

How to be a Trans* Ally

Top ten ways to make safe space for people of all genders:

1. Don't wait until someone in your family or community or institution comes out as trans or genderqueer to make safe space. Be an ally now!
2. Educate yourself about the needs and perspectives of trans and gender-non-conforming people and don't wait for TGNC people to teach you.
3. Don't assume you know anyone's gender identity or preferred pronoun. Ask everyone their name and chosen pronoun and use those even if they are inconsistent or change over time, circumstance, or context. Use "they" and "them" until you know for certain someone's pronoun preference. Don't judge someone's ability to pass or to conform to any gender stereotype or model. It doesn't matter how someone looks to you. It matters how they feel.
4. Don't assume anything about people's bodies, or ask intrusive questions about someone's body or medical business. Don't gossip about people's bodies or behaviors or past.
5. Remember that gender identity is separate from sexual orientation and often from social roles. Don't assume anything else about a person based on their being trans or genderqueer. Use gender neutral language like "partner" or "family" or "significant other."
6. Bathrooms, locker rooms, and other gendered spaces can be sites of stress and abuse for trans and genderqueer people. Consider de-gendered bathrooms and have fewer activities separated by gender. Make sure trans and genderqueer folks feel welcome in gendered groups.
7. Interrupt and abolish hate language. Don't allow anyone to demean or tell jokes about sexual or gender minorities or allow anyone to be mocked for gender traits or identity.
8. Don't "out" anyone, ever!! Promote the privacy and safety of trans and genderqueer people.
9. Challenge binary systems and labels. Don't make forms with only two boxes. Don't check boxes in cases where they don't work for you or others, or it seems unnecessary to include gender. Make more space for everyone to live outside gender roles and stereotypes.
10. Remember that it takes a lot of courage for people to come out or to be different than the people around them. If someone comes out to you as trans or gender-non-conforming, it's not a phase or fad or illness or way to rebel or get attention: it is someone trusting you to see them as they see themselves.

