



APRIL HARTFORD

Transgender - One Person's Journey

Supporting a Trans Person

43% of trans people maintain most of their family bonds, while 57% experience significant family rejection.*

Do...

Do ask your trans friend which pronoun they prefer. Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do the same. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologize, laugh about it with your trans friend, and move on.

When referring to a trans friend, do try using just their name until the correct pronoun feels more natural.

Do respect the terminology (transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, crossdresser, etc.) the person uses to describe their identity. Don't tell them which term you think fits best.

Do be mindful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."

Do challenge transphobic remarks and jokes in private and public spaces, including queer spaces.

Do make it clear in your organization that trans people are welcome to use whichever restroom they feel most comfortable in.

Do listen to trans members of your organization and involve them in all aspects of the group's work.

Do love them and support your trans friends and family members. It will give them strength to resist the hate.

During the counseling phase, therapists help trans people prepare themselves to lose anyone and everyone in their lives after they transition.

Don't...

Don't ask a trans person what their "real name" is. Respect and use the name they prefer.

Don't ask about a trans person's genitals or whether they are "pre-op" or "post-op." Let them bring up that topic if they wish.

Don't question the authenticity of their gender identity by pointing out the ways they behave according to their birth gender.

Don't ask, "So how do you have sex?"

Don't make assumptions about their sexual orientation.

Don't give backhanded compliments:

- "You look just like a real woman."
- "I would never have guessed you were trans. You look so gorgeous."
- "He's so hot, I'd date him even though he's trans."

Don't give helpful tips:

- "Have you considered a voice coach?"
- "You'd pass so much better if you wore more makeup/dressed more naturally/got hair transplants/etc."

*National Center for Transgender Equality and The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Injustice at Every Turn," 2011.