



# BEING AN OUT AND PROUD TRANS ALLY

## What is an ally?

An ally is a member of a privileged group who takes a stand against oppression (examples: a white person who speaks out against racism; a straight person who works to end heterosexism/homophobia/transphobia). An ally works to become part of social change rather than part of oppression.

## What is a trans\* ally?

A trans ally is someone who commits to being open-minded and respectful to people who may have different gender identities or expression; who takes the time to learn more about trans people and trans lives; who confronts assumptions around gender roles and gender presentation; and who works to change the misunderstanding and mistreatment of trans\* people.

## There is no one way to be a 'perfect' ally.

The trans community is diverse and complex, coming from every region of Canada and around the world, from every social, economical, racial and ethnic background, and from every faith community. This means that different members of the trans community have different needs and priorities. Similarly, there is no one right way to handle every situation, or interact with every trans person. Be respectful, do your best, and keep trying.

## Educate yourself.

One of the simplest ways to be a strong ally is to take your education into your own hands. Check out your union, for information on workplace rights, research books, films, YouTube channels, and trans blogs to find out more about trans people and the issues people within the community face.

## If you don't know what pronoun to use, ask.

Be respectful when you ask a person which pronoun they prefer. Then use that pronoun and encourage others to do so.

## Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."

A trans person may not choose to tell others that they are transgender because it is unsafe. They are worried they will be harassed, threatened, fired, or simply because they don't want to share that information.

## Speak out.

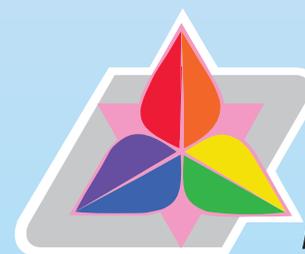
Correct others if they use the wrong name or pronoun for a trans person. Visible support for trans rights can show trans people that they are accepted. Challenge transphobic remarks or jokes. It is important to challenge transphobic remarks or jokes whenever they're said and no matter who says them.

## Know your own limits as an ally.

Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know. It is better to admit you don't know something than to make assumptions or say something that may be incorrect or hurtful. Seek out the appropriate resources that will help you learn more. Remember 'ally' is a verb; not an idle or stable noun.

## Learn about policies.

Trans rights are protected under human rights legislation and the Criminal Code's Hate Crime section. Review workplace and union policies and your collective agreement to ensure inclusion of trans people and their rights.



**ONTARIO  
FEDERATION OF  
LABOUR**

*Promoting Rights Inclusion Diversity & Equity*

### **Identify yourself as an ally.**

Stickers, signs, or brochures that identify yourself as an ally, and that can go a long way in building trust with trans members.

### **Rethink gender on forms and documents.**

If you do need to ask for gender information, consider using a blank space for people to fill in, rather than boxes marked “male” and “female,” or make it clear that people can fill in forms in a way that matches their gender identity. Review your union policies, collective agreements, constitution and replace gendered language with them, they, theirs.

### **Ensure everyone has access to bathrooms and other facilities.**

Everyone should be able to safely use bathrooms. Providing gender-neutral bathrooms is a way to provide safe space.

### **Push for support and inclusivity, not simply tolerance.**

A baseline of tolerance—allowing trans people to exist—is an important start, but we must do more. If your local and/or union invites outside speakers or hosts events, make sure that some of them include transgender people and topics. If your local/union donates to non-profit organizations, make sure that some of them support the transgender community. Support community Pride events. Acknowledge May 17th as the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia and November 20th as the Trans Day of Remembrance.

**Trans\*** is an umbrella term which describes people whose gender identities and expressions are not fully defined by the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans\* people may identify as one, none, or with several of the following gender-related identities: Agender, androgyne, bigender, gender fluid, genderfree, genderless, genderqueer, intergender, multigender, neutral, neutrois, non-binary, third gender, trans\*, transgender, transsexual, trans man, trans woman, and two-spirit, among others.

Non-binary\* gender identity is any gender identity that does not fall within the strict categories of contemporary Western societies, which typically consider gender to be binary, e.g., either man or woman.

### **LABOUR RESOURCES— CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (CLC)**

**Workers in Transition Guide:**  
[www.canadianlabour.ca/issues-research/workers-transition-practical-guide-about-gender-transition-union-representatives](http://www.canadianlabour.ca/issues-research/workers-transition-practical-guide-about-gender-transition-union-representatives)

**Bargaining Equality for LGBTQ Workers:**  
[www.documents.clc-ctc.ca/whr/Pride-LGBT/BargainingEquality-2015-07-EN.pdf](http://www.documents.clc-ctc.ca/whr/Pride-LGBT/BargainingEquality-2015-07-EN.pdf)

**Allies Booklet:**  
[www.documents.clc-ctc.ca/whr/Pride-LGBT/Allies-Booklet-2010-EN.pdf](http://www.documents.clc-ctc.ca/whr/Pride-LGBT/Allies-Booklet-2010-EN.pdf)

**LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL  
TRANSGENDER QUEER  
TWO-SPIRIT**



**POSITIVE  
SPACE**