



## Sexuality and Gender

### What is Sexuality?

- Sexuality begins before birth and is a lifelong process
- Everyone has a sexuality!
- Sexuality involves and is influenced by many things like: values, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, physical and sexual characteristics, society, other's expectations
- Sexuality also involves gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation
- There are a wide range of gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations
- Sexuality is a spectrum, like a rainbow
- A person's gender or sexual identity may be fluid, or change over time



### What is Gender Identity?

#### Gender identity

- Everyone has a gender identity
- Gender identity is how a person feels about their gender
- There are many genders
- No one can see a person's gender identity
- Gender identity is how a person feels
- Gender is not a choice a person makes





## Sexuality and Gender

### Gender Identity

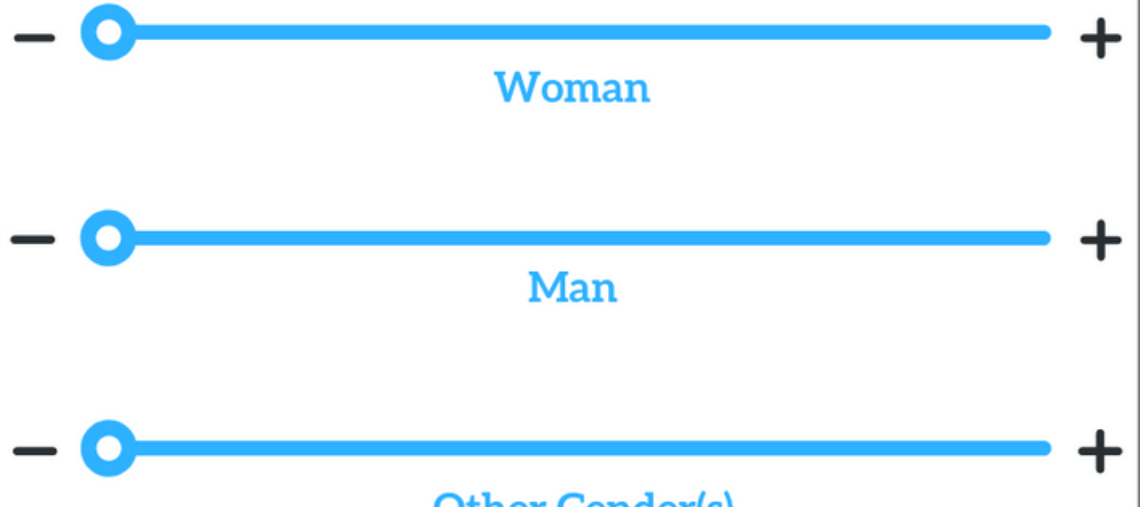
Ginger the Gender Cat:



**Gender Identity**  
How we feel about our gender

autism  
NOVA SCOTIA  
Adapted from: Trans Student Educational Resources (n.d.); CisNormative (2011) & Killermann, S. (2011)

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### What is Sex Assigned at Birth?

#### Sex assigned at birth

- A doctor or another person assign sex at birth
- Sex assigned at birth is based on what a baby's genitals look like and on their chromosomes
- This sex is what goes on a person's birth certificate
- There are typically three options: female, male or intersex

Sex Rex the Dog:



**Sex Assigned at Birth**  
Based on genitalia and chromosomes

autism  
NOVA SCOTIA  
Adapted from: Trans Student Educational Resources (n.d.); CisNormative (2011) & Killermann, S. (2011)

**Sex Assigned at Birth**  
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- Female
- Male
- Intersex

autism  
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## Sexuality and Gender

### What is intersex?

- A word used to describe people who are born with some variation(s) in chromosomes, hormones, and genital system
- Intersex is part of normal human diversity
- Sometimes the variance is visible, sometimes it is internal and cannot be seen
- Some people know they are intersex their whole lives, other times they may find out later in life
- Intersex is **not** a gender or an orientation



### A person's gender identity does not always match their sex assigned at birth

- Some people experience their gender identity as being different than the sex they were assigned at birth, this is known as **transgender**
- The transgender community is diverse and people may use different words to identify their gender



