

How to be an Ally for the Transgender Community

When you're learning more about the transgender community and how you can better support transgender people, it's important to recognize that the transgender community is not a monolith. Everyone is different. Everyone has different needs and different things that make them comfortable and uncomfortable – just like cisgender people. Here are a few ways you can be a better ally to the transgender community:

- **Introduce yourself with your pronouns.** When you're introducing yourself start with yours. For example: "Hi, my name is Sunitha and my pronouns are she and her. To make sure I don't unintentionally misgender you, what are yours?" It may seem strange at first, but that's how it always is when we learn new things.
- **Respect everyone.** Recognize you don't have to understand how someone feels, or their experience, to respect them. Everyone, regardless of how different they are from you, deserves basic human respect and dignity.
- **Transgender people present as differently as cisgender people.** There is no one way to be transgender. The transgender community is wonderfully diverse, and some transgender people might not "look" transgender to you. Some people only socially transition – meaning, they may use pronouns that weren't assigned to them at birth, wear different clothing, or use a different name than their name assigned a birth. Other transgender people choose to medically transition. It is not your role to ask questions about this, it is only your role to respect each person.
- **Think before asking questions.** Be careful and considerate about the questions you ask. You would not ask most cisgender people about their medical history, medications, surgeries, or about their intimate life – keep questions that are not relevant to your conversation to yourself. If you have questions, it's up to you to do your own work on the transgender community. It is not up to transgender people to educate you about their experience and life. If they do choose to tell you about their experience, respond with empathy, kindness, and support for their experience.
- **Avoid gendered compliments and advice.** Saying: "you look like such a woman!" or "if you did X you'd be perceived as more manly." Compliments, comments, or advice based in gender are sexist and inappropriate. Everyone has different ideas of how they feel the best and playing into gender stereotypes with comments like this is inappropriate.
- **Stop using gendered phrases.** Phrases like "Hi, guys," "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen," or "We need more manpower to get this work done," automatically excludes the trans and nonbinary communities. Shifting your language can make a big difference in how people feel when they are welcomed or included in spaces. Saying "Good morning, everyone," "Hi, folks," or "It'll take more person-power to get this work completed," can create a space where you aren't unintentionally excluding the people around you.

- **Learn more.** These are just a few ways you can be a better ally. The transgender community has always existed in all cultures, in all countries, and across time. It's up to each of us to do our own work to unlearn ideas of a gender binary and to better support transgender people. To learn more about how you can support the transgender community, check out these organizations:



**Advocates for Trans Equality:
Supporting Transgender
People**



**GLAAD: Tips for Allies of
Transgender People**



**The Trevor Project: Being
an Ally to Transgender and
Nonbinary Youth Guide**

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