

100 Easy Ways to Make the World Better for Trans People

 [vice.com/en_us/article/kzjnjm/how-to-be-trans-ally-tips](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/kzjnjm/how-to-be-trans-ally-tips)

Let's cut the shit—there's no positive way a cis person can dictate or speak on a life that you do not live and a world you do not have to navigate as a trans person.

In a world where misconstrued ideas about trans folk—what we need, what we deserve, how we should live—fall from the lips of so many cis people, we need to end the debate on whether trans womxn are womxn, whether we should be able to use the correct bathrooms and changing rooms, and whether we should be parents or teachers. Because it's not a debate. We are entitled to our human rights just as much as everyone else.

What we actually need are ears, eyes, and action. We need you to listen to our problems and our voices. We need you to be on the look out for how you can use your privilege for our benefit and not yours, and how to actively respond to, argue with, and call out transphobia in your everyday conversations and the national news.

Here are 100 ways that cis allies can help us. Bear in mind that this is only a start.

- 1.** Respect people's pronouns. This is really not very complicated! If someone tells you how they identify, you have no say on the matter. Use the pronouns *they* use.
- 2.** Still on pronouns: if you don't know somebody's pronouns and want to get it right, either use gender neutral pronouns (i.e. they/them/their) or quietly and discreetly speak to the person and ask. Be aware of your surroundings and those around you before doing so—do not out this person or put them in an unsafe situation.
- 3.** Trans folk can use gender neutral pronouns, so please do not assume that we must adhere to a binary.
- 4.** Try to start removing binary language from your everyday conversations. If we all make conscious efforts to steer away from gendering everything, this will have a knock-on effect that stops our learnt obsession of having to divide everything into binaries.
- 5.** Trans women are women. This is not up for debate—so don't try to.
- 6.** Trans men exist! We are often overlooked or forgotten, so try to remind yourself that we are out here and can find the male cis world hard to navigate.
- 7.** Call out transphobia **WHEREVER** you are! Even if a trans person is not present, be our defence. Hateful language perpetuates the dangerous cycle of violence.

8. Understand and be vocal that transphobia is never “funny,” “in jest,” or “banter.”

9. Don’t refer to us as a whole. Do not make sweeping generalisations about every trans person. We are all individual people with different opinions.

10. Reject the idea that transitioning looks like one thing. People wish to transition in various ways. If someone doesn’t want to or can’t medically transition, this does not mean they are “less trans.” There is no such thing as “less trans” or “more trans.” This is a personal journey that doesn’t need to tick any boxes in order for the transition to be validated—by anyone!

11. NEVER ask anything about our genitalia or body. “So... do you still have everything down there” as a puzzled hand flutters near our privates is not ever going to be OK. That is final.

12. Oh, let’s not forget that we do not all know each other. The queer community is bigger than you think.

13. Try to refrain from using language that is heavily influenced or derived from queer culture if this is not your community. Words and phrases are a way of communication in code for a large majority of the queer community (like “reading”). Language creates a dialogue within the queer community that is meant to protect and ensure safety.

14. Do not enter queer or trans safe spaces without a queer person asking you to be there or without making sure that allies are welcome.

15. When you are in queer spaces, repeat: “This is not my space, I will not fill it” and actually do what you say.

16. Be aware of your hands. Do not touch people without consent in all spaces—and especially queer spaces—and especially avoid touching trans people who often are triggered by physical contact involving parts of their body.

17. If you are called out for being offensive, do not argue. This is not a debate. Apologise. Take a moment to reflect. If necessary, leave or give the space over to those you have offended or upset.

