

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN...

Transgender and Non-binary Advocacy - Part 2

Additional resources:



WHY NEEDED?

Close to 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have already been introduced in 2023. Laws targeting transgender people send a message that transgender people are not worthy of equal treatment, resulting in a rise in violence against transgender people. In an effort to ensure that all our children are safe and that we are speaking up for the rights of all children, here are some ways you can respond to misinformed comments you may hear about transgender and/or non-binary people.

** PLEASE NOTE: Some nonbinary folks do consider themselves transgender, and others don't. For the sake of space, I used "trans" as short-hand for transgender and "enby" for nonbinary. Not all nonbinary people are comfortable with "enby," and it's always best to use the individual's language for themselves rather than making assumptions. Also, additional background information is given in this font and isn't intended to be part of the suggested response.*

6

"IT'S DANGEROUS IF WE LET TRANSGENDER OR NONBINARY PEOPLE USE THE BATHROOM THAT MATCHES THEIR GENDER IDENTITY. I DON'T WANT A 'BIOLOGICAL' MALE IN THE WOMEN'S BATHROOM; IT'S NOT SAFE."

- There hasn't been a single incident of bathroom sexual assault by a trans woman. In fact, more than 300 domestic violence and sexual assault prevention organizations support full and equal inclusion of transgender people in facilities consistent with their gender identity.
- Our politicians have a history of weaponizing bathroom policies to incite fear, as they've done so in response to civil rights causes, the Equal Rights Amendment, and gay rights.
- Actually, trans and enby people are 4 times more likely to be a victim of violent crime than cis people. And, trans and enby students are more likely to be assaulted in bathrooms when they're not allowed to use bathrooms that align with their gender identity.
- The people most likely to assault young kids and women are cis men. Transgender women shouldn't be punished for their actions by not being able to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity.

"TRANS WOMEN HAVE A BIOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OVER CIS WOMEN AND WILL DOMINATE WOMEN'S SPORTS IF ALLOWED TO COMPETE."

- All athletes -- transgender and non-transgender -- have different shapes and sizes, have different strengths and weaknesses.
- Michael Phelps was double jointed and was less prone to fatigue than other male athletes. How is that fair to the other competitors? Should he have been banned from competing? Seems like there is a double standard for transgender athletes.

(No one says a cis person can't compete b/c they won; why is it fair to say that of transgender or nonbinary athletes?)

- "Out" transgender athletes have been competing since 2003 and there's only been 1 transgender woman in the Olympics, 2 National Champions and 5 Regional Champions - in 20 years! That hardly seems like they're dominating sports.

(There's a tendency to push out stats that don't tell the whole story. For example, there was a lawsuit in CT where 3 female athletes claimed racing against transgender athletes was unfair. One of the plaintiffs beat her transgender competitor in several races 10 days after the lawsuit was filed. Lia Douglas, the UPenn swimmer, is cited as breaking records during the 2022 NCAA Swimming Championships. However, 27 records were broken during that competition; 26 by cis women.)

- According to research, transgender women on testosterone suppression have no clear advantage.
- Several of the new proposed legislation around this issue is requiring people to undergo genital exams, which given the history of sexual assault of women in sports, puts all women in more danger.

7

8

"TRANSGENDER AND/OR NONBINARY PEOPLE ARE MENTALLY ILL."

- Are you a mental health professional?
- The American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association have both stated that being transgender or nonbinary is not a mental disorder.
- The APA uses "gender dysphoria" and studies show that the best treatment is gender affirming care. And not all transgender or nonbinary people experience gender dysphoria.
- Having a trans or nonbinary identity does not make someone mentally ill, however there are trans and nonbinary people that do have mental health struggles; as do cis people. There's no reason to further stigmatize something that many people deal with.
- This does not mean they cannot make informed choices about their transition.

"THEY/THEM PRONOUNS AREN'T GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT AND DON'T MAKE SENSE. I REFUSE TO USE THOSE PRONOUNS BECAUSE IT IS HARD FOR ME TO GET USED TO"

- Even if it doesn't make sense to you, it's respectful to use the pronouns someone requests.
- It may take some practice and getting used to, but that doesn't mean they're not correct.
- "They" has actually been used to identify singular persons in speech and written materials since at least the 12th century.
- "They" has been officially recognized as correct by Associated Press, American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), the Oxford English Dictionary, and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Depending on your mood, you can add...I'll take my grammar cues from them.

9

10

"I DON'T GET WHY PEOPLE ARE SHARING THEIR PRONOUNS THESE DAYS. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? "

- I understand that not everyone may feel comfortable sharing, and that's okay. What isn't okay is making fun of other people for their pronouns.
- I don't think it's a big deal which is why I don't mind sharing mine. And if it helps people feel more included and seen, then even better!
- I wouldn't want to misgender someone by mistake, so I introduce myself with my pronouns so others are then more comfortable to share theirs, if they would like to.
- Pronouns affirm gender identities and create safer spaces by referring to people in the way that feels most accurate to them.

DEFINITIONS:

Transgender - Gender identity doesn't correspond to the sex they were designated at birth.
 Non-binary - Gender identity that doesn't conform to the male/female binary.
 Cis - Gender identity corresponds to the sex they were designated at birth.

SOURCES:

Schuyler Bailar - [Pink MantaRay](#) - TRANS ACTIVISM & YOU
 Human Rights Campaign - [Myths and Facts: Battling Disinformation About Transgender Rights](#)
 Vox - [Transgender People: 10 Common Myths](#)
 National Education Association - [Why pronouns matter](#)