



## **G(end)er Swap CIC**

Document created by Santi S, Founder & Creative Director of G(end)er Swap CIC

[www.genderswap.org](http://www.genderswap.org)

### **HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TRANS ALLY**

G(end)er Swap CIC is the only LGBTIQ+ clothing outreach organisation based in the UK that supports trans and gender-diverse individuals to access clothes and community with bespoke workshops, pop-up events and exhibitions. G(end)er Swap is an awareness campaign, working with allies, service staff, orgs and corporate entities to educate staff on gender, sexuality and trans identity through the medium of fashion.

Some of our services include: makeup and styling consultations, clothing swaps, a chest binder service, collecting and distributing clothing donations and care packages to isolated trans people, youth workshops, and awareness training and education for allies. Please visit our website and social media platforms to learn more.

G(end)er Swap CIC is a registered Community Interest Company (in England and Wales).

**This guide provides you with resources on gender terminology, 'everyday' scenarios and media information that will support you in being an effective ally for non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals.**

For any further queries please contact Santi via email: [info@genderswap.org](mailto:info@genderswap.org)

## **KEY GENDER TERMS**

**AFAB:** Acronym meaning Assigned Female at Birth.

**Affirmed Gender:** An individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. This term should replace terms like new gender or chosen gender, which imply that an individual's gender was chosen.

**Agender:** a person who identifies as not having a gender. This identity falls under the non-binary umbrella.

**Ally:** A (typically) straight and/or cisgender person who supports members of the LGBT community

**AMAB:** Acronym meaning Assigned Male at Birth.

**Androgynous:** Having elements of both femininity and masculinity in one's gender identity and gender expression.

**Binding:** The process of tightly wrapping one's chest in order to minimise the appearance of having breasts, often by using a chest binder.

**Butch:** a term used in LBT culture to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically masculine way. This is a self-identifying term.

**Cisgender (Cis):** Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Someone who is not trans.

**Deadnaming:** Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name.

**Femme:** Femme is a term used in LGBT culture to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically feminine way.

**Gender:** often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally constructed and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth. However, it is important to know that sex does not determine one's gender.

**Gender Binary:** The concept that there are only two genders, man and woman, and that everyone must be one or the other.

**Gender Dysphoria:** Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. Gender Dysphoria can also be experienced socially. For example, being read as the wrong gender in public which causes distress.

**Gender Diversity:** refers to the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from stereotypical gender norms and societal expectations.

**Gender Expression:** How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

**Gender Identity:** A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

**Gender-fluid:** A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

**Gender Neutral:** Not gendered. Can refer to language (including pronouns and salutations/titles, spaces (like bathrooms), or gender expression/clothes/outer appearance.

**Gender non-conforming:** A broad term referring to people who do not behave or present in a way that conforms to traditional gender expectations.

**Genderqueer:** A historical term for 'non-binary' describing people who may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Gender Reassignment:** Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

**Intersex:** A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

**Misgender:** To refer to someone, especially a transgender or gender-expansive person, using a pronoun or title, which does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

**Non-binary:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity is outside of 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely. (See 'Genderqueer').

**Outing:** Exposing someone's LGBTQ+ identity without their permission.

**Pronoun:** Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.

**Queer:** a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s to signify rejecting gender and sexuality norms in society.

**Questioning:** the process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Sex assigned at birth:** The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy.

**Trans:** An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as the one they were assigned at birth.

**Trans Man:** A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth (AFAB) but identifies and lives as a man.

**Trans Woman:** A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth (AMAB) but identifies and lives as a woman.

**Transitioning:** The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries. For others it may involve socially transitioning such as dressing differently and telling friends and family. Not all trans people medically transition.

**Transphobia:** the fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it.

**Transsexual:** this was used in the past as a medical term to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as the one they were assigned at birth. This term is outdated and sometimes reclaimed the trans people themselves.

**Two-Spirit:** A term used within North American indigenous communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. The term encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities, and provides unifying, positive, and encouraging language that emphasizes reconnecting to tribal traditions.

