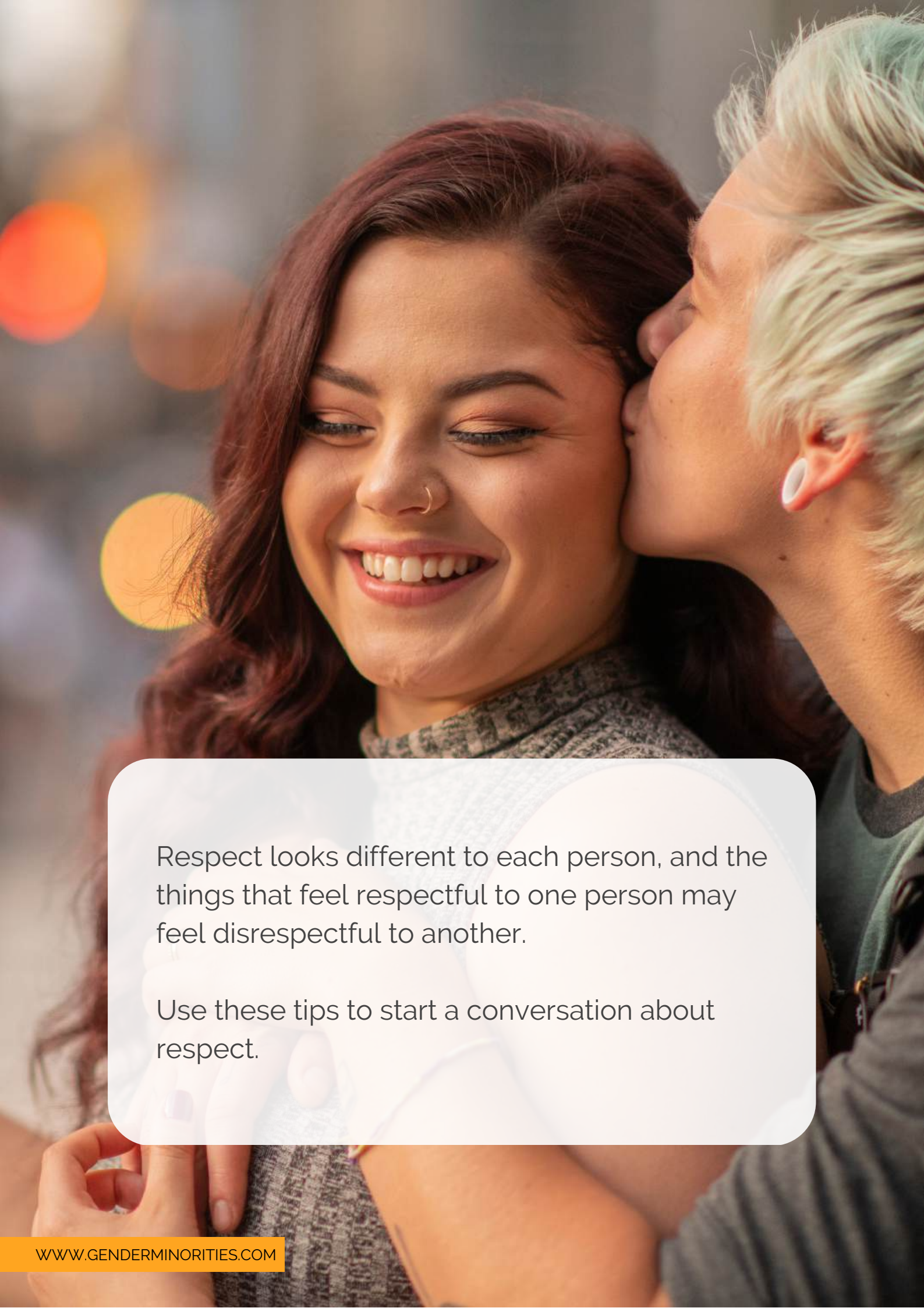
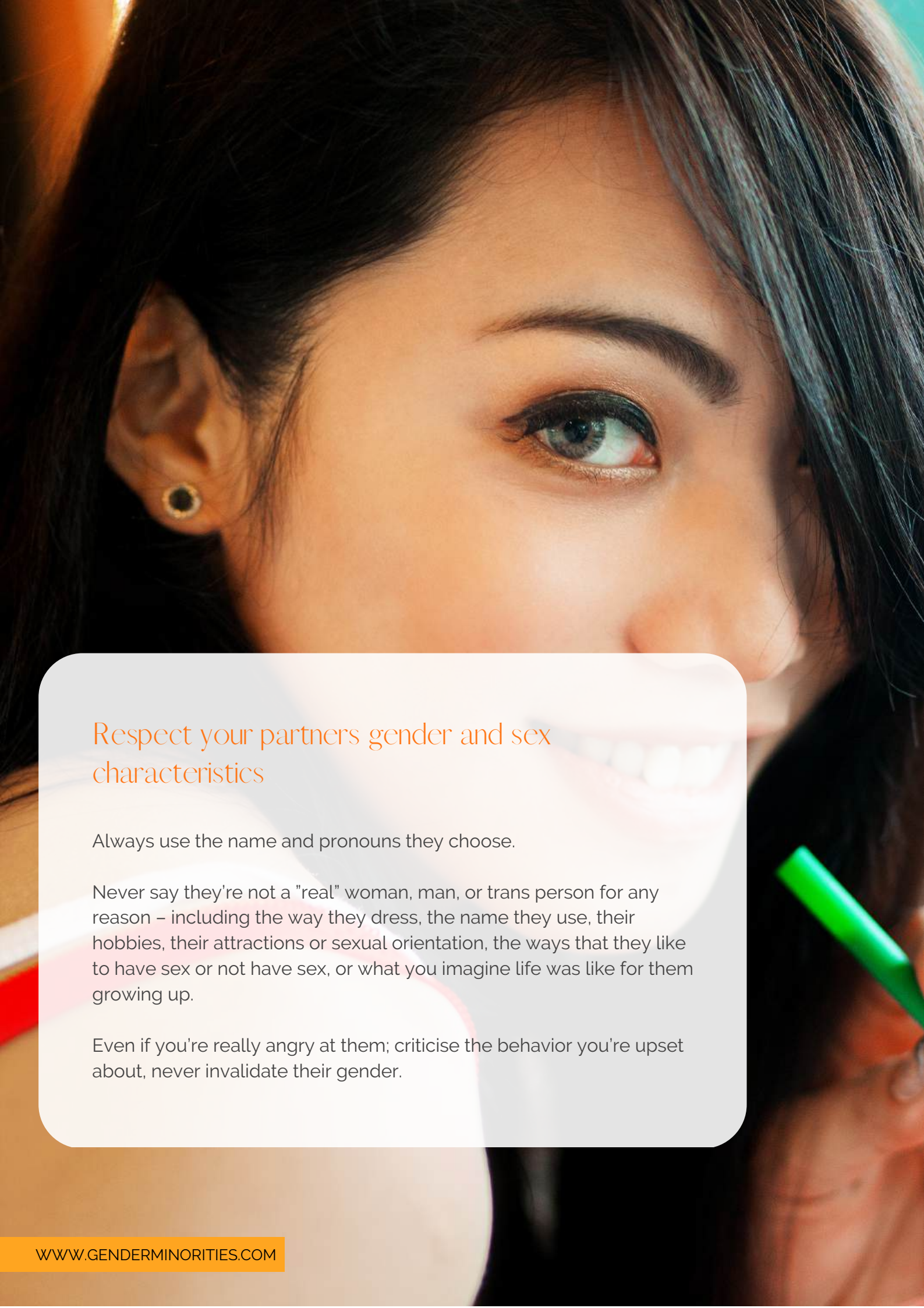
Dating a trans person 101

