experienced was in their mind and not real.

The moment you feel yourself getting defensive when someone brings to your attention problematic behavior and/or language that you are being called out for should be your first indicator that you are perpetuating the harm and will most likely you are about to engage in gaslighting behavior and/or a micro/macroaggression.

Just like no one can argue with your lived experience, emotions and how something directly impacts you. You cannot argue with someone else’s lived experience, emotions and how something directly impacts them. Take a breathe, remind yourself that the person is not saying you are a bad person and that they are trusting you enough to take the time to engage in emotional labor to bring this to your attention how your language and/or behavior is problematic and either impacting them and/or others.

Last definition, I promise, then the article is done:

**Emotional Labor** is when you must regulate your emotions and to provide education to someone that are harming you (whether they are aware of the harm they are causing or not, does not change that the harm has/is happening). An example is: when someone says something transphobic, rather than reacting and/or walking away, I will take the time to explain what they have done, how it impacted me and how they could have done it differently.