## **SEXUALITY TERMS**

**Aromantic:** refers to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction.

**Asexual:** the lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people. The 'A' in LGBTQIA+ stands for asexual (not ally).

**Bisexual:** a person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one gender.

**Gay:** a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

**Orientation:** an umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual (sexual orientation) and/or romantic (romantic orientation).

**Pansexual:** describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people regardless of gender. Bisexuality means being attracted to more than one gender whereas gender is not a factor in Pansexual attraction.

---

To find out more visit:

Stonewall UK's [Glossary of Terms](#)

Human Rights Campaign [Glossary](#)

PFLAG [Glossary](#)

A Comprehensive List of Sexuality [Terms](#)

List of Non-binary [Terms](#)

[Nonbinary FAQ](#) from a trans person based in Wales

## USEFUL ORGANISATIONS AND HELPLINES

These can be useful organisations to refer someone to and/or to ask for additional support.

### Organisations based in England

[Intersex UK](#): NGO supporting Intersex rights

[Gendered Intelligence](#): Supporting trans youth

[Mermaids](#): Supporting trans youth + families of gender-diverse youth

[Stonewall](#): Empowering LGBT+ people/creating social change

[All Sorts Youth Project](#): Supporting LGBT+ youth (Brighton)

[Communi-T](#): Social support group for Trans folks in Bournemouth

[Space Youth Project](#): Supporting LGBT+ youth in Dorset

[Action for Trans Health](#): Campaigning for Trans Healthcare Rights

[Not a Phase](#): Supporting Trans+ people with well-being initiatives across the UK (focus on fitness/socials)

[Black Trans Foundation](#): a fund supporting Black Trans individuals in the UK

[Galop](#): Support for LGBT+ individuals experiencing domestic violence

[CliniQ](#): Trans sexual health clinic/support org

[Trans Plus](#): UK's first integrated gender, sexual, HIV health clinic

[Opening Doors London](#): supporting LGBT+ individuals who are 50+

[Mindline Trans+](#): confidential helpline for Trans folks (Bristol)

[The Clare Project](#): (free downloadable resources for allies:

## Organisations based in Wales

[Oll:](#) Intersex Org in the UK

[Stonewall Cymru:](#) Empowering LGBT+ people/creating social change

[Cardiff Trans Wardrobe:](#) free clothes for trans folks in Wales

[TMSU:](#) Cardiff Trans support group

[Trans Aid Cymru:](#) Mutual aid group in Cardiff

[Carmarthen LGBT+:](#) Facebook support group for LGBTQ+ folks in Carmarthenshire

[Terence Higgins Trust:](#) Support for HIV+ folks

[Umbrella Cymru:](#) gender and sexual diversity support services

[Youth Cymru:](#) Supporting and empowering young people in Wales

[LGBT Cymru Helpline:](#) Monday support line for LGBT+ individuals

[Glitter Cymru:](#) LGBT+ support group for BAME folks in Wales

[Aubergine Cafe:](#) LGBT+/Autistic owned cafe and support organisation in Cardiff

[Spokesperson:](#) LGBTQ+ cycling club and cycle support hub in Cardiff

\*Click [here](#) for more Wales based LGBT+ support groups, initiatives and organisations

\* [Directory](#) of orgs in the UK

## **SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES: G(END)ER SWAP FAVOURITES**

YouTube and Instagram is the most popular and accessible platform for obtaining LGBT+ knowledge directly from members of the community!

Here is a list of Trans/Non-binary influencers/creators whom you can learn directly from.

### YouTube: Non-binary and Intersex Creators

[Pidgen](#) (Intersex activist)

[Jamie Raines](#)

[Lucy Rose Shaftain-Fenner](#)

[Chandler Wilson](#)

[Ashton Daniel](#)

[Luxander](#)

[Epically Curious](#)

[Celeste M](#)

[Ash Hardell](#)

[Megemiko](#)

[Miles McKenna](#)

Other recommendations covering binary trans experiences, asexuality and polyamory.

