



Five ways you can be an ally to the trans and non binary community

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GMB Activist Christina Dearlove writes on why we can't leave challenging transphobia just to trans people and gives give ways you can be an ally to the trans and non binary community

Everyone single person deserves to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness at work. Unfortunately, this isn't the case for all workers.

According to [TUC research](#), seven in ten trans workers say their experience of workplace harassment or discrimination has a negative effect on their mental health.

The trade union movement can help tackle this. Our movement is built on solidarity in an explicit acknowledgement that we are stronger together.

This is why it's important all working people, union members and trade union representatives are trans allies.

The fact is, being a trans ally really isn't that difficult.

What is a trans ally?

A trans ally is a non-trans person who is committed to being open-minded and respectful to people who either may have a different gender identity to them or present their gender

in a different way.

They have taken the time to learn more about trans people and their lives and confront assumptions and stereotypes around trans people.

Allies work to ensure trans people are treated with respect in and outside of the workplace.

Every non-trans person can be a trans ally and work to ensure trans people are treated with dignity and respect.

Below are five simple tips on how to be a good ally to the trans and non binary community:

1. Knowledge is power, so educate yourself

Many people have said they want to be a trans ally and support the trans community, but feel they don't know enough about trans people to speak up. If you feel this way there are many resources you can use to learn more and empower yourself. This will help you to a better ally.

There are many online resources you can find using Google, YouTube or by looking at LGBT-friendly media sites such as the LGBT consortium, Stonewall and equality groups within our own union.

There may be times when you might use the wrong terminology or misunderstand something. People might point that out, but don't let that stop you being an ally.

Trans people will appreciate that you have the right intent. Use the opportunity to learn more.

2. Include trans colleagues

Many trans friends have told me how isolated they can feel at work, with some stating their colleagues did not speak to them or allow them to join into their conversations. Some people took active steps to exclude them.

It's easy to try and help with this.

Just make an effort to include your trans colleagues in both work and social conversations. It is good workplace practice and a courtesy that should be extended to all your colleagues.

3. Respect boundaries

If you've read this far, it's likely you want to be an ally or already are and have taken the



decision to support the trans community at work and more widely.

So, thank you! That's great! Please keep reading as there are more ways you can help.

One good way to be an ally is to understand and respect people's boundaries. You're not going to ask a stranger, friend or work colleague about the appearance or status of their genitals. So don't ask a trans person.

Unsolicited personal questions about their transition aren't ones you really need to asking. If a trans person is going to have, or are having, surgery that isn't something you need to know.

The fact is that each person's transition is different and there is no right or wrong way. Understanding that and respecting a person's privacy are key attributes of an ally.

4. Listen

Listening to how a trans person describes themselves will enable you to follow their lead and active listening will help you ensure you use the right pronoun and name if you are unsure.

If you realise you've used the wrong name, pronoun or terminology just apologise, correct yourself and move on.

Don't make a big deal about it, but make an active effort not to make the same error again.

5. Challenge transphobia

This is a big one.

Speaking up for trans people, for trans equality and against transphobia is really important.

Don't forget your voice and your actions have weight and can change hearts and minds.

Be the first to challenge transphobia or correct misconceptions, even when there aren't trans people in the room.

Don't leave challenging transphobia just to trans people. Show your solidarity. Be a trans ally.

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