

Key Terms

Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply-felt sense of being male, female, something other, or in-between. We all have a gender identity.

Gender Expression

An individual's characteristics and behaviors such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are perceived as masculine or feminine.

Transgender

An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity and/or gender expression is different from their birth assigned gender. Many transgender people identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). People who transition from female to male may be referred to as "FTM" or "transgender men." People who transition from male to female may be referred to as "MTF" or "transgender women."

Gender Non-Conforming

Gender non-conforming people have, or are perceived to have, gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.

Transition

The process of changing genders from one's birth assigned gender to one's gender identity. There are many different ways to transition. For some people, it is a complex process that takes place over a long period of time, while for others it is a one- or two-step process that happens more quickly. Transition may include "coming out": telling one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; accessing hormone therapy; and possibly accessing medically necessary surgical procedures.

Transgender Law Center advocates in courtrooms, boardrooms and legislatures as the legal and policy heart of the grassroots movement to create a world where people who don't fit narrow gender stereotypes are free from prejudice and we can all live as our authentic selves. We are proud to work with people in their efforts to get and stay employed no matter how they express their gender.

If you are looking for additional support hiring or working with transgender professionals contact the nation's first transgender employment program, **Transgender Economic Empowerment Initiative (TEEI)**. Visit www.teeisf.org or call 415-865-5632.

To learn more or to get help, please contact Transgender Law Center.



Transgender Law Center

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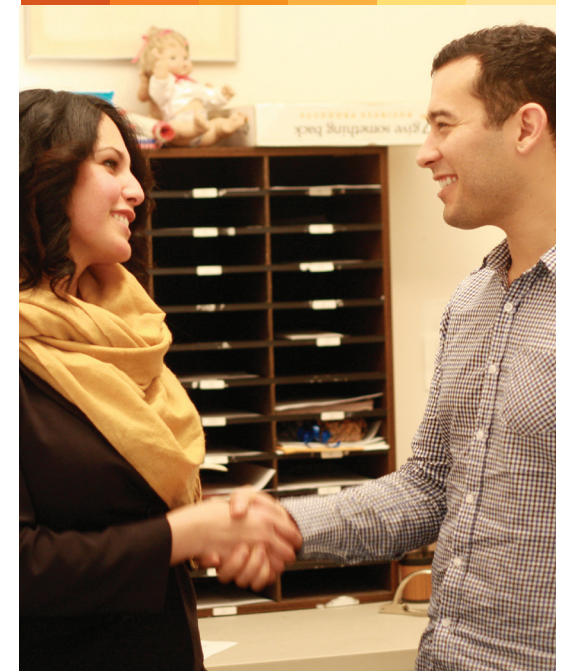
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Tips for Working with Transgender Coworkers

An information and resource publication for employees



Transgender Law Center

Making Authentic Lives Possible

Tips for Working with Transgender Coworkers

Transgender people are employed in every industry and profession throughout the country, and deserve a safe and inclusive workplace. Although an increasing number of states have passed laws prohibiting employment discrimination based on gender identity, many transgender people still face pervasive harassment and unfair treatment in the workplace. Helping to ensure that your workplace is free of discrimination and harassment is very simple. The following tips can help you comply with the law while making your workspace safe and welcoming for all employees.

1. DEMONSTRATE RESPECT. Transgender coworkers do not expect any special treatment. They simply want their identity to be respected. This often means they want to be addressed by the name and pronoun that reflects their gender identity. Most often transgender women want to be referred to with the pronouns “she” and “her” and transgender men want to be referred to with the pronouns “he” and “him.” If you are unsure of what pronoun to use, you can politely ask your coworker how they would like to be addressed. Also, just like all coworkers, transgender people do not want other employees talking about them behind their backs or making fun of them. Treat your coworkers the way you would want to be treated at work.

2. RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR PERSONAL VALUES AND THE COMMUNITY VALUES OF YOUR WORKPLACE. Some people have political, cultural, and/or religious objections to someone being transgender. Being polite and respectful to a transgender coworker does not require abandoning these beliefs. Instead, being polite simply requires that these beliefs are not acted upon in the workplace. After all, transgender and non-transgender people alike want to be treated respectfully; the best way to do that is to separate out private values from workplace conduct.

3. RESPECT YOUR COWORKER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY. Many non-transgender people have a lot of questions about their transgender coworker's gender transition. However, it is inappropriate to ask a coworker questions about their private medical history. Certainly, friends talk about things that coworkers don't and some coworkers will feel comfortable enough with one another to discuss private issues. Regardless, it is important that you do not assume that your transgender coworker will want to discuss their private health care matters with you. Instead allow your coworker to initiate any conversation about their transition.



4. HELP COWORKERS WHO ARE HAVING TROUBLE WITH ANOTHER EMPLOYEE'S TRANSITION.

Sometimes one of your non-transgender coworkers may have difficulty showing respect to their transgender coworker. The person may mistakenly use the transgender coworker's old name out of habit and may need to be gently reminded about the new name or pronoun. Other times, the person may have trouble separating their personal values from the community values of the workplace. In those instances, it is helpful if you talk to them about how their behavior affects not only your transgender coworker, but you as well. This will help them understand that their actions have larger consequences than they may know.

5. DON'T ASSUME THAT YOUR TRANSGENDER COWORKERS KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT ALL TRANSGENDER ISSUES. While some transgender coworkers may have a special interest in discussing transgender-related issues, others may not. It might make sense to you to discuss a news story or movie about a transgender issue with your coworker. The same might be true if you have a question about a transgender civil rights or medical issue. Before doing so, however, make sure that your coworker really wants to discuss these things. What you may find is that you have other shared interests that they'd much rather discuss. Just because someone is transgender does not mean that they wish to discuss every transgender-related issue that may arise.