18. Never try to argue with a trans person that something isn’t transphobic.

19. Remind us that being trans isn’t a burden or a bad thing!

20. Recognise the strength and power of your voice.

21. Now use it.



- 22.** If a trans person is being verbally assaulted, made to feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or being attacked in any way and needs your help—open your mouth.
- 23.** This being said, do not become the ally that speaks over or for a trans person in this situation. Ask if we want you to step in because there's nothing more frustrating than cis person silencing you. It happens enough, jeez!
- 24.** Talk to us about more than gender! Movies, what we had for dinner, our next holiday—anything that isn't constant emotional labour.
- 25.** Take us off your mood boards. Book us, pay us, and celebrate us.
- 26.** Do not fetishize trans folk. We are not your sexual experimentations, tokens, or reason to rebel against your parents. We are not here for you.
- 27.** Criticise the media. Write to the newspapers, institutions, and publications that are spreading hate towards the trans community. Create polls and petitions. National news portrays us as monsters and threats to society. We can't stop them from doing that on our own.
- 28.** Learn what Mx means.
- 29.** Talk to the generation above you—your parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. You can't always change traditional mindsets, but you can give them a new perspective.
- 30.** Support the generation below; speak to young kids. Make them aware that gender is a spectrum and they don't have to commit to one gender for their whole life. Educate them on their freedom and choices.
- 31.** Don't buy gendered things for kids around you. This just pushes the ideas that boys must like blue and girls must like pink and only one of them can play football in their spare time. I don't even particularly like either colours!
- 32.** Stop pretending only trans people experience name changes or surgery. Me changing my name and a friend getting married and changing her surname meant we had to go through some similar legal process. Help trans folk with these legal procedures, whether that's telling us which bank is easy to change your name with or going through the deed poll process with us. It means it doesn't feel like these are "trans issues"—they're just really confusing forms that nobody quite understands!
- 33.** Share your platforms. I am tired of cis people talking about trans health. Ask us to talk, educate, share our stories, and pay us. This way you don't get the credit for the lives we live.

- 34.** Support trans artists. Rock up to our exhibitions. Buy our books. Listen to our podcasts. Use your social platforms to share the incredible things we do despite the adversity we face.
- 35.** Don't expect trans folk to always congratulate you for being an ally. Sometimes you're just being a good person. I don't get a gold star for just being a good person.
- 36.** Donate to organizations and charities that are set up to aid and help trans folk. There are so many organisations struggling with funding. Without lots of these resources we can't access things like mental health services and free meet-ups.
- 37.** Do not tell us what RuPaul, Trump, or the *Daily Mail* said about us. Chances are we already know.
- 38.** Post about the #blacktranslivesmatter campaign—highlight that trans people of color are targets of violence.
- 39.** If you are dating a trans person, try to understand their triggers. For example, me and my partner call my menstrual cycle “Lucifer.” So if I text her to say “Lucifer is here,” she knows to bring chocolate and pillows. You can also try covering tampon or pad boxes and wrapping with cute cartoons or their favourite colour.
- 40.** Do not tell us we “are playing the victim,” WE ARE THE FUCKING VICTIM.
- 41.** Do not attend panels that address gender and/or trans identity if everyone on the panel is cis.
- 42.** Give trans creatives platforms to share work that aren't all about being trans.
- 43.** Do your research. For all ignorant questions, divert to Google. Google is your friend. I am not, especially if you're asking me how doctors make a penis from my leg.
- 44.** If trans folk do have to explain something to you that may be uncomfortable, triggering, or upsetting for us, buy us a bunch of flowers, take us for dinner, drop something into our PayPal. No labor should be free.
- 45.** Transphobia is a huge issue in the queer community. Do not let other people who identify as queer get away with things, because they can be by far the worst.
- 46.** Record transphobic incidents. (Caveat: This is only if your immediate assistance is not needed and you have checked you can use this footage by the person involved.) Share this with everyone you can. It may lead to prosecution or people in positions losing their job. Nobody should still be allowed to be a CEO and use offensive slurs.

- 47.** Don't question someone's religious beliefs because they are trans and you think they go against what it says in a holy book. This isn't your business, OK?
- 48.** Trans issues are not for profit. That's it.
- 49.** "Queer" is not a theme. Do not have a "queer" house party and let boys who still use the word "faggot" wear your heels and dresses because it's fun.
- 50.** Drag queens are not always trans, but they can be—so respect that!
- 51.** Do not make someone feel bad after dragging you for something you have done that is deemed transphobic. Your guilt is not my guilt to feel.
- 52.** Don't ask what gender dysphoria feels like because it's a stupid question and there's no way you can try to understand it.
- 53.** Ask your friends or trans folk you know if they'd like company when going to hospital appointments. Hospitals are scary at the best of times and sometimes you don't always get the treatment, doctors, or results you want. Be there to give a hug, at least.
- 54.** Do anything you can to stop trans exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs) from leaving stickers, leaflets etc. Tear down everything you see associated with them.
- 55.** Do not engage in question-based conversations with TERFs. You have nothing to learn from them.
- 56.** Correct others when they misgender people.
- 57.** Gender and sexuality are not the same thing. Remember that at all times.
- 58.** Do not ask a trans person's partner what being in a relationship with a trans person "makes" them. It makes them in love, now fuck off.
- 59.** Trans Lives Matter should be more than a hashtag. Push it further than social media.
- 60.** Tell your trans friends and partners how great they look. Highlight the changes after hormones, surgery, or even just a good skin day.
- 61.** You are not a true ally if you allow your partner to use transphobic language. Educate your friends and family.
- 62.** Love your children regardless of what gender they identify as. Most self-hate for many trans folk comes from not being accepted at home.
- 63.** Offer shelter, money, food etc. The basics of survival are hard for trans folk. If you have enough to spare, try to offer.