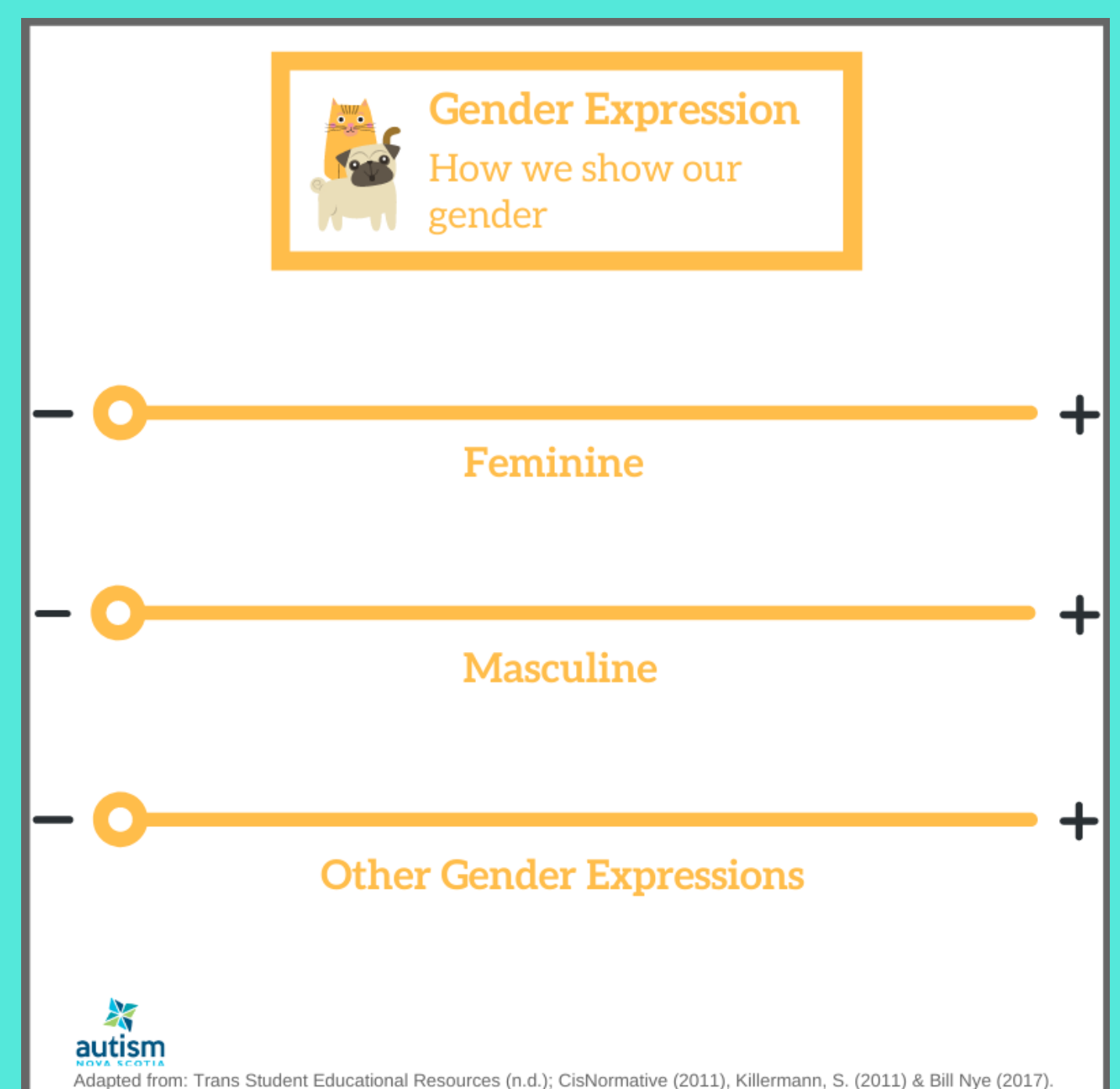
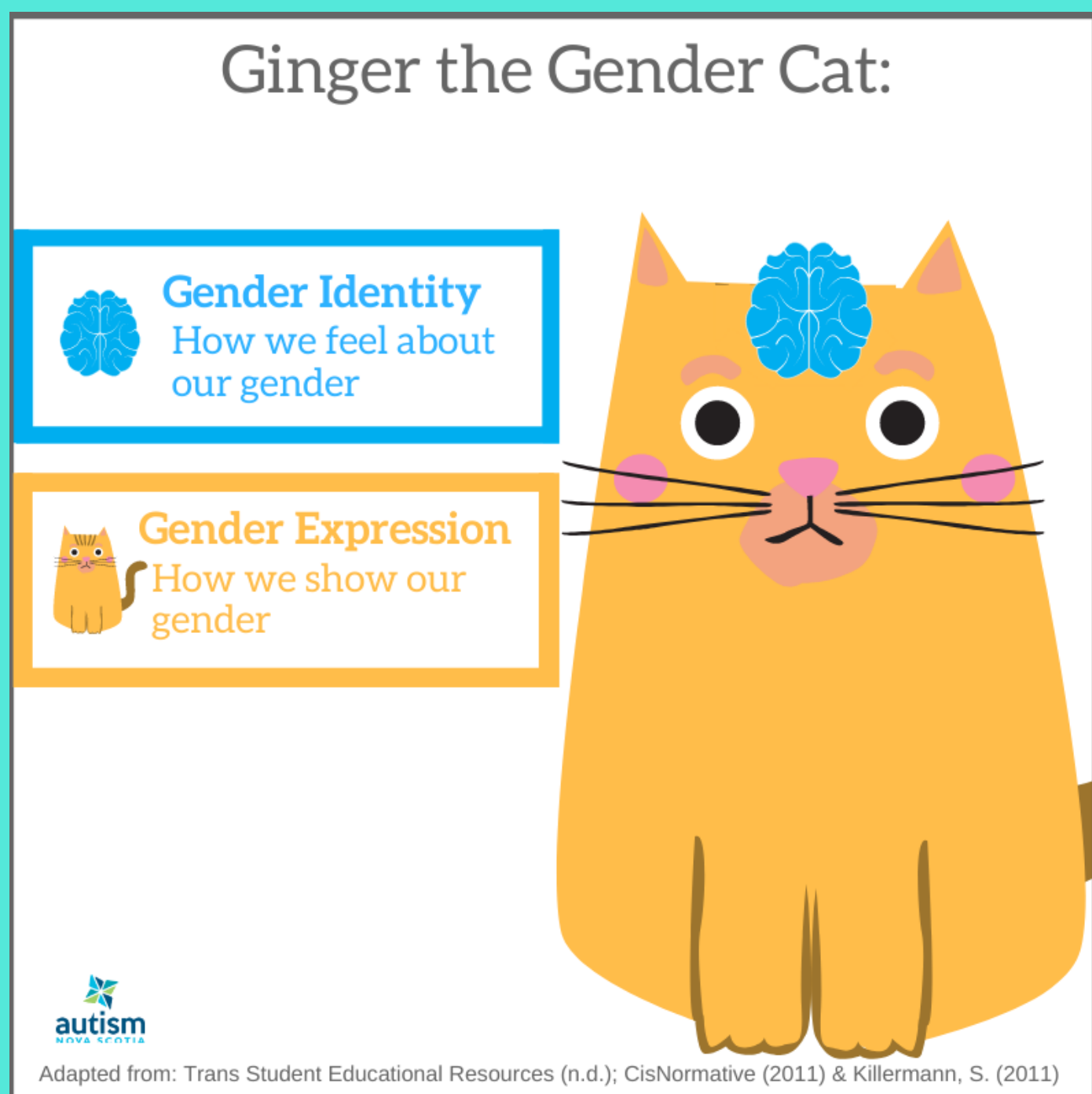