Respect



Respect looks different to each person, and the things that feel respectful to one person may feel disrespectful to another.

Use these tips to start a conversation about respect.

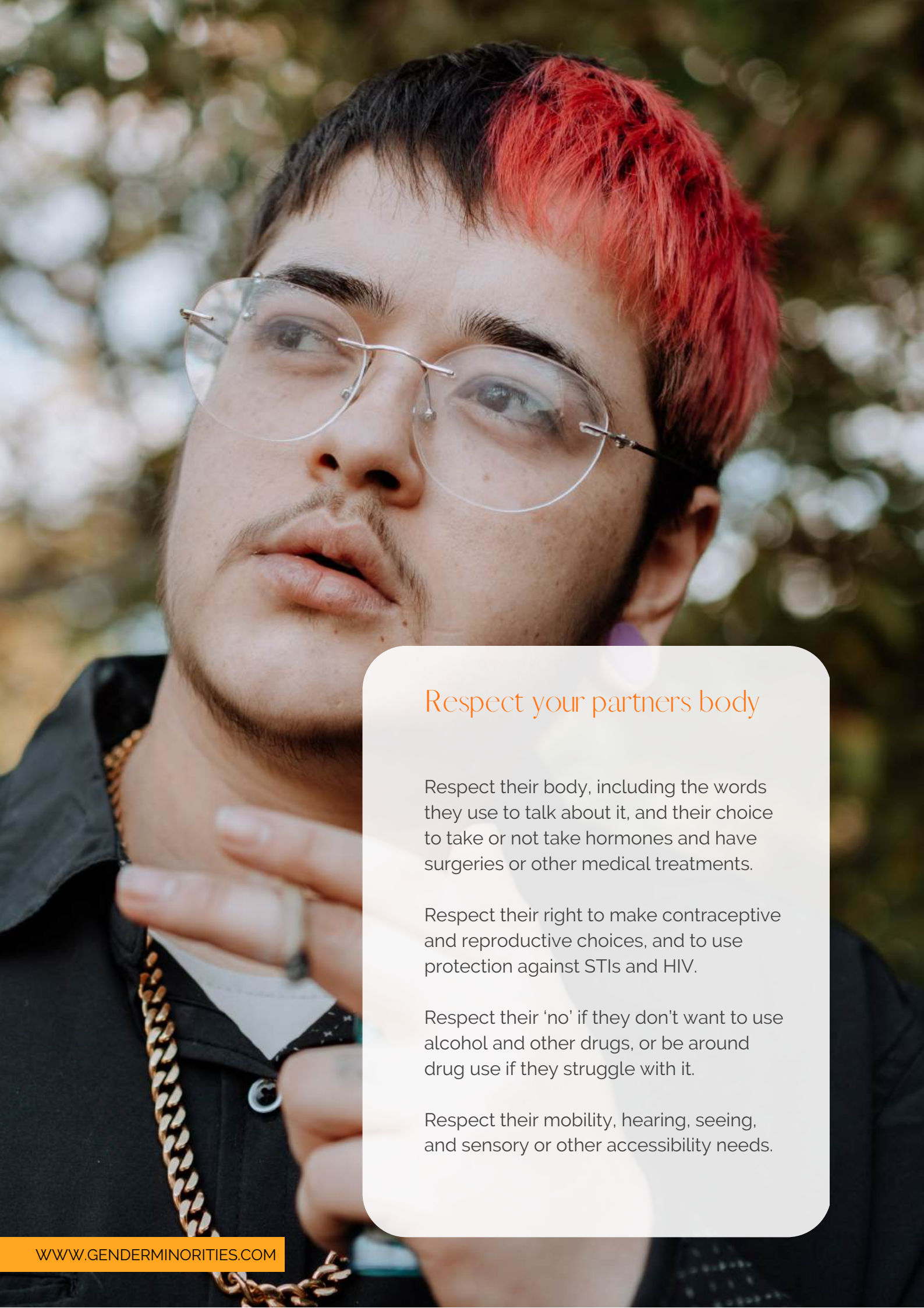


Respect your partners gender and sex characteristics

Always use the name and pronouns they choose.

Never say they're not a "real" woman, man, or trans person for any reason – including the way they dress, the name they use, their hobbies, their attractions or sexual orientation, the ways that they like to have sex or not have sex, or what you imagine life was like for them growing up.

Even if you're really angry at them; criticise the behavior you're upset about, never invalidate their gender.



