



Action Steps for Being a Trans Ally

“Transgender” encompasses many different gender presentations and identities. From MTF (Male-to-Female) and FTM (Female-to-Male) to nonbinary, agender, genderqueer, and many more. Many people do not identify as transgender but still face discrimination based on their gender expression and for not conforming to traditional gender presentations.

Here are some steps you can take to be a good ally to your transgender or gender nonconforming friends:

Don’t Make Assumptions About A Trans Person’s Sexual Orientation

Gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Being gay doesn’t mean you’re trans and being trans doesn’t mean you’re gay. Sexual orientation is about who we’re attracted to. Gender identity is about how we see ourselves. Trans people can identify as gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, or any other sexual orientation.

If You Don’t Know What Pronouns To Use, Ask Politely And Respectfully

Use their pronouns and encourage other people to do so. When introducing yourself to others, tell them your pronouns as a way to normalize this process.

Confidentiality, Disclosure, and Outing

Knowing a trans person’s status is personal information and up to them to share with others. Gwen Araujo and Brandon Teena were both murdered when others revealed their trans status. Other routinely lose housing, jobs, and friends. Do not casually share this information or gossip about a person you know or think is trans.

Don’t Assume What Path A Trans Person Is On

Affirm the many ways all of us can and do transcend gender boundaries, including the choices some of us make to use medical technology to change our bodies. Some trans people wish to be recognized as their gender of choice without surgery or hormones; some need support and advocacy to get respectful medical care, hormones and/or surgery.

Don't Police Public Restrooms

Recognize that gender variant people may not match the little signs on the restroom door—or your expectations! Encourage businesses and agencies to have unisex bathrooms, and offer to accompany a trans person to the bathroom so they are less vulnerable.

Don't Just Add The "T" Without Doing The Work

"LGBT" is now commonplace to show support for queerness. To be an ally for trans people, other aspects of the LGBT community need to examine their own gender stereotypes and transphobia and be willing to defend trans people and celebrate trans lives.

Listen To Trans Voices

The best way to be an ally is to listen to trans people themselves. Check out the sites below. Talk to trans people in your community. They are the experts on their own lives!

Web Resources:

Gender Identity 101: A Transgender Primer by Alexander John Goodrum:

www.tgnetarizona.org/gender101.htm

Gender Education and Advocacy: www.gender.org

FTM International: www.ftm-intl.org/

International Foundation of Gender Education <http://www.ifge.org>

Intersexed Society of North America: <http://www.isna.org>

Leading Transgender Organizations: <http://www.gendertalk.com>

PFLAG's Transgender Support Network: <http://www.critpath.org/pflag-talk/>

GLBTQ Resource Center at Kutztown University

15219 Kutztown Rd, Kutztown, PA 19530

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