



### **Appreciate gender diversity**

All gender identities are valid and should be supported equally. If someone's gender is outside of the gender binary or they don't have a gender identity at all, it simply reflects the diversity of people's identities.

### **Support everyone**

Recognise and respect the lives and experiences of all trans and non-binary people, and understand the oppression they face. This includes supporting trans people of colour, sex workers, and people with disabilities.

### **Help your friends**

Going to a gendered bathroom or changing room can be difficult for trans people,

especially when they are made to feel like they don't belong. One practical thing you can do to help your trans friends – if they want you to – is to go inside with them. This ensures they don't have to face any potential transphobia alone.

### **Call out transphobia**

Challenge friends and family members who make transphobic comments. Dealing with toxic, dehumanising attitudes can be extremely draining and distressing for trans people. Support from others can really help.

### **Listen and learn**

Learning the appropriate terminology and language can be daunting. If you make a mistake, apologise and learn from the

experience. Honest mistakes – as opposed to intentional attempts to invalidate someone's identity – don't make you transphobic.

### **Don't out anyone**

It can be dangerous for trans people to be open about their gender identity. Don't tell anyone about someone's gender identity without their consent, even if they have come out to their friends, family or wider society.

### **Educate yourself**

It's important to learn more about trans experiences but remember that trans people are not walking encyclopaedias. Organisations like Stonewall, Mermaids, Gendered Intelligence and GLAAD have lots

of resources online:

- ▶ [www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans)
- ▶ [www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)
- ▶ [www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)
- ▶ [www.glaad.org/transgender/allies](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies)

### **Answering questions**

'Should trans women be allowed in women's refuges?'

'What about public toilets and changing rooms?'

'Should children and young people be taught about trans issues?'

Stonewall has lots of useful information about these and other frequently asked questions:

- ▶ [www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans)

LGBT 017

# TALKING OF TRANS... A guide to good gender language



This booklet provides an introduction to gender diversity and offers advice on how to support the trans population.



## THE BASICS

Your anatomy does not determine your gender.

Not everyone's gender identity falls within the gender binary – the idea that there are only two genders, male and female. The situation is much more diverse.

Gender isn't set in stone – some people have fluid or fluctuating gender identities.



## KEY TERMS

**TRANS** is a gender identity and an umbrella term for people whose gender differs from or does not sit comfortably with the sex they were assigned at birth. A trans woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth. A trans man is a man who was assigned female at birth.

**CISGENDER** is someone whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**NON-BINARY** is a gender identity and an umbrella term for people whose identity falls outside of the gender binary. The term non-binary comes under the trans umbrella.

**INTERSEX** describes someone born with anatomical, hormonal and/or chromosomal variations in their sex characteristics. It is not a gender identity and should not be lumped under the trans umbrella. Some intersex people self-define as trans and/or non-binary, others with the gender they were assigned at birth.

## LABELS

It's always up to an individual as to how they describe their gender identity. Some people use multiple terms or shift between different terms to better represent their gender identity. This should always be respected and supported.

## HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANS POPULATION

### RESPECT PEOPLE'S NAMES

Use the name and gender a trans person tells you to use. Don't ask what their 'real' name or gender is – this is disrespectful and distressing.

#### Use the correct pronouns

Some people prefer gender-neutral pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir. If you are unsure which pronoun to use, wait for an appropriate moment and ask. Alternatively, indicate the pronouns you use first – this gives people an opportunity to say theirs, too.

#### Gender identity and gender expression are different

Gender identity is how someone defines their gender. Gender expression is how they choose to reflect their gender identity in their physical appearance. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender based on the way they dress – it may not reflect their gender identity or the appearance usually associated with their gender identity.