[Hannah Phillips](#)

[Kat Blaque](#)

[Slice of Ace](#)

[Jackson Bird](#)

[Contrapoints](#)

[Riley J Dennis](#)

[Instagram Influencers: Non-Binary Representation](#)

[Ben Pechey](#): UK based non binary activist

[Alok Vaid Menon](#): performance artist and activist

[Travis Alabanza](#): performance artist, poet and activist

[Lex Horwitz](#): Non-Binary Jewish representation

[Chellaman](#): Genderqueer activist and artist

[Ruby Allegra](#): Non-binary/Trans and disability activist

[Rain Dove](#): Non-binary activist/Model

[Wednesday Holmes](#): Non-binary artist

[Melz](#): Trans activist

## **BE AN EFFECTIVE ALLY FOR TRANS & GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE**

Wondering how to be an effective non-binary ally in really awkward situations?

Here is a list of some common situations that could come up and some quick solutions for you to remember!

Can't remember the terms used in these examples? Refer back to your key terms glossary!

## **ASKING FOR PRONOUNS**

**Scenario 1:**

Pronouns can be an awkward subject to navigate. Picture this: you are out with some friends and a friend introduces you to someone in the group with only their name. They appear to have a gender non-conforming express and a gender neutral name and you aren't sure how to address them. What should you do?

In this scenario (and similar situations) it is always best to introduce yourself with your name and then the pronouns you use. This will prompt the other person to share theirs.

For example:

*"Hey, my name is Ben and I use he and him pronouns".*

But what if the person introduces themselves without pronouns?

In this case you can then ask what pronouns they use.

For example:

*"It is nice to meet you. By the way, what pronouns do you use?"*

## **Scenario 2:**

You are a manager in the workplace and have some employees that identify as Non-binary. Your employees have told you which pronouns they would like you to use for them. You realise that not everyone in the office has shared their pronouns and you think it is important that they do so. What would be the best practice to implement in this case?

The best thing to do is to implement a policy where all team members need to have their pronouns in their email signatures or name tags. This normalises the sharing of pronouns in the workplace so Non-binary folks at work don't feel like the odd one out.

## **MAKING A MISTAKE**

### **Scenario 1:**

You are at work and two customers walk in: one person seems to have a 'tomboy' appearance, while the other has a typically 'feminine' gender expression. You address them with "Hi, Ladies" as they walk in. Both of them politely say "we aren't ladies". You can feel your face get hot and you feel really embarrassed. What should you do?

Solution: The best thing to do is to apologise and to correct yourself by saying "Oh sorry about that, hello folks" or by using another gender neutral expression. You can also introduce yourself with your pronouns and ask them for theirs. Generally, when you swiftly apologise and correct yourself the other people really appreciate it!

## Scenario 2:

Your partner just came out as Gender Fluid to you and instead of she/her pronouns, your partner now feels more comfortable using he/him and they/them pronouns only. When you are out together at a restaurant, you accidentally use 'she/her' pronouns when ordering food for them. What should you do?

Solution: The best thing to do is to correct yourself during your order without turning to your partner or apologising in front of the waiting staff. Once you are both alone, you can apologise and mention that you will remember to use the right pronouns going forward.

- Don't worry about correcting pronouns in mid-sentence. It's better than carrying on speaking whilst still using the wrong pronoun!

For example:

*"She - sorry, he will have the reuben sandwich please".*

## **SO YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS NON-BINARY**

### Scenario 1:

You are in a conversation with your family telling them about the enjoyable weekend you had going shopping with your friend. In conversation you use their pronouns (they/them) - your family seems confused and asks you why you are saying 'them'. They ask, are you referring to multiple people?

Solution: In this scenario, explaining that your friend uses they/them pronouns is sufficient. You can explain that it is only referring to one person and that a lot of people who do not identify with/feel connected to the identity of man/woman use it as a way to remain neutral.