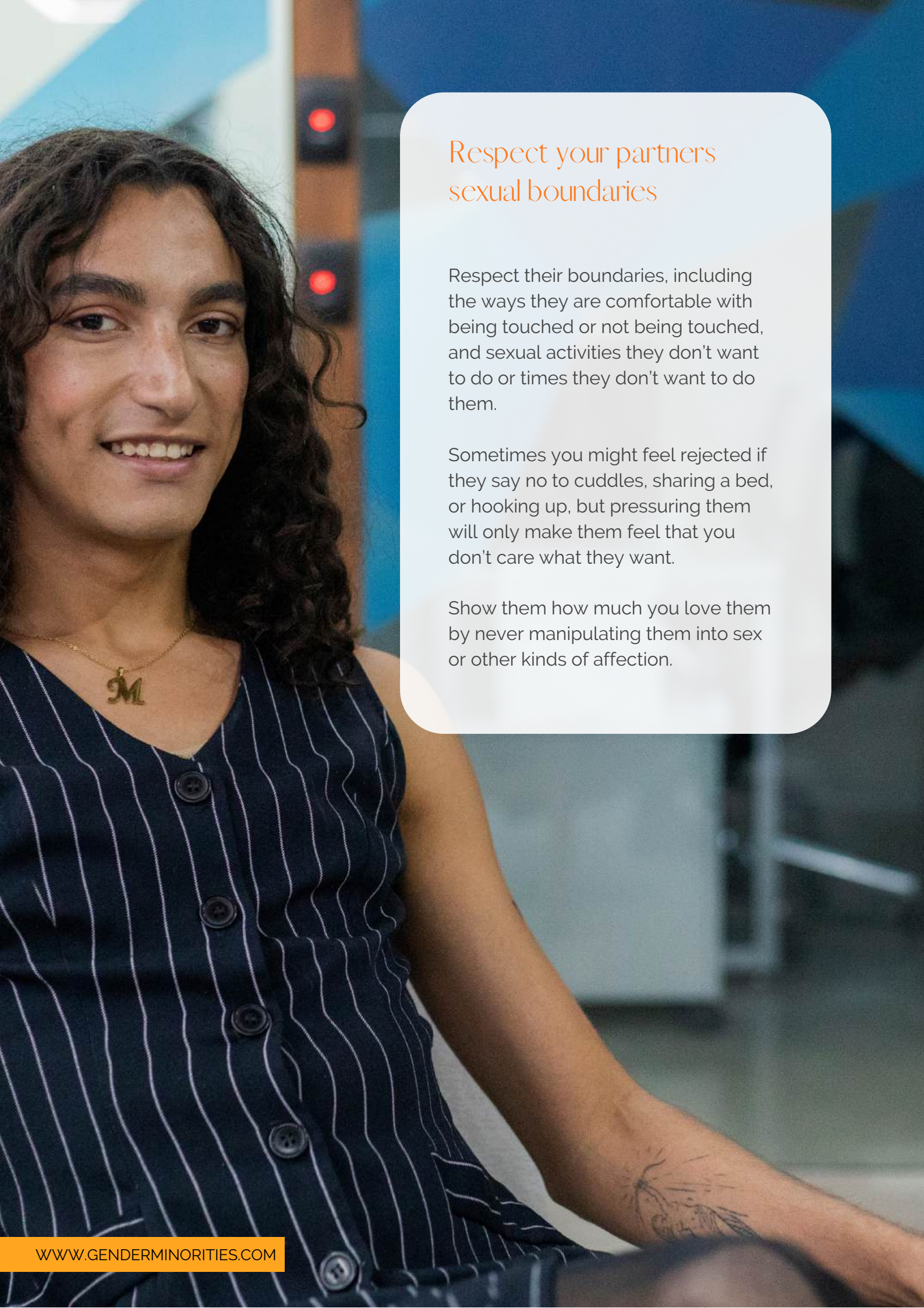
Respect your partners body

Respect their body, including the words they use to talk about it, and their choice to take or not take hormones and have surgeries or other medical treatments.

Respect their right to make contraceptive and reproductive choices, and to use protection against STIs and HIV.

Respect their 'no' if they don't want to use alcohol and other drugs, or be around drug use if they struggle with it.

Respect their mobility, hearing, seeing, and sensory or other accessibility needs.



Respect your partners sexual boundaries

Respect their boundaries, including the ways they are comfortable with being touched or not being touched, and sexual activities they don't want to do or times they don't want to do them.

Sometimes you might feel rejected if they say no to cuddles, sharing a bed, or hooking up, but pressuring them will only make them feel that you don't care what they want.

Show them how much you love them by never manipulating them into sex or other kinds of affection.

