



University of Minnesota Transgender Commission Quick-Guide to Transgender Inclusion

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This document is provided to help your department, college, organization or institution be more inclusive and accommodating to the transgender and genderqueer people who are your students, staff, faculty, visitors, customers and more. We have outlined a few areas to assess your inclusion policies and help create positive change to better serve your population. It is important to note that when you are making a process or facility more trans-friendly, you are often helping other populations you serve such as persons with ability issues, parents, non-traditional students---and many more.

Don't wait until someone comes out as transgender to start creating a safer, more welcoming environment for everyone. In fact, we recommend that you start having conversations with the people around you right away!

Restrooms, changing areas and locker rooms can be some of the most gender-polarized and intimidating areas in our buildings. Consider changing signage on any currently existing single stall restrooms so that they are gender-open and not designated for a specific gender.

Forms, Publications & Websites: Do you have a paper form or website which asks people to choose from "female" or "male?" Ask yourself: why are you gathering this information? Consider allowing people to make multiple selections, no selection or to write in their gender self-identity.

Personal Communication:

Privacy: Treat the transgender status of anyone you interact with as a private, confidential matter. Interrupt and discourage office/classroom gossip regarding an individual's gender expression or identity.

Language: Think about the most common questions you ask your co-workers/classmates and whether they are inclusive of transgender experiences. For example, "Are you dating anyone?" could replace "Do you have a boyfriend?" as a more inclusive question.

Pronouns: Try not to assume that you already know what pronouns a person might prefer. Rather, in order to treat each person with respect, pay attention to how they self-identify or ask which pronouns they would prefer when referencing them.

Internal Policies: Often we create documents with unnecessary or inappropriate use of pronouns. Consider reviewing public documents to see if they need to be gender-specific. Clothing/Uniform/Dress Codes are examples of an internal policy to review.

Addressing Harassment: Everybody has a role in interrupting and discouraging harassment against people of all genders, including transgender people (and people who are perceived to be transgender, whether or not they identify as such). Modeling respectful language and behavior is the first step toward creating an environment free from harassment. However, if you observe or overhear someone being harassed, interrupt if you can and always report the incident to the proper organization.

Name Change: One major step in the transitioning process for some transgender people is a name change. In order to be respectful, it is important to acknowledge a person's chosen name, regardless of legal status. Examine your forms and policies and make room for "preferred name" on forms, and encourage office/classroom communities to acknowledge chosen names. Paychecks, rosters, filing systems, mailing lists are some areas to examine and make changes that honor a person's gender self-identification.

Education and Training: Include transgender identities and issues of gender diversity in any diversity training offered for staff/students.

Resources: Many people have little to no experience with transgender issues, and may have a lot of questions. Provide your office/classroom community with as many resources as possible. Check out the links and resources on the Transgender Commission website or elsewhere. Encourage your office/classroom community to explore these websites, and to continue their self-education.

In all of these areas it may be helpful to remove yourself from the traditional societal viewpoint of two regimented genders. Imagine yourself as a person who doesn't fit into this system. How would you feel about restrooms with the signs ♀ ♂ ? How would you feel if your office did not allow you to wear clothing that was comfortable for you or expressed who you are? How can you be part of the change to help transgender people feel safe and included?