

Tips for Allies of Transgender People

The following are tips that can be used as you move toward becoming a better ally to transgender people. Of course, this list is not exhaustive and cannot include all the "right" things to do or say - because often there is no one "right" answer to every situation you might encounter.

When you become an ally of transgender people, your actions will help change the culture, making society a better, safer place for transgender people - and for all people (trans or not) who do not conform to gender expectations.

- You can't tell if someone is transgender just by looking.**
- Don't make assumptions about a transgender person's sexual orientation.**
- If you don't know what pronouns to use, listen first.**
- Don't ask a transgender person what their "real name" is.**
- Understand the differences between "coming out" as lesbian, bisexual, or gay and "coming out" as transgender.**
- Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."**
- Respect the terminology a transgender person uses to describe their identity.**
- Be patient with a person who is questioning or exploring their gender identity.**
- Understand there is no "right" or "wrong" way to transition - and that it is different for every person.**
- Don't ask about a transgender person's genitals, surgical status, or sex life.**
- Avoid backhanded compliments or "helpful" tips.**
- Challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes in public spaces - including LGB spaces.**
- Support gender neutral public restrooms.**
- Help make your company or group truly trans-inclusive.**
- At meetings and events, set an inclusive tone.**
- Listen to transgender people.**
- Know your own limits as an ally.**