

5 Simple Ways To Be A Great Trans Ally

ANJA JURGENSSEN: Welcome to the audiobook of the eLearning course 5 ways to be a great trans ally by me, Anja Jurgenssen.

I'm a trans woman living in the UK and I designed this course for all those wonderful people who wanted to know what they could do on a simple and practical level, to be a great trans ally.

The audiobook, like the original course is split into two sections.

- In the first section, you'll hear from Gethin, Vic, and Laura, who will talk you through 12 simple tips on how you can be a great trans ally.
- In section two, I'll talk you through 5 practical ways you could use these tips in your everyday life, either at work, at home, or socially.

This audiobook is deliberately paced to be accessible for those who might find it easier to follow.

If you have the functionality in your media player, you can always alter the speed to suit your listening preference.

In total, this audiobook is just short of 19 minutes from start to finish, although this does include some introductory music at the beginning, followed by credits and details of the Creative Commons copyright licence at the end.

So, let's go, and thanks for listening.

A great trans ally feels able to use their standing in the workplace and socially, to empower, to support and defend transgender people.

Here are 12 simple tips on becoming a great trans ally.

Let's meet Gethin, Vic, and Laura now, they can take things from here.

GETHIN: Thanks, Anja, my name's Gethin, I'm a trans man, and my pronouns are he and him.

VIC: Hi, my name's Vic, I'm non-binary, and my pronouns are they, and them.

LAURA: Hi, my name's Laura, I'm a trans woman, and my pronouns are she, and her.

GETHIN: We're now going to take you through 12 simple tips on how to be a great trans ally, which have been collated alphabetically.

I'll go through the first 4 tips with you followed by Vic, who will talk you through the next 4, then Laura will conclude with the last 4 until we have covered all of them.

Just like being trans, please bear in mind that being a great trans ally is different for everyone.

Tip 1. Befriending.

It's not uncommon for trans people to be rejected for a variety of reasons by parents, family and close friends when they transition.

This can include being shunned by former colleagues or sections of the community, all of which can be hard to come to terms with.

During this time, some trans people begin to build a new life for themselves, this can involve moving away, starting a new job and making new friends.

As well as making a new friend, befriending a trans person could go a long way to you becoming more informed about what being trans person involves, and what being a great trans ally means.

Tip 2. Deadnames.

One of the many positive things about being trans is that often the trans person gets to choose a new name.

In many instances, this involves a lot of thought either alone or with others, and results in a name that has a significant amount of emotional connection.

The previous name is referred to as a 'dead name' this can have very negative connotations if you use it

The best advice is **not** to use a trans person's dead name.

Tip 3. Education.

According to the [UK 2021 census](#) of 45.7 million people, 99.46% are not transgender but 0.54% are.

That means many people don't know an openly trans person personally, although obviously some do.

Of the 262,113 members of the UK trans community 0.24% that's 117,775 people, identified as not being the same as the gender assigned to them at birth.

Of these, 0.10% that's 48,435 people identified as a trans man, whereas 0.10% that's 47,572 people, identified as a trans woman.

Of the remaining 0.10%, 48,331 people identified as non-binary, or a different gender identity.

There's a lot for you as a great trans ally to learn about the UK trans community and the varying beliefs and opinions that surround them.

Much of what is publicised is the result of others talking 'about' trans people, but not actually talking 'with' trans people.

This can result in generalisations and misunderstandings, which is where you as a great trans ally, can help.

As you begin to educate yourself, you will learn to recognise over time, those sources that are factually credible and those which are not!

Tip 4. Gender-specific language and terminology.

Being a great trans ally means looking at some things differently.

Why not challenge yourself to avoid using gendered language daily, until it becomes second nature?

Some typical alternatives can include saying spouse or partner instead of husband or wife; working hours instead of man-hours and everyone, instead of ladies and gentlemen, for example, when talking to a group of people.

Trans people notice gendered language, especially when there are simple alternatives that could be used instead.

That's my part finished and now here's Vic with your next 4 tips.

VIC: Thanks, Gethin.

Tip 5 is Mental Health.

You cannot be a great trans ally, if you don't look after your own mental health.

Being a great trans ally can be exhausting, especially if you find yourself in yet another circular discussion.

You will learn where your boundaries are, when to act, and as importantly, when to step back.

Tip 6. Misgendering.

Misgendering is when someone uses the wrong terminology in relation to another person, for example using the wrong pronouns.

Most Trans people understand that this may take some getting used to, especially if they were known to the person, prior to transition.

Whether you realise yourself or are corrected by someone else, simply apologise and move on.

Tip 7. Outing.

When trans people 'come out' they have taken the decision to be open about who they are, which can be a traumatic experience, and you will remember Gethin talking about befriending earlier.

Outing is when someone else is told about someone being trans, and the trans person has had no involvement in that disclosure, which is referred to as outing.

Outing a trans person, could not only be a breach of confidence but could also place the trans person in genuine danger.

The best advice is not to refer to someone as being trans unless you know it is safe to do so, and you have permission to disclose this information.

Tip 8. Pronouns.

Everyone has a pronoun and if you are unsure, it is entirely appropriate to ask, or simply refer to the person by name.

Typical pronouns are. he, him or his for males, she, her or hers, for females and, they, them or their, for those who are non-binary.

You can add your pronouns to your email signature and maybe look for them in emails from others.

That's it from me.

Here's Laura with your last 4 tips.

LAURA: Thanks, Vic, here's your last four tips from me!

Tip 9. Questions.

It is understandable that some people will have questions when they meet a trans person, especially for the first time.

Typically, inappropriate questions not to ask include: What is your real name? What do you 'identify' as? and have you had surgery yet?

