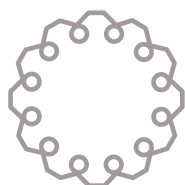


GENDER DIVERSITY SEX & CONSENT

**A RESOURCE FOR THE PARTNERS OF TRANS
AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE**



Zoe Belle
Gender Collective

Gender Diversity, Sex and Consent

This resource is for people who want to learn more about healthy sexual relationships with trans and gender diverse people. It provides practical information on how to respect your partner's body and gender identity during sex.

Many people find sex with trans and gender diverse people fun and enjoyable, whether as part of a hook-up, casual dating or a long-term relationship. Sex can be a great way to explore attractions, desires and relationships. However, trans and gender diverse people often talk about the challenges that come up if their partner doesn't understand how to communicate or interact with their bodies respectfully.

"As someone assigned female at birth, so many people tried to have sex with me as though I was a woman, even though I am very open about being trans and non-binary. Sexual partners would just completely disrespect my gender identity during sex and wouldn't ask about how I would like to have sex as a non-binary person." – Gem, non-binary

Respecting other people's experiences

It's important to recognise that no two people are the same, including trans and gender diverse people. Whilst there may be overlapping experiences within communities, we all have our individual needs, wants and desires.

"Trans people are all so beautiful and we are so diverse in how we experience and express our gender. I just wish we could get rid of the idea that you have to look or act a certain way just to be valid. We are all valid and worthy of respect and love." – Gem, non-binary

One way of respecting your trans and gender diverse partner is to validate their gender identity regardless of how they look, sound, act – or if they have/have not had any medical interventions. The more you understand and respect each other as individuals, the more enjoyable sex will be for everyone involved.

"My ex-partner was very respectful towards me. He respected me as a woman and never judged me. He supported me to be proud of myself, especially as a trans woman, and always gently challenged me if I had negative thoughts about myself. He was very compassionate and encouraging. He was so open about our relationship, taking me on dates in our community and introducing me to his friends." – Kim, trans woman¹

¹transfemme.com.au

**"RELATIONSHIPS WITH
TRANS PEOPLE ARE BEAUTIFUL"**

Respectful language

We all use different language to describe our identities and our experiences. Taking the time to check in with your partner about the language they use to describe their identity can help build trust and respect.

"When we were hooking up he kept referring to me as a crossdresser, even though I identify as transfeminine. All he had to do was ask rather than make misinformed assumptions that made me feel uncomfortable." – Electra, transfeminine¹

TIP: It's important to ask what language your partner wants you to use, including their name, pronouns, nicknames, compliments and other gendered language. Be open to this changing over time, and take the time to look up any unfamiliar terms online.

Trans and gender diverse people may use different language to describe their bodies or particular body parts. For example, some people may use words such as 'chest' instead of 'breasts', 'junk' instead of 'penis', 'front-hole' instead of 'vagina'.

TIP: Check in – "Hey before we hook-up, is it okay if I check in about the language you use to describe your body?"

"I use the term 'junk' for my genitals. I don't like my partners using the same words for my genitals that men use such as 'penis' or 'dick'. Other trans women who haven't had lower surgery might use other terms that they find is a right fit for them." – Electra, transfeminine¹*

*sometimes called genital reconstruction surgery or other similar terms.

Interacting with your partner's body

Trans and gender diverse can feel uncomfortable or distressed when their partner/s engages with their body in ways that do not align with their gender identity.

"I wish I could have men, cis men in particular, understand that they're not having sex with a woman." – Genie, non-binary

TIP: Respect your partner's gender identity at all times, including during sex. Check-in with them about ways you can affirm their gender identity during sex.

Some trans and gender diverse people may experience distress or discomfort with certain parts of their bodies. This is sometimes referred to as body dysphoria or gender dysphoria. They may not always want to use particular parts of their body or have them touched by others. This might also impact how they feel about particular sexual acts.

"In the past I felt really nervous around how people would perceive and interact with my body, especially my chest and genitals. I always worried they'd misgender me, find me unattractive once they saw me naked, or pressure me into doing things that made me feel dysphoric." – Gem, non-binary

¹transfemme.com.au



Sex can also be a great way for trans and gender diverse people to express and explore their gender identity. Gender euphoria is the feeling of joy and happiness a trans or gender diverse person feels about their gender and/or body.

