



Curtin University

Gender Affirmation at Curtin
How to be an Ally
Appendix C

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INFORMATION FOR CURTIN EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This resource is for all employees and students to assist them in becoming an Ally to Trans*, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary (TGDNB) people at all times.



WHAT IS AN ALLY?

An Ally is someone who supports and advocates for the fair treatment of a community other than their own.

Being a an Ally involves actively supporting and respecting the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ individuals. It's important to educate yourself about the challenges and issues faced by the LGBTQIA+ community, and to use inclusive language that respects people's identities and pronouns. Listening to and amplifying the voices of LGBTQIA+ individuals, standing up against discrimination and prejudice, and advocating for equal rights and justice are crucial actions. Additionally, creating safe and welcoming spaces, both in personal and professional environments, can make a significant difference in the lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Being an Ally is an ongoing journey of learning, empathy and commitment to equality and acceptance.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Exploring and affirming one's gender identity is a personal journey, unique to each individual. Everyone in the TGDNB community has their own unique experiences, and their journey may not follow a linear, straightforward, or easily recognisable path. It might take time for someone to 'figure it out' and align on language about themselves that is readily shareable with others. They may try out different language, pronouns, and gender expressions throughout their journey. Like Allies, TGDNB people are continually learning and adapting to change.

Coming out as a TGDNB person can often be quite a different experience from coming out as gay, lesbian or bisexual. For TGDNB individuals, coming out can be a uniquely complex and involuntary process, as they may lack control over when or where disclosure occurs, such as unexpectedly encountering a colleague at a conference. This means they will repeatedly end up having to 'come out' to people and networks. Navigating this can induce a range of emotions, sometimes joyful and affirming, other times stressful and emotionally draining. This is why allyship is crucial in providing support and creating environments where individuals feel safe and affirmed in their identities.



IF SOMEONE COMES TO YOU SEEKING GUIDANCE AND/OR SUPPORT, REMEMBER:

- Take them seriously, allow the time and space to have a serious conversation with them.
- Be calm and supportive; know that they might be sensitive to your first reaction/response.
- Be honest, open, and respectful. Remember that they could also be feeling vulnerable and uncertain about how their gender affirmation will impact on their studies and/or work and their relationship with you in this environment.
- Listen closely and carefully, check in with them as they explain and discuss their needs.
- Reinforce their agency. They are the expert of their own experience and are to be included in every decision made and every action taken related to their gender affirmation. It is essential that no assumptions are made.
- Be mindful that some people may not feel comfortable approaching someone in a leadership position and may ask to bring a support person or seek alternative channels for support before coming to you.

INFORMATION THE PERSON MAY DISCLOSE TO YOU

These are some of the questions you can ask if someone does inform you that they are currently or planning on affirming their gender:

EMPLOYEES	STUDENTS
Their new name and/or pronouns	
Who else knows (such as others within the team and/or other areas)	Who else knows (such as classmates and/or Curtin employees)
How comfortable they feel about coming out to colleagues	How comfortable they feel about coming out to classmates and/or Curtin employees
If details are updated within the system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred Name • Formal [Legal] Name 	



TIPS FOR BEING AN ALLY

These points below are some ways you can be an Ally to Trans*, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary (TGDNB) people both at Curtin and in the wider community.

RESPECT, PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

EMPLOYEES

STUDENTS

Be Respectful – do not demand information

Do not ask about transgender people's bodies. Never ask whether they have had, or are planning on, any surgeries or hormone therapy. This information is private and highly personal and nobody has a right to ask

Be aware it is never acceptable to out a transgender person, unless they have explicitly said it is okay to you in that context

Avoid commenting on a person's appearance – even if intended as a complement

Try to interrupt the assumptions your brain automatically makes about others – consider how you make assumptions about others based on their appearance, age, perceived gender identity, language, name etc.

If using a printed register/list of names and a person informs you that they have updated their name, correct it

If using a roll and a person informs you that they have updated their name, correct it immediately

Do not single someone out and ask them questions about their gender identity, and never in front of their colleagues

Do not single someone out and ask them questions about their gender identity and never in front of the class or other students. This should only be discussed one-on-one with the person if necessary

Maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the person affirming their gender – this includes gender history and previous name. Only disclose information if you know it is legally necessary and you have their consent

Ensure everyone is being treated with respect, equality and dignity by ensuring all Curtin environments are free from harassment and discrimination towards TGDNB people

Where appropriate and following the direction of the individual affirming their gender, act on any requests about following up with peers or colleagues, such as using correct pronouns

Facilitating communication of relevant information to key stakeholders, for example, sharing that the individual has changed their name, with the full consent and understanding of the individual

Model Curtin values and lead by example to develop a positive, inclusive and respectful environment to support gender affirmation on campus, in the workplace and in the classroom

Do not make assumptions about the person's sexual orientation or personal relationships. Gender and gender affirmation are entirely distinct from sexual orientation



BE AWARE OF LANGUAGE (NAMES/PRONOUNS/IDENTITY)

- Correct yourself if you use the wrong name/ pronouns – even if the person is not there
- Correct others if they use the wrong name/ pronouns – even if the person is not there
- Do not ask for or share a person’s previous name – even if the person is not there
- Take care to use the correct pronouns; write them down (such as on your roll/ register) if that helps
- Use the name with which someone signs off their emails, instead of their account display name
- Introduce yourself with your pronouns in all contexts to normalise it – this can also look like adding them to your email signature and/or wearing a pronoun pin/badge
- Take note when people are wearing pronoun pins/badges or have them in their email signature and use them
- If you do not know what someone’s pronouns are, ask them respectfully, and ideally, privately
- If you do not recognise the pronouns that someone uses, ask them respectfully, and privately, how to use them

