

How to be a trans ally

1. Respect people's gender. Don't assume anyone's gender and don't refer to someone's gender based on how you think they look or sound or whether it makes sense to you.
2. Don't know someone's pronouns and embarrassed to ask? Use their name wherever possible, along with gender neutral language, avoid he/she, ladies/gentleman and use 'they' instead, until you know their pronouns. Ready to be an active ally? Lead the way and introduce yourself with your name and pronouns.
3. Don't ask "what is your real name?" or use the person's dead name (the name they used prior to transition) because in doing so you feed a culture that constantly invalidates that person's identity.
4. Drop the use of the word 'preferred' in regard to gender, pronouns and name. By adding preferred it suggests a choice and it isn't or that there are other options which there are not. If you are unsure just ask and be sure to be polite and respectful. If you make a mistake, apologise and move on. Don't make a big deal about it.
5. Respect confidentiality. Do not reveal someone's trans status without their permission/consent (known as "outing").
6. Challenge transphobic behaviour and language where you come across it. If you are at work you can raise it with a manager. When out of work, you can inform the police. This includes challenging the media—use social media to challenge the bigotry that the media is perpetuating.
7. Respect boundaries. Would you approach one of your cisgender colleagues and start asking them about their genitals? Or sexual preferences? What surgery they've had?
8. It's OK not to know how to treat a trans person but it's not ok to not educate yourself. Listen to the person about how they want to be treated. Treat them as you would treat anyone else.
9. Don't make comments such as "you'd never know", "you look just like a real woman", "I would never have known you were transgender", "he's so hot, I'd date him even if he is trans", "you'd pass so much better if you wore less/more makeup, had a better wig, etc."
10. Support their choice of bathroom. If we are going to continue as a society to reinforce the use of male/female toilets (is that what we all do at home?) then trans people should be able to use the facility that corresponds to their gender identity and expression without fear of reprisal, violence or judgement. Just get on with what you are there to do!