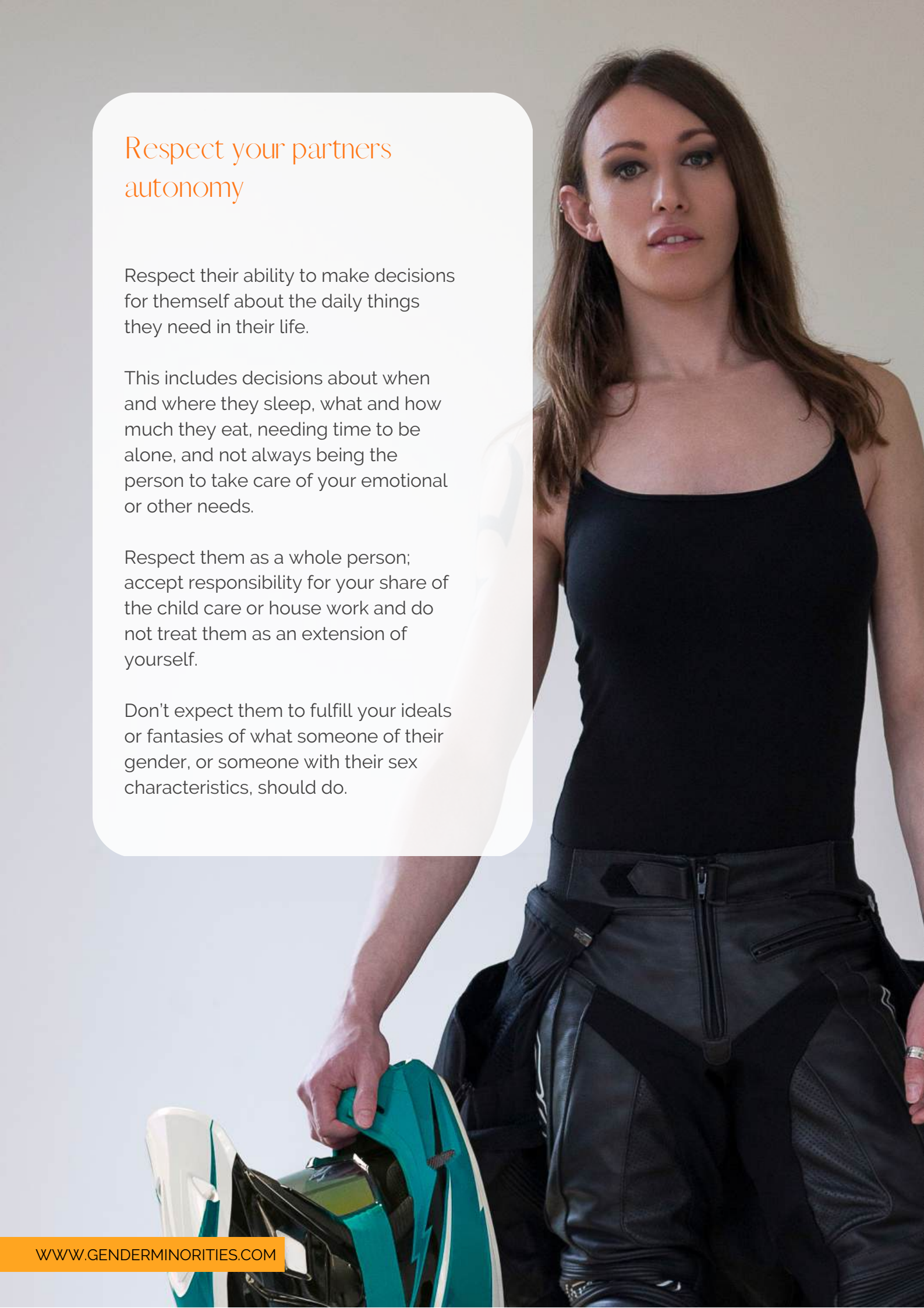
Respect your partners autonomy

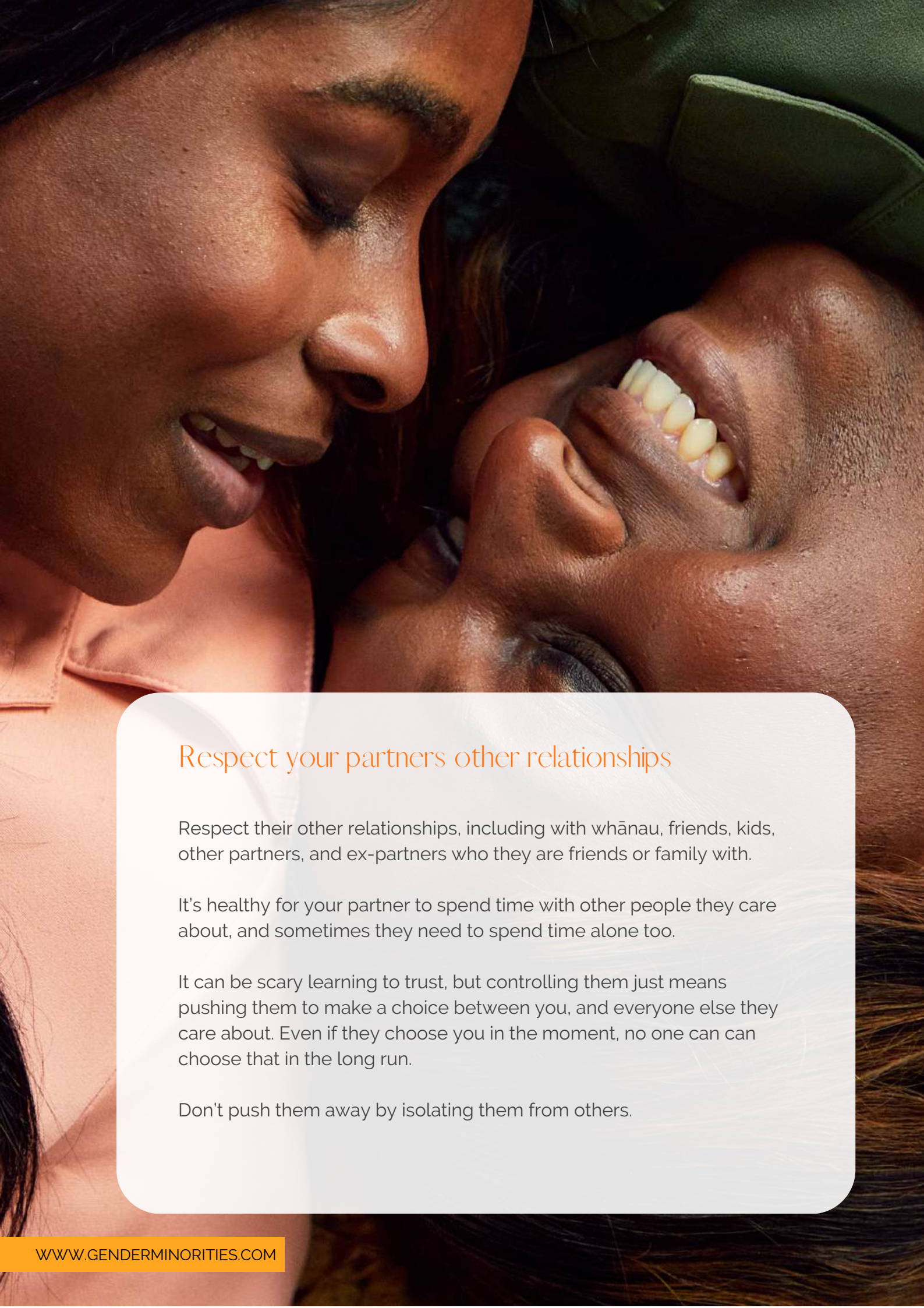
Respect their ability to make decisions for themself about the daily things they need in their life.