If your friend used to use a different pronoun you can also give a disclaimer at the start of your story that you are talking about a specific person and that they use different pronouns now.

For example:

*So I went to the shopping centre with John today, they found this really cheap Christmas jumper. John uses they/them pronouns now by the way.*

## **Scenario 2:**

Your friend keeps talking about their friend and keeps saying that Cass is “a non-binary”. At the start of each sentence when referring to Cass, your friend keeps saying “Cass who is non-binary”. It makes you feel awkward because it seems that your friend is announcing Cass’ identity any chance they can and/or referring to them as a different category of human. What do you do?

Solution: This situation is tricky because you don’t want to make the conversation awkward or come across as antagonistic. I would gently remind your friend that they don’t need to announce Cass’ identity constantly and maybe Cass doesn’t feel comfortable with this. You can also suggest that the correct phrasing would be “Cass is a non-binary person” -if they feel the statement is relevant to their story at the beginning.

For example:

“Hey, thanks for letting me know. Does Cass know that you are sharing their identity with others in conversation?. I don’t think you need to refer back to Cass as non-binary everytime- they are just a person”.

## **A FRIEND/FAMILY MEMBER COMES OUT TO YOU AS NON-BINARY**

Someone close to you tells you that they feel like they don’t have a gender and that they now identify as non-binary and agender. You are super excited for them but nervous about what to say and what to do next.

Here are some quick pointers for you:

Congratulate them. Affirm them by asking for their pronouns and name that they would like you to use/experiment with.

Change their name in your phone and add a pronouns reminder in your phone directory.

Ask them if they need any support. Re-assure them that you are there if they need to talk.

Ask what titles or words of endearment they prefer to hear.

Don’t share their identity or ‘out’ them to anyone unless they have specifically asked you to. This could be dangerous for a trans person.

Send them a (gender neutral) card congratulating them and continue to affirm them when you can!

## **WITNESSING TRANSPHOBIA AGAINST A GENDER NON-CONFORMING PERSON**

An AMAB person with a feminine expression is standing next to you at the bus stop. A man walks up to them and starts calling them very hurtful names and making fun of their appearance. What do you do?

Solution: The best thing to do is to step in right away and tell the man that this is your friend/family member they are talking to. Tell him to back off in whichever way feels more comfortable. Offer to walk with the person to another bus stop or provide your phone details in case they need anything. You can also offer to sit next to them on the bus to have a chat to ensure they aren't alone on their journey.

In cases where transphobia is present, it is always best to stick with the person and defend them as safely as you can. You may want to refer the person experiencing transphobia to a LGBT+ or anti-violence charity to seek further support following the incident.

## **HEARING A PERSON BEING DEAD NAMED**

A colleague of yours has changed their name and has informed everyone in your work office about this. It seems that despite everyone being informed, a co-worker of yours continues to refer to the person's 'dead name' in conversation during break time in the staff room. It is making you feel uncomfortable - what do you do?

Solution: It would be best to address the situation immediately by correcting them.

For example:

"Oh, actually our colleague goes by the name of Sally now".

If the person continues to use the person's old name (dead name) in conversation. Please continue to correct them and to use the person's correct name back in conversation.

For example:

"Remember, that she goes by Sally, now"

Co-worker: "Yes, Michael sent that email today"

You: "Yes, I saw that Sally completed the emails today".

For more information about how to be an effective ally please click [HERE](#)

For more information on gender identity including intersex identities click [HERE](#)

The History of They/Them [Pronouns](#)

Learning more about They/Them [Pronouns](#)

The [history](#) of non-binary identities

#### Recommended Books:

Before We Were Trans, Kit Heyam

Transgender History, Susan Stryker

An Anthology of Non Binary Lives, Meg-John Barker

Supporting Trans People of Colour, Sabah Choudrey

Beyond the Gender Binary, Alok Vaid Menon

None Of The Above, Travis Alabanza

Seeing Gender, Iris Gottlieb