

How to be a Trans Ally!

1. **Don't assume you know if someone is trans or not.**
There is no one way to be trans. Don't assume that everyone is on the same path in regards to hormones or surgery. **Don't privilege one way of being trans over another.** Expand your ideas of gender and understand that some trans people might not clearly switch from one gender to another.
2. **Use respectful language at all times,** not just when you know (or think) there is a trans person present. This includes respectful use of pronouns, i.e. using pronouns that a person has identified themselves with, avoiding pronouns and just using people's names, and never using terms like "he-she" or "it" to identify a gender variant person. **Don't tolerate hateful language from other people,** regardless of if there is a trans person around.
3. **Don't make assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation.** Understand the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity. Trans people can be gay, straight, bisexual, asexual, etc, just like cisgendered people.
4. **Never out someone's trans status for them.** Most likely, if someone has not "come out" there is a very good reason for it. Whether outing someone because you think other people have a "right to know" or are just casually gossiping about a person, outing someone's trans status could have severe emotional, economic and/or safety repercussions.
5. **Don't police the bathrooms.** Gender variant people may not match the "skirt" or "pants" option on the bathroom door. **Encourage businesses, schools, and workplaces to provide unisex bathroom options.** Understand that this is a major health issue, not a special privilege.
6. **Allow people to process their gender identities at their own pace.** This might mean that names and pronouns shift and change. Meet people where they are at and follow their lead, even if it is confusing to you.

7. **Don't ask trans people personal questions about their bodies**, i.e. what their genitals look like, if they've had hormones, how they have sex. Don't assume you have a right to know.
8. **Don't add the "T" without doing the work.** "GLBT" is commonly used to show inclusiveness in an organization. But adding the "T" without educating your organization on what the "T" means still leaves trans people without a voice. In order to be an ally, LGB people need to examine their own gender stereotypes, their prejudices and fears about trans people and be willing to support and celebrate trans lives.
9. **Know your limits as an ally.** Be willing to admit you might not know everything and know resources to refer people to when you see the limits of your understanding. Admitting your limits is better than giving wrong or hurtful information.
10. **Listen to trans voices!** Trans people are the experts in their own lives.
11. **Do your homework.** Don't assume that trans people have the time, emotional capacity or desire to educate you. Find resources that support YOU as an ally. Particularly when a loved one has come out to you as trans, it is important to support how difficult it may have been to come out by taking care of yourself and working on your own prejudices, questions and concerns about gender.