This includes decisions about when and where they sleep, what and how much they eat, needing time to be alone, and not always being the person to take care of your emotional or other needs.

Respect them as a whole person; accept responsibility for your share of the child care or house work and do not treat them as an extension of yourself.

Don't expect them to fulfill your ideals or fantasies of what someone of their gender, or someone with their sex characteristics, should do.





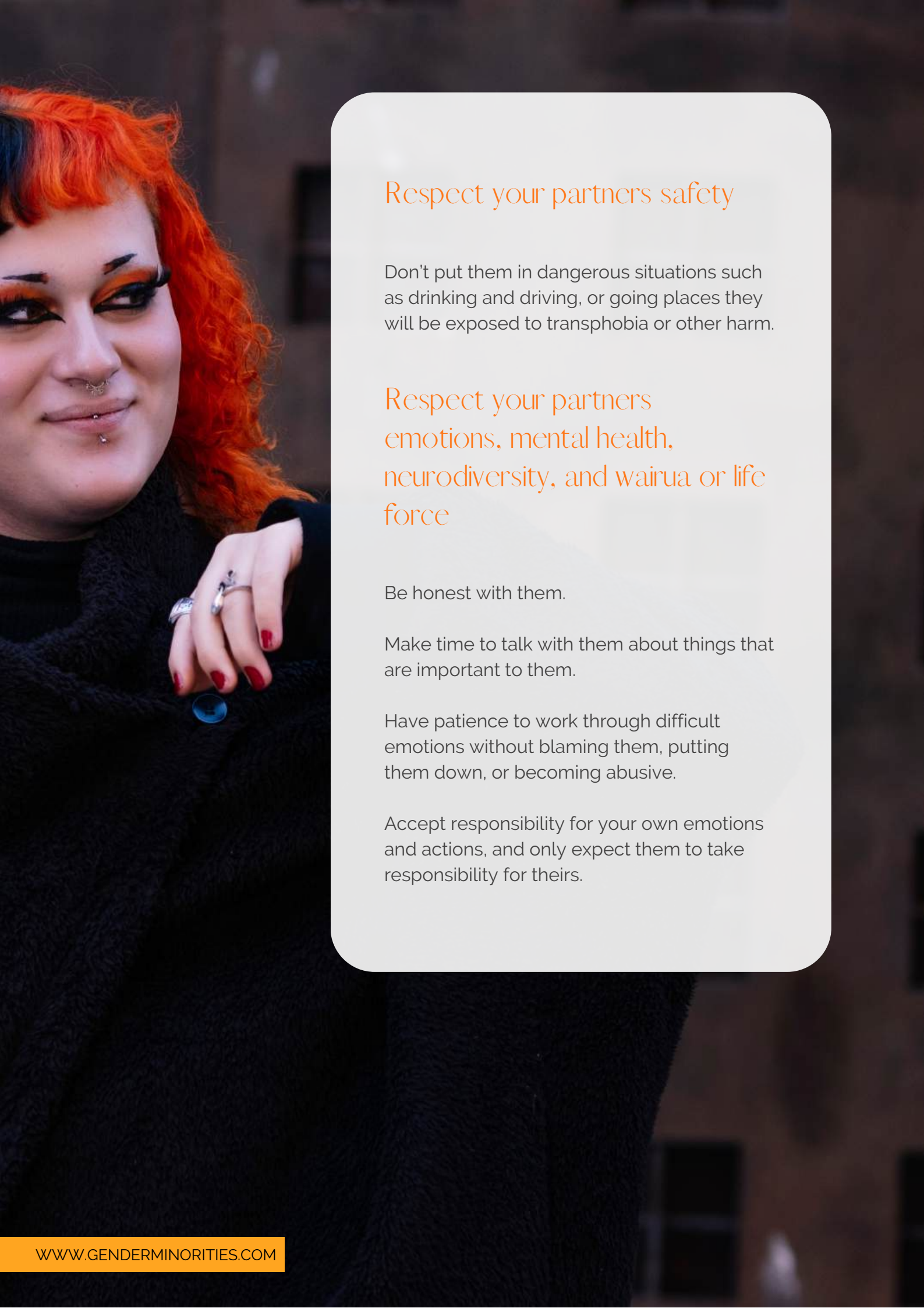
Respect your partners other relationships

Respect their other relationships, including with whānau, friends, kids, other partners, and ex-partners who they are friends or family with.