# Sexuality and Gender

## What is Gender Expression?

### Gender Expression

- Is how people show their gender to others
- It can include how people dress, how they wear their hair, their voice, and how they act
- A person's gender expression may be different from their gender identity
- This may be because it is not safe for the person to express their gender, or they are not comfortable to do so.



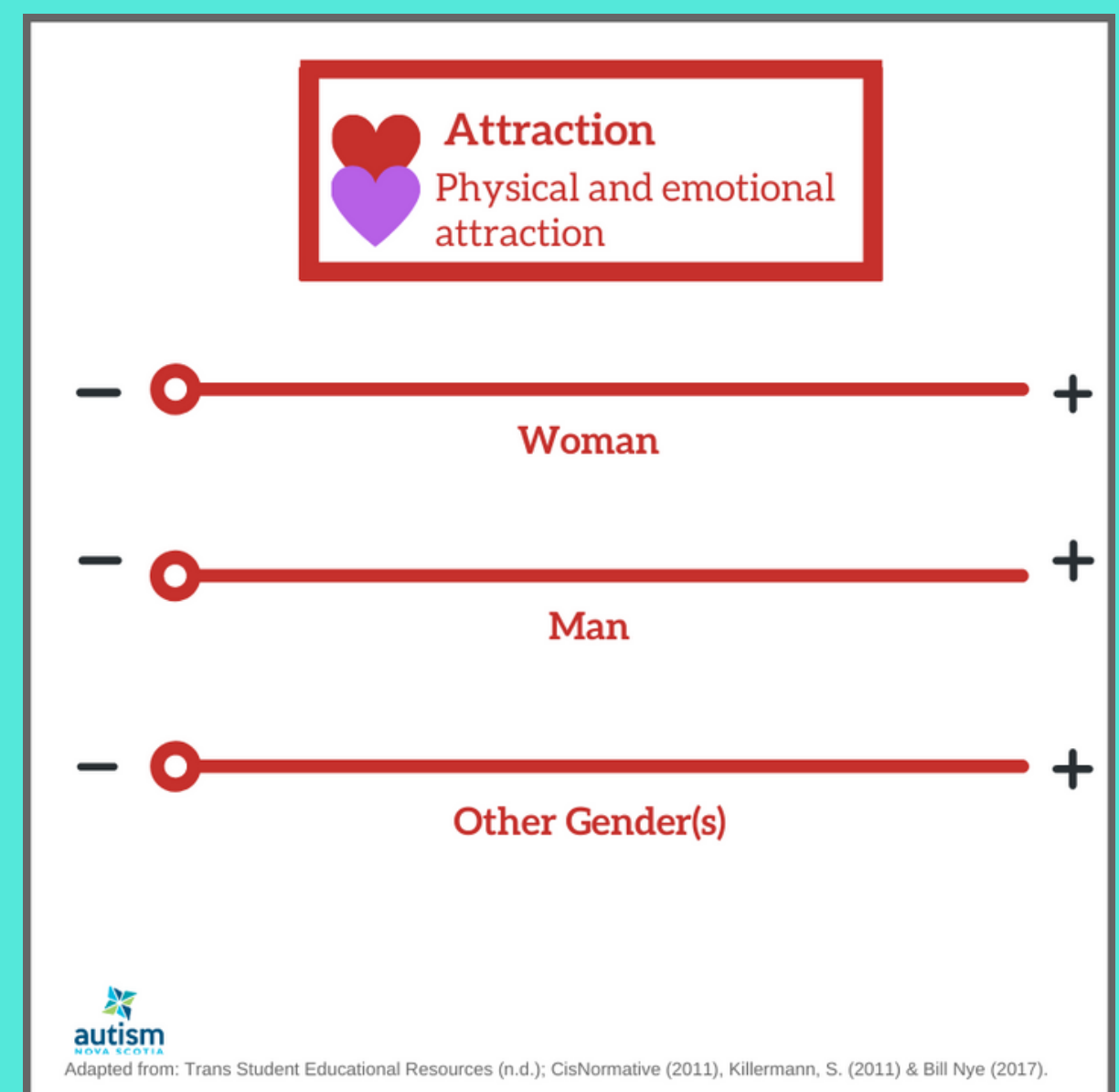
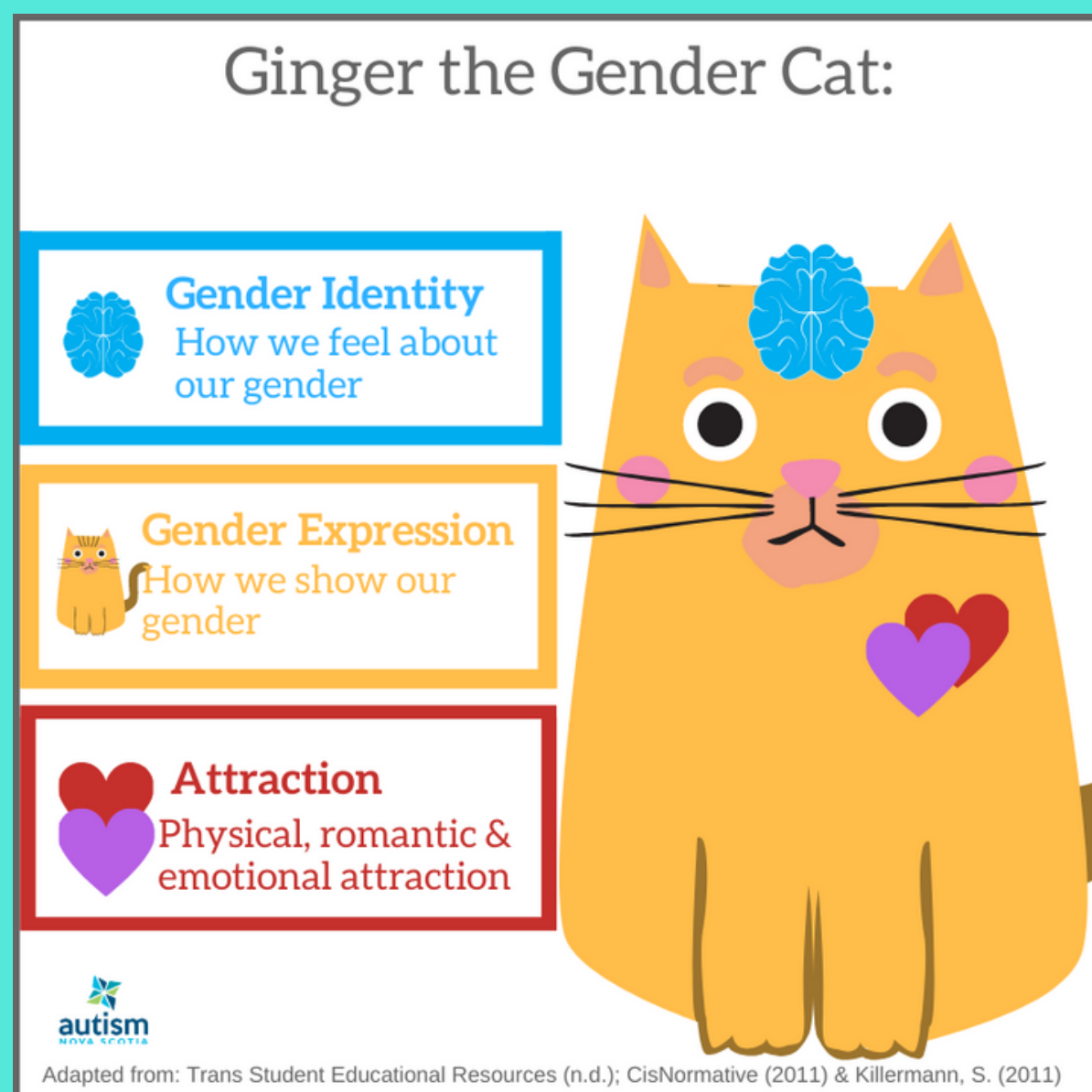


