

# TOP TIPS FOR ALLIES

- Don't make assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation.
- If you don't know what pronouns to use, listen first. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologise quickly and sincerely and move on.
- Respect the terms a person uses to describe their identity.
- Avoid backhanded compliments and 'helpful' tips (e.g. "You look just like a real woman!").
- Challenge anti-transgender remarks or 'jokes', even in LGBT+ spaces.
- Support all-gender public toilets.

*Adapted from GLAAD's 'Tips for Allies of Transgender People'*

## MYTH BUSTER

### ***The role of medical treatment or surgery in transitioning***

Transitioning refers to the steps someone takes to live as the gender they identify with. This may include steps such as coming out to friends and family or changing official documents. It may or may not include medical interventions, such as hormone therapies or surgeries. Choosing to, or not to, undergo these interventions does not make someone more or less trans.

Further information and support, please visit the SU's LGBT+'s Campaign's website - <https://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/trans/>

#### **REFERENCES:**

Allen, Tollit, McDougall, Eade, Hoq & Pang. (2021). A Waitlist Intervention for Transgender Young People and Psychosocial Outcomes. *Paediatrician*, 148(2).  
Bailey, Ellis & McNeil. (2014). Suicide risk in the UK trans population and the role of gender transition in decreasing suicidal ideation and suicide attempt. *Mental Health Journal Review*, 19(4).  
Galop. (2020). *Transphobic Hate Crime Report 2020*.  
<https://www.mypronouns.org/>

# TRANSGENDER AWARENESS WEEK 2021

A guide created by Hughes Hall students

## TRANS 101

The terms '**sex**' and '**gender**' are two distinct, although often associated, concepts. When we are born, our sex is assigned based on our primary sex characteristics (male, female, or intersex). Gender, on the other hand, is a socially constructed identity which differs culturally. We are often labelled with a gender (boy or girl) based on our assigned sex.

'**Trans**' is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. 'Trans' encapsulates a wide variety of terms, including transgender, non-binary and genderqueer.

## GLOSSARY

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity 'aligns' with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Trans(gender) woman:** A person who lives and identifies as a woman, but was assigned male at birth.

**Trans(gender) man:** A person who lives and identifies as a man, but was assigned female at birth.

**Non-binary:** A person whose gender identity does not fit comfortably with either 'man' or 'woman'.

# PRONOUNS: *why do they matter?*

When we refer to someone in the third person, a gender is usually implied (e.g. she (girl/woman) or he (boy/man)). Often we make assumptions about people's gender, and therefore pronouns, based on their name or outward appearance.

Assuming someone's pronouns can send a potentially harmful message that people of particular genders look or act in certain ways.

*"Just as it can be offensive or even harassing to make up a nickname for someone and call them that nickname against their will, it can be offensive or harassing to guess at someone's pronouns and refer to them using those pronouns if that is not how that person wants to be known."*

Sharing your own pronouns normalises others sharing theirs.

## Gender neutral pronouns include:

- They/them/theirs
- Ze/hir/hirs
- Xe/xir/xem
- Using a person's name instead of pronouns

## Some gender inclusive alternatives to "Ladies and Gentlemen":

- Friends
- Students
- Colleagues
- Folks

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*Gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and attraction, are all distinct, albeit sometimes related, concepts.*

# WHAT ISSUES DO TRANS PEOPLE FACE IN THE U.K. TODAY?

*Many trans people face multiple barriers and levels of discrimination in lots of different parts of the world. The U.K. is no exception. Here are just some of the issues that trans people face:*

**Hate crimes** Four in five trans people reported experiencing a hate crime in the last year (Galop, 2020).

**Poor mental health.** A U.K. study of approx. 900 trans people found that 48% of them had attempted suicide (Bailey, Ellis & McNeil, 2014).

**Inadequate medical support.** Waiting times for NHS gender identity clinics stretch into the years. For example, as of 11th June 2021, there were nearly 9000 people awaiting their first appointment at a central London clinic. With the clinic seeing an average of 1000 people a year for first appointments, there is a significant delay in being evaluated for specialised trans medical support, let alone receiving it, which may take additional appointments. Such delays inevitably impact the wellbeing of trans people. Unsurprisingly, a recent Australian study has found that shorter wait times lead to improvement in young trans people's mental health, family functioning, and quality of life (Allen et al., 2021).

**Barriers to legal gender recognition.** Changing your legal gender is a long administrative process and involves applying to a panel. You need a medical diagnosis & to have lived in your current gender for at least 2 years. In 2020, this process was reviewed. However the decision was made not to remove the need for a medical diagnosis, despite the extensive wait times described above.

**Transphobia.** Transphobia is found in multiple parts of our society, including the government, media and even within the LGBTQ+ community. Such transphobia not only negatively impacts trans people on a daily basis. It also worsens the status quo and inhibits wider structural changes to policy and law that would improve the lives of trans people.