

TRANSPHOBIA & PREJUDICE - HOW CAN I RESPOND?

People often tell us they want to respond to prejudice when they see it - but they don't feel quite confident enough or 'know what to say'. So we've created a website called www.NottinghamTogether.com to help offer some ideas and guidance. We've worked with people with lived experience of responding to prejudice. Together we have identified the comments they hear most often, and the potential responses they would suggest using to reply. Experience tells us that arguing doesn't work, but by talking and listening, we can help to change perspectives and attitudes.



Remember, you don't have to engage in conversation if you don't feel physically and emotionally safe to do so, and all hate crime should be reported to Nottinghamshire Police by calling 101 (999 in an emergency) or online through True Vision at www.report-it.org.uk

! Warning: Please be aware the content of these comments and responses may be offensive or distressing and is intended for educational purposes !

Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>Trans people are mentally unwell.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of people have a mental illness, but having feelings that your body doesn't align with your gender identity and choosing to express your identity doesn't make you mentally unwell. • It is true that living a lie and not being able to express who you really are can cause depression and anxiety when people try to deny their trans identity, but generally people are happier when they feel able to be honest about their gender identity. In other words, denying or hiding that you are trans is what can lead to mental health problems, and being open actually helps prevent that.
<p>There are 100 different genders now, how are we meant to keep up?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to keep on top of new language and changing political / social narratives, many people do struggle with this, and it doesn't mean you are unkind if you make a mistake. • The best we can do is try our best, and make it clear to people that we are trying. • It can be good to ask people how they want to be referred to - that gives them the chance to tell you and will show them that you are trying even if you don't know all the terms. • There are a few more widely accepted terms that can help when unsure, for example, referring to someone as 'they' or 'them' instead of 'he' or 'she', or calling people non-binary if they don't fit into male or female.
<p>Being trans is ... - a choice. - fashionable. - a phase.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's something that many people would choose to change if they could, but many trans people can't help that their gender assigned at birth doesn't align with their true identity. • Many people have to put up with persecution and violence because of being trans and many are killed for it - there are many asylum seekers that are here because being trans or gay isn't legal where they're from. • There have always been trans people - there are documented cases dating back centuries. The only difference now is that there is more awareness about it and people feel more able to express who they are. • Many people are very unhappy with their lives before they are able to express their true gender identity. • It is still very difficult to be trans in today's society - people are subject to a lot of hate and are even killed for it.
<p>You're not a real woman / man.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think makes someone a 'real' man / woman? • Isn't there a lot of variation between men and women anyway? People have really different experiences of being a man/woman. • Do you think gender norms are only ever helpful - could they be harmful too? • My friend who's a trans man/woman always felt like a man/woman and didn't feel like a 'real' woman/man in their previous identity either.

Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>How do I know a trans woman will not attack me in women-only spaces?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think someone would attack you? Is there any experience/ evidence of this? • Trans women may feel safer with people who identify similarly. • Trans women might also be scared about this from other men, as their experience is of feeling like a woman.
<p>I don't want men in women-only spaces / I don't want a man in the ladies toilet.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If trans women identify as female why shouldn't they be able to access women-only spaces? Do you think there is a safety issue? • Rather than posing a risk, trans women may feel safer sharing spaces with people who identify similarly. Where else do you think they can feel safe if they are not allowed in to women-only spaces, and are not comfortable in men's spaces any more than most women would be? • It might be more helpful to consider the trans woman as her mind and feelings rather than the body that she is trapped into - she feels like a woman not a man. • For trans women, it can be excruciating going into a men's toilets, as it would be for a cis woman. We don't know about her body parts and it needs to be her choice where she feels comfortable and safe too - would you feel safe if you were told to use the men's toilet instead?
<p>They/them doesn't make sense.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's tricky to get your head around, and can get confusing, but it's actually what we use anyway when we don't know the gender of someone we are talking about. Once you make that connection, it becomes a lot easier to use they/them. • The important thing is to respect people's feelings and do your best to make them feel welcome. • How would you feel if someone kept calling you by a different name because they assumed you looked a certain name? It's a similar thing. • If you make a mistake, you don't have to feel bad about it - when someone can see you're making a genuine effort to get it right then they should be understanding. Say that you are trying and show the person you care.
<p>I don't want them with my child.</p> <p>I don't want my child learning about trans people because it will give them ideas.</p> <p>Children are growing up confused.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think the threat to your child is? • Trans adults don't pose any more or less of a risk around your children than any other adult. Being trans has nothing to do with their sexuality and doesn't make them more likely to be paedophiles. • Many trans people are parents or have great relationships with children and young people and there is nothing wrong with this in my opinion. There is no reason to 'protect' children from trans people. • It can be really helpful for children to meet people who are different, and to understand the diversity of the human race so they can be compassionate and not get scared when they encounter someone who is different. • Do you think a child will be 'converted'? If a child is unsure of their own gender they will discover this over time whether or not they meet a trans person - may people go their entire lives holding these feelings in and trying to deny them. • Don't you want your child to understand all the types of people in the world and make them feel welcome and included? They're more likely to become confused if they only learn about these sorts of things later in life.