## Sexuality and Gender

### What is Sexual Orientation?

#### Sexual Orientation

- Based on the people and/or gender(s) a person is attracted to physically, emotionally, and romantically
- Is a spectrum - there are a wide range of sexual and romantic orientations



### What is the Difference Between Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity?

**Gender Identity** is how a person feels inside themselves about their gender. Gender Identity is about that person. **Sexual Orientation** is who a person is sexually and/or romantically attracted to.

Each person has a gender identity AND a sexual orientation.



# Healthy Relationships, Sexuality & Autism

Developed by: **Autism Nova Scotia**

## What are some ways to be gender affirming?



**DO NOT** make assumptions. Remember you can not tell someone's gender by how they look.

It is **NOT OKAY** to ask someone about their sex assigned at birth. That's like asking them what genitals they have and that is **not appropriate!**

## People can ask respectfully about gender identity and a person's pronouns

A way to talk to someone about gender identity is to SAY:

"Hi! My name is Alex. My pronouns are she/her."

Then they can REPLY:

"Hi. My name is Sam. My pronouns are they/them."

or ASK: "What are your pronouns?"

Using correct pronouns helps create a safer world for all genders. It helps people be who they are.



## Not everyone agrees about sexuality & gender...

- The "rules" about gender have changed over the years and they still vary depending on where you live.
- Language about gender is evolving and some information will likely change in the future.
- How someone chooses to identify, or whether they choose to disclose their identity is **ALWAYS UP TO THEM!**



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**For more information regarding content or questions, please contact:**

Yevonne Le Lacheur at Autism Nova Scotia **Email:** [programs@autismns.ca](mailto:programs@autismns.ca) **Phone:** (902) 446-4995