If you're not sure if asking a specific question is appropriate, why not ask first and the trans person will indicate if they are happy to discuss this with you.

Tip 10. Signalling.

Signalling involves openly showing in some way, that you are a trans ally.

Typical examples of openly signalling that you are a great trans ally include: Including your pronouns in an email signature; Wearing an LGBTQIA+ lanyard or a lanyard in the trans community colours, or wearing an LGBTQIA+ lapel badge, or badge relating to the trans community such as the 'I'll go with you' ally project badge.

You can access more information on the I'll go with you ally project, by visiting their website at www.illgowithyou.org

Tip 11. Toilets.

Some trans people will prefer to use toilets based on a range of reasons, including their own personal safety.

The best advice is to let them use the facilities that they themselves choose, as this is often based on their experience of which is the safest.

This is where the 'I'll go with you ally project' comes in, and where trans allies of any gender, can help.

You can access more information on the 'I'll go with you ally project' by visiting their website at www.illgowithyou.org.

Whilst there is a specific exemption in the Equality Act 2010, in general terms, it would be unlawful to exclude a trans woman from using female toilets, or a trans man from using the male toilets.

Tip 12. Understanding the limits of belief.

Just as the UK Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination based on the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, this also prevents discrimination based on the protected characteristics of religion or belief.

To claim the protected characteristic of religion or belief, this must pass the Grainger test, especially part 5, being worthy of respect in a democratic society.

This test is referred to in various salient Employment Tribunal rulings, such as the 2021 [Forstater](#) ruling.

As such, believing that sex is immutable and cannot be changed, sometimes referred to as being gender critical, is a protected belief under section 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Please note, that treating someone less favourably merely because they hold gender critical beliefs could amount to discrimination, and as a great trans ally, you wouldn't want to subject anyone else, to the kind of discrimination some trans people are subjected to.

As indicated in the [Mackereth](#) 2019 ruling, this does not mean that a person who holds gender critical beliefs can manifest those beliefs to the detriment of a trans person, such as deliberately misgendering them.

It's important to understand that whilst 'belief' is a protected characteristic, 'opinion' is not!

We hope you find these simple tips helpful, and now, we'll hand you over to Anja.

ANJA: Thanks, Laura.

To summarise, being a great trans ally takes time, and whilst it can be challenging, it can also be incredibly rewarding as well!

In the next section, I'll talk you through 5 practical ways you can put these simple tips in practice.

You can be a great trans ally by becoming a confidant, champion, amplifier, sponsor or an upstander.

Let's find out some more.

A confidant listens to trans people.

A champion, advocates for trans people.

An amplifier heightens pro-trans messages.

A sponsor helps trans people succeed and an upstander defends trans people.

Let's explore each role a little bit more.

A confidant listens.

You can encourage a trans person to feel comfortable, in sharing their experiences, or to talk about being Trans with you.

What is said to you is 'in confidence' and should not be repeated unless a disclosure has been agreed to.

How can you be a great Confidant?

Give a trans person space, to speak freely about what's on their mind.

Believe, trust, and validate a person's account of what it means to be trans for them.

Ask an appropriate question to encourage a trans person to share their experiences with you.

A champion advocates.

As someone at work or in your wider community, you can openly support trans people.

This could be from making passionate and factual statements about injustice to simply wearing a lanyard or lapel badge.

How can you be a great Champion?

Recommend a trans person join your team when you notice a lack of diversity.

Create space for a trans person to succeed, by being visible to others.

Ask an appropriate question, that encourages a trans person to share their experiences.

An amplifier heightens positive trans messages.

There is a wealth of misinformation about trans people, which leads to misunderstandings, prejudice and even hatred.

As a great trans ally, you can help make sure that trans people are heard.

How can you be a great Amplifier?

Provide opportunities for a trans person to share their thoughts and opinions.

Echo what trans people say and give them credit in the process.

Check-in with a trans person in your team, especially at difficult times in the trans community, such as on the Trans Day of Remembrance, referred to as TDoR, which takes place each year on the 20th November.

A sponsor helps.

As a sponsor, you are able to advocate for a trans person to be given the same opportunities as anyone else.

Helping someone to reach the same starting point as anyone else, is not special treatment and is particularly important if a trans person is overlooked in the workplace.

How can you be a great Sponsor?

Recognise the trans person for their ideas and expertise—help them build credibility.

Recommend a trans-colleague for new workplace opportunities.

Create connections, if you know a helpful contact, you could make that introduction.

An upstander defends.

Allies push back against offensive behaviour towards trans people, even if a trans person isn't present at the time.

To quote Martin Luther King ...

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

How can you be a great Upstander?

Speak up when you see poor behaviour towards a trans person or trans people in general.

Involve yourself in a conversation if people are talking about a trans related topic.

Explain politely to others, why their actions or comments are inappropriate or at worse, offensive.

Ultimately, an ally acknowledges the power they have to help dismantle prejudice.

When you act in solidarity with trans people, you can disrupt unfair treatment, defuse hostility, and fight discrimination.

I want to leave you with a quote, from a wonderful woman called Fiona Lisa, who is the founder and organiser of Femme-Fest.

As a member of the LGBTQ community and as a woman, I am proud to be a Trans ally.

I stand hand-in-hand with the Trans community, in their struggle for equality, and to be treated with the same dignity and respect we all expect from each other.

Thank you for listening to this audiobook of the training course, 5 simple ways to be a great trans ally.

I hope that you have found this audiobook helpful.

We now conclude with credits, and details of the Creative Commons copyright licence.

Until next time, keep being awesome, and good luck on becoming a great trans ally.

Credits.

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