It's healthy for your partner to spend time with other people they care about, and sometimes they need to spend time alone too.

It can be scary learning to trust, but controlling them just means pushing them to make a choice between you, and everyone else they care about. Even if they choose you in the moment, no one can can choose that in the long run.

Don't push them away by isolating them from others.



Respect your partners safety

Don't put them in dangerous situations such as drinking and driving, or going places they will be exposed to transphobia or other harm.

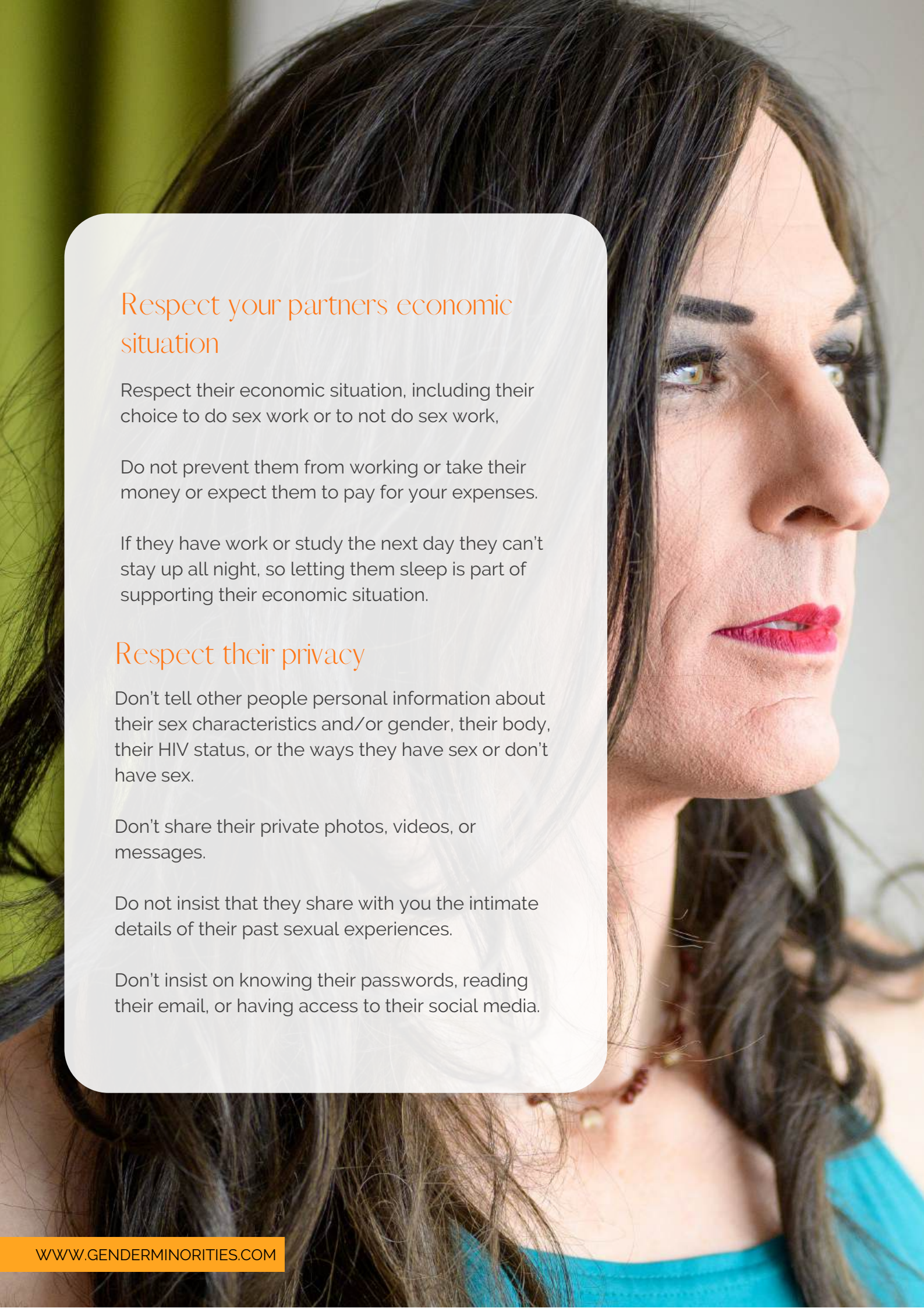
Respect your partners emotions, mental health, neurodiversity, and wairua or life force

Be honest with them.

Make time to talk with them about things that are important to them.

Have patience to work through difficult emotions without blaming them, putting them down, or becoming abusive.