- 64.** This is not a “phase.” Do not tell me it is one.
- 65.** If your trans friend is leaving a social situation and feels uneasy about travel, offer to walk them to a train station and wait with them, drive them home, or get them a taxi. Travelling home alone by yourself can be a scary scenario.
- 66.** Do not think you are saving us. We don’t need saving. You are helping us to have what everyone else has without having to ask for it.
- 67.** Be active about your allyship. Just saying you are an ally but not doing enough to actually make a change isn’t enough.
- 68.** Avoid gendered slang terms like “dude,” “man,” or “missy.” For trans people, these too feel like misgendering.
- 69.** Expand your knowledge of gender. For example, the Yoruba language is genderless. There is also a third gender in many spiritual philosophies.
- 70.** Decolonize the way you think of gender. Remind yourself that these social constructs are postcolonial issues that the western world have pushed onto people.
- 71.** Be hyper aware of the systems that work against trans folk in issues like policing, housing, and health care.
- 72.** Offer to help go to health meetings and assessments. These spaces and the people within them can be very triggering and cause distress.
- 73.** Correct yourself if you accidentally misgender someone. It doesn’t matter if it was an accident—it still hurts.
- 74.** Make no excuses for others. No trans person wants to hear one of your friends say something offensive, only for you to say, “I’ve known them for ages, they don’t mean it like that.”
- 75.** Don’t forget that racism is rife in the queer community and trans people of color are often the most vulnerable. Protect us.
- 76.** Do not call yourself an ally if you do not believe in complete intersectionality. You be xenophobic and be an ally for trans folk. It doesn’t work like that, I’m afraid!
- 77.** Sex work is a service. Again, this is not up for debate. Do not try to stop trans folk from advocating for and implementing their own safety measures. Do not hide your prejudice against sex workers with fake worry.
- 78.** Do not ask to try on or feel a strap-on, breast plate, or packer. These belong to us.

- 79.** Believe trans folk when they say they have been targeted. Recognize the hatred that is thrown at us from so many angles.
- 80.** Read Charlie Craggs' *To My Trans Sisters*, Juno Dawson's *The Gender Games*, C Riley Snorton's *Black on Both Sides*, and Travis Alabanza's *Before I Step Outside (You Love Me)*.
- 81.** Relearn there is no universal trans experience. Not all of us go through the same things—we are all shaped by our varying lives.
- 82.** Share our work. Often our talents are overlooked based on our gender identity.
- 83.** Step down. Take up less space. If you are asked to do or take about something that you think your trans friend, partner, or coworker is more qualified for. Give our names.
- 84.** Love us and see us as human beings. After all, that's what we are!
- 85.** Watch *Pose*, *Paris is Burning*, *Tomboy*, *Tangerine*.
- 86.** Learn the correct terminology. Instead of saying “when you were a girl/a boy” say “your assigned gender at birth.”
- 87.** “Transgender” is not a thing. We do not fall under one group. Never say that.
- 88.** Fight for our rights. Block and report pages or people spreading hate, too.
- 89.** Help to introduce gender neutral bathrooms. They should be way more common. Ask for them at work, cafes, bars, and venues.
- 90.** If somebody who is trans asks you to go to the bathroom with them, go. This can be a very unsafe space for us.
- 91.** Pride is not for you to get drunk and smear glitter on your face. Respect that this is not your space.
- 92.** Trans-only groups are there for a reason. These are also not your spaces.
- 93.** Your curiosity does not come before our comfort. Don't expect answers and labor.
- 94.** Saying “I do not see gender” is hella problematic. We don't need another way to be erased.
- 95.** Don't assume anything about gender dysphoria. Not everyone experiences it and not everyone experiences it in the same way. People navigate it with different coping mechanisms.

96. Do not deny your privilege. If you tell me that being a cis heterosexual white man doesn't mean you haven't "had it rough," I will tell you that you are wrong.

97. I also am not playing Top Trumps with you. Don't try to top my experience.

98. Not everything needs labels. As my grandmother would say: "Baby, some things just be as they be."

99. Intimacy can be even more complicated for some trans folk. Respect boundaries and ways people feel comfortable with nudity, tactility, and sex. This may mean being patient or unlearning what we deem as 'sex'.

100. Find your own ways to disrupt the cis world. There are so many ways to do this.