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Do's and Don'ts: Creating an Inclusive Studio

Do:

#1: Let the singer guide the lesson; they are in charge.

Questions to ask:

- "What pronouns do you use? (*I ask everyone*)"
 - Create a list of terms and pronouns that you know, and have them circle ones they are ok with, and cross out ones they do not like. If transitioning, ask them if they would prefer that you ask at every session.
 - "Do you have any medical conditions or have you had any medical procedures that might affect your voice?" – *Eli Conley*
 - "Do you take any medications that might affect your voice?" – *Eli Conley*
 - "What dose do you take?" (i.e.: steroid inhalers, hormones, antihistamines, heart burn meds, anxiety/depression medications) – *Eli Conley*
 - How many hours of talking during the day?
 - What are your vocal behaviors? (ie: tend to be loud, quiet, talkative, glottal fry, use of a variety of character voices, sound effects, a feminine voice, a masculine voice)
- Do realize you know more about teaching singing to this population than you might think.
- Check in regularly with the student about their voice, and how they feel about singing in the range that you are working in (be aware of vocal dysphoria).
- Do keep in mind that this group has a high percentage of incidence of suicide, abuse and poverty, so act like you are under "HIPAA law" (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and never share personal details of your student with other teachers or students.
- Be careful to find a line in the counseling you provide, and refer appropriately to their psychologist.
- You should also work closely with their speech-language pathologist, if they have one for their speaking voice.
- Remember that "it takes a village" to be a part of this person's journey, you are joining their team of professionals. At a minimum, connect with their counselor and SLP.
- It's ok to be open with your transgender and non-binary singers about what you do and do not know. Encourage them to talk to you and educate you, as needed. A running dialogue is best.

Don't:

- If it is not in your skillset don't do it; it is also ok to admit that you may not know something. Use every opportunity to learn and grow yourself.
- Don't assume that all transgender and non-binary singers will be changing voice parts. Some will choose to keep their original voice quality, and others will choose T, so again, it is important to check in from time to time. – *Eli Conley*
- Don't require vocalization throughout the entire range, if you suspect vocal dysphoria.
- Don't force mirror work, if you suspect it contributes to gender dysphoria.
- Do not criticize attire: recognize that dress may vary as they experiment in finding their authentic self, so be careful and kind with any suggestions for performances.
- You should not provide medical advice and don't have to; defer to the health professional that specializes in their needs when it is outside of your wheelhouse.
- Don't ask questions about your student's bodies that are not relevant to their voices.
- Don't assume that you will be able to tell who if someone is transgender/ transfem/ non-binary; work to be inclusive to all.
- Do not necessarily refer to things you learned even 2 years ago; things are changing quickly. It is best to continue to seek out regular opportunities to learn the most current information and evidence to be a strong ally.