Accept responsibility for your own emotions and actions, and only expect them to take responsibility for theirs.



Respect your partners economic situation

Respect their economic situation, including their choice to do sex work or to not do sex work,

Do not prevent them from working or take their money or expect them to pay for your expenses.

If they have work or study the next day they can't stay up all night, so letting them sleep is part of supporting their economic situation.

Respect their privacy

Don't tell other people personal information about their sex characteristics and/or gender, their body, their HIV status, or the ways they have sex or don't have sex.

Don't share their private photos, videos, or messages.

Do not insist that they share with you the intimate details of their past sexual experiences.

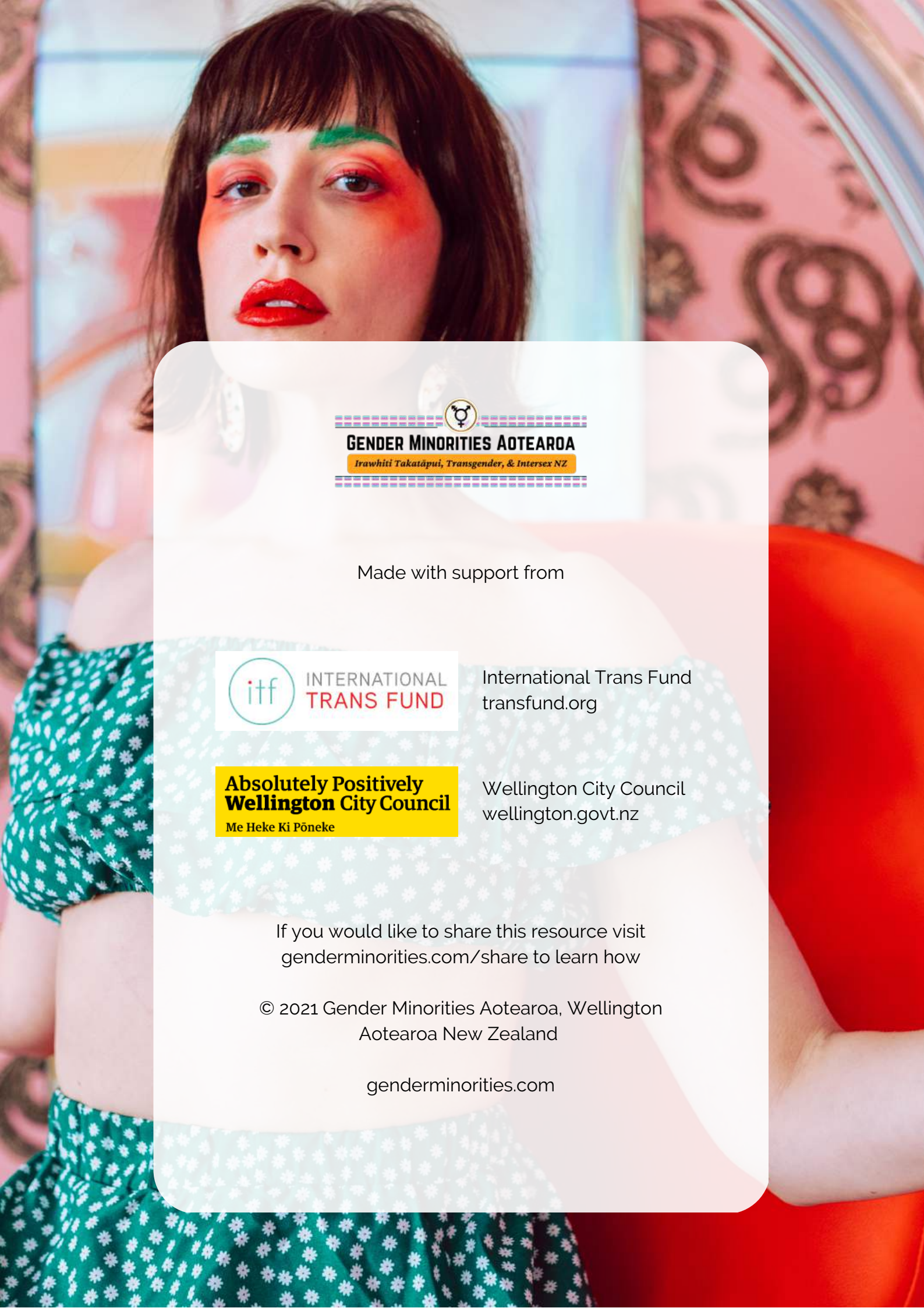
Don't insist on knowing their passwords, reading their email, or having access to their social media.

Respect their culture

Respect their whakapapa, their people, their language, their values, their spiritual or religious practice, and the land they're from.

Respect the histories of their people, and the ways in which gender and sex characteristics might be thought about differently than in your own culture.

A healthy relationship has room for difference and can celebrate each others diversity.



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