"For me gender euphoria is feeling confident and affirmed in the fact that my body, whatever it looks like, is mine and it's male because I'm male therefore my body is male. All my parts are male. The idea that I'm not in the wrong body, I am just in a body and that body is mine." – Zac, trans man

It can be helpful to talk before getting physical, and to approach these discussions with a sense of respectful curiosity rather than expectation. The point is to get to know each other and to build trust.

"Can we start with– How are you going? How are you feeling? Are there parts of your body that you're more or less comfortable with? Are there ways that I can make you feel more comfortable with those parts of your body?" – Crystal, trans woman¹

TIP: Do not make assumptions around how your partner relates to their body or gender identity, especially during sex and intimacy. Ask if there is anything you can do to help alleviate the discomfort, or what might make them feel good.

"It's much better to make sure you are happy, your partner's happy, and that you are both going to have a good time, because ultimately sex is just something fun that you do with your body with somebody that you trust." – Zac, trans man

For trans and gender diverse people there can be additional barriers accessing healthy relationships due to discrimination and stigma. This can mean feeling obliged or pressured to meet the sexual expectations of partners.

"I'd often go out of my way to fulfil other people's expectations even if it wasn't what I felt comfortable with. I felt like I owed them something because of my trans-ness, because they accepted me despite my trans-ness. I felt some kind of obligation to them." – Q, non-binary¹

Stop and check in when your partner doesn't seem present or comfortable. This may be a sign that your partner is not comfortable or is not consenting to particular sexual acts or situations. Remember to check in with them and make space for them to talk about it if they want to.

"As a chronically-ill person, there are times where I have to be like "ok my body is saying no, I have enjoyed this, but my body is tired. My muscles start shaking, my body is saying we've got to stop." – Mx G, non-binary

It's important to always see your partner as a person with individual needs, desires and boundaries. You should always respect and consider your partner's boundaries and what they are comfortable with. They have a right to do only what feels good for them, their body and their gender identity. When your partner is respected and has positive experiences in negotiating consent, they are more likely to experience gender euphoria during sex and intimacy.

¹transfemme.com.au

"EVERYONE DESERVES TO FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED DURING SEX"

Consent and Pleasure

Consent means actively taking steps to understand what the person is interested in doing sexually, and what they are not interested in doing. Consent can change at any time, and cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent, because it was not given freely. In some places, such as Victoria, it is now unlawful to have sex or sexual contact with someone without first gaining their explicit consent, rather than waiting for them to say no.

"I feel much more respected and have a more enjoyable experience when guys check in with me before sex, where they ask me if I'm comfortable. What are my boundaries? What do I like and not like in terms of sex and intimacy? When they invite me to let them know if I want to stop, slow down or take a break. Good lovers have a deep understanding of communication and consent."
– Electra, transfeminine¹

For more information about consent laws in Victoria: www.sasvic.org.au/consent

¹transfemme.com.au

If you decide to have sex, here are some ways you can make it more pleasurable:

- Share what you both want to do, what brings each of you pleasure and/or what you might want to explore together.
- Establish verbal and non-verbal cues for communication during sex. This might be safe words like red for stop and green for good, or gestures like having a hand up for stop and a thumbs up for good.
- Have open communication before, during and after sex, about what felt good or what might need to be changed.
- Consider the kind of environment and the amount of time you both might need, to feel comfortable and to enjoy yourselves.
- Explore activities, toys, clothes and language that allow your partner to express or embody their gender identity in empowering and affirmative ways.



WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

SAY IT OUT LOUD

www.sayitoutloud.org.au

ACON's sexual, domestic and family violence website [Say It Out Loud](http://www.sayitoutloud.org.au) provides information and guidance relating to sexual, family and intimate partner violence in the Australian LGBTQ+ community.

QLIFE

[www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)

National anonymous and confidential LGBTIQ+ peer support service (including partners)

Phone: 1800 184 527

Opening hours: 3PM to midnight, every day

Telephone and web chat support service

TRANSHUB

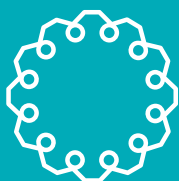
www.transhub.org.au

TransHub is ACON's digital information and resource platform for all trans people, and their loved ones, allies and health providers.

TRANSFEMME

www.transfemme.com.au

This is a website made by the Zoe Belle Gender Collective with stories, tips, and resources to support healthier relationships between trans women or transfeminine people and cisgender men.



Zoe Belle
Gender Collective