

Transgender awareness

Language and etiquette

Rachel Reese: Using appropriate language and pronouns for trans people is important because it's showing that you made an attempt to understand our identities and you're giving us the respect and recognition.

- Take a seat.

Jake Graf: That would make us feel that, you know, other people are respecting us as the people that we've chosen to be.

Narrator: When working with trans colleagues or customers, it's important to:

- always use a transgender person's chosen name
- consider using gender-neutral language, for example: "I've got a visitor for you" instead of "there's a gentlemen or lady here to see you".
- use gender-appropriate pronouns, and if you're in doubt, either ask respectfully or consider whether you need to use gender specific pronouns at all.

Rachel Reese: You can be non-gendered and say: "how are you today?" or "welcome to my organisation" or "I have a person here to see you, I have a visitor here to see you". You don't need to use ladies or gentlemen or that kind of thing. But people walking to reception, if you feel you really need to know somebody's pronouns, my advice is either listen so you can hear them, there might be a conversation going on, but if you really need to know just ask, just say: "I'd really like to be respectful and understand what your pronouns are, my pronouns are...". And do it that way.

Jake Graf: I'm getting used to the singular "they", so instead of calling someone "he" or "she" you know, "they will be coming tomorrow", "I like their work." So I think, you know, if you don't know, maybe ask but I know that's not always practical on everyday basis but if someone's corrects you once and says: "actually, I identify as 'she'" then you know, I think it's really up to you to make the biggest effort to go with that and to respect them.

- So what I don't get is this right, when he was a man he used to go out with women, so, now he's a woman, does that mean he goes out with men? I mean, how does it work?

- Hey guys, do you fancy going out for a bite to eat?

- Oh.. um...

- I'm on a diet at the moment.

- I've got a big conference call in about 20 minutes.

- Guys, sorry, wallet. Let's go, I'm starving.

- Do you wanna...
- We'd already planned, but if you wanted to come with us ...
- Get a bit of chicken?
- No, it's fine, it's fine.
- Are you sure, mate?
- It's fine

Narrator:

- Avoid making assumptions about transgender people's sexual orientation.
- Avoid confusing "gender nonconformity" with being transgender - not all people who appear androgynous or gender nonconforming identify as transgender, or want to have gender-affirmation surgery, and
- Be supportive but respect privacy - unless a trans person speaks about the topic openly and encourages dialogue.

Rachel Reese: Trans for me was something I did, so I transitioned to become female and I just then got on with my life. Trans is not a part of my life any more, it's something I did, not something I am.

Narrator: Being trans-friendly isn't about giving trans people special treatment, it's about creating an inclusive environment where everyone is valued and afforded the respect they deserve.

Jake Graf: Unless you've actually meant someone trans, it does remain you know, we remain these kinds of figures in the shadows, veiled in mystery and shadowy, and so on. So I think unless we are out there making ourselves visible, showing that we're just like you, or just like anyone else, then it's very hard for people to understand what it means to be trans.

Rachel Reese: We are more than our trans identities, I would hope people wouldn't say: "well, Rachel's trans, a trans female", they would say that: "Rachel can play the piano" or "Rachel used to be an engineer", that would be much more enriching for me.