DO NOT BE A BYSTANDER

- Call out all discriminatory behaviours (e.g. transphobia, homophobia etc.)
- Model Curtin values and lead by example to develop a positive, inclusive and respectful environment to support gender affirmation on campus, in the workplace and in the classroom
- If you see or hear someone being misgendered or deadnamed, step in and correct them
- Remember that repeated purposeful misgendering and/or deadnaming is bullying and has no place at Curtin
- Do not condone or participate in gossip, jokes, flippant remarks or sexual innuendos about the person or their TGDNB status
- If you see someone facing transphobia or any other negative behaviours support them by:
 - *Directing them to support services available*
 - *Supporting them in reporting behaviour and/or incidents*
 - *Asking their permission to report the behaviour on their behalf*

IT IS OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES

Mistakes are part of the learning process. If you mistakenly deadname or misgender someone, you need to:

- Own it
- Apologise – sincerely and do not labour the point endlessly
- Correct and adjust
- Do not overanalyse it – remember when you introduced yourself to a new person, there was no judgement or acceptance piece when you gave your name, a simple exchange – no dissection – do the same here
 - *For example, “Alex – sorry – Ash will be presenting”*

OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE IS:

- Allyship is an ongoing journey, you may make mistakes and that is okay as long as you learn from them
- This is new for you and for them – they are also adjusting to a new name, their pronouns and trying to find what fits. It is your role to help support them on that journey



COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTENT

EMPLOYEES

STUDENTS

Use inclusive language, including in any spoken/written/electronic communications, regardless of whether any TGDNB people are present. See the *Inclusive Language Guide*

Where possible, use examples, information and cases from a diversity of backgrounds, particularly in trainings	Where possible, use examples, information and cases from a diversity of backgrounds, particularly in course materials
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Include your pronouns in your email signature

Being available to work with Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Team to address any questions or concerns of stakeholders through briefings or facilitating education and awareness of others	Being available to work with the Queer Officer and the Guild to address any questions or concerns of stakeholders through briefings or recommending education and awareness of others
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DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH

If you know someone who is openly TGDNB, this does not mean that they are your only source of information. Listen to those who are in a position to share their lived experiences but understand not everyone is comfortable doing this – do your own research if you want to know more.

- Remember our understanding of language and gender is always evolving
- Increase your own level of understanding by seeking resources, such as the *Inclusive Language Guide* and educating yourself by completing LGBTQIA+ Ally training
- Do your own research. Never assume that the person is willing to discuss TGDNB and/or LGBTQIA+ related issues with you, or expect them to be the authority on these topics
- TGDNB people are not the only source of information on these topics – but they are the experts of their own lived experience

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Do not worry about what bathrooms TGDNB people use. It can take an incredible amount of courage for someone to step into a bathroom or space that matches their gender identity – they need your support not your opinion.

EMPLOYEE SPECIFIC

- Develop a shared understanding about agreed work arrangements during the initial period of gender affirmation in the workplace
- Work with the individual to understand their goals and discuss related matters, including the development of a gender affirmation plan, if they request to have one
- Be reasonably flexible and supportive of any leave that may be required by the employee, in line with the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement



RESOURCES AND HELP



STUDENT RESOURCES

Student Wellbeing Advisory Service

Provides advice and support on any issue impacting on your studies or wellbeing in a confidential and safe environment. They can refer you on to relevant internal and external services where necessary to assist you further.

Phone: 1800 244 043 (free call)

Email: studentwellbeing@curtin.edu.au

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/personal-support/counselling-wellbeing/wellbeing

Curtin Connect

Curtin Connect can assist with student services, support and advice or refer you on to services that may assist you further.

Phone: 1300 222 888

Location: Building 102

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/connect

Curtin Student Guild Queer Department

Provides advocacy and support for all LGBTQIA+ students across campus, including organising social events and being a voice for queer students in meetings and committees at various levels in the Curtin Student Guild.

Email: qd@guild.curtin.edu.au

Curtin Safer Community Team

For help on campus at any time, 24/7.

Phone: 9266 4444

[Download the SafeZone app](#)

Curtin Counselling Services

Provides free psychological and counselling services in a safe, professional environment to deal with any issues affecting your life or study.

Phone: 08 9266 7850

Email: counselling@curtin.edu.au

Website: curtin.edu.au/students/personal-support/counselling-wellbeing/counselling

Student Assist

Provides free support and advocacy services run by the Curtin Student Guild.

Phone: (08) 9266 2900

Free call: 1800 063 865

Email: student.assist@guild.curtin.edu.au

Location: Building 106F

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

Employee Assistance Program

(Run by Assure Programs) for free, external and confidential counselling or wellbeing coaching with a 24/7 crisis hotline.

Phone: 1800 808 374

Website: assureprograms.com.au

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Team

For confidential discussions related to gender affirmation for employees.

Email: staffdiversity@curtin.edu.au

Employee Wellbeing

For wellness and mental health support, health services (log in required) and assistance if you are experiencing difficulty in the workplace due to either a physical or psychological injury or illness.

Email: employee.wellbeing@curtin.edu.au

LGBTQIA+ Ally Program

for LGBTQIA+ training, events, advocacy, community outreach and resources

Email: lgbtiq-training@curtin.edu.au

The Curtin Services on this page work together to provide you with safe and confidential assistance to navigate Curtin systems and administrative processes, and support you when they do not work as planned.