

STUDENT ALLY FAQ:

BEING A CISGENDER ALLY TO GENDER DIVERSE STUDENTS

For the purpose of this document, we will use Gender Diversity to refer to students of Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary, and Queer experience. Cisgender refers to individuals who identify with the gender that corresponds to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Sex is biologically-informed and assigned at birth, gender (identity and expression) requires a conscious coming to terms with how you navigate the world as a gendered being, and sexual orientation describes the desire and attraction for and between others.



Contributing to an Inclusive Campus

- Introduce yourself to other students by using your name and pronouns and asking for their name and pronouns even if you think you already know them.
- Show up at educational programs about gender or relevant activities, when it is appropriate for allies, to show your support.
- If you are a student leader or part of an organization on campus, be mindful of whose experiences are not present or not being represented. How can you make your group more inclusive to gender diverse students?
- Hold others accountable for words or actions that are non-affirming toward Trans and Non-Binary students.



Always... Use gender-free language.

- Use “folks,” “everyone,” or “y’all” instead of “ladies and gents” or “guys.”
- Avoid assumptions about gender: You can’t tell someone’s gender based on how they look, gender can change, and not all gender diverse students are open about their identity.
- Use person-first language (e.g. “people who identify as women” or “people who are Trans”).
- Control your curiosity: Don’t ask unnecessary questions about a gender diverse students’ experience or identity.



Always Think About...

Educating yourself. Don’t position gender diverse students to teach you or others about their experience and identity or speak on behalf of gender diverse people. This is tokenizing. Attend a TransZone training through the Office of Intercultural Engagement.

Working on your discomfort. Be humble in your learning process and respectfully acknowledge what you don’t know or understand.

Identifying the resources. Know where to refer gender diverse students and be willing to help them access these resources.



Mistakes Happen...

Correct quickly and move on. If you or a peer accidentally call someone by the wrong name or pronouns, also known as misgendering, don’t call unnecessary attention to the mistake. Correct yourself immediately and move on. Avoid future mistakes through independent practice. Remember that repeated or purposeful misgendering is violence.



For more information Go to the Gender Diversity Toolkit on the UNCG Office of Intercultural Engagement website at the link below and complete the appropriate form located at the bottom: <https://bit.ly/2Z0EaAc>

This document was created by LEARN's Gender Diversity Working Group, which is a collective of faculty, staff, and students from across programs and departments at UNCG concerned with the experiences and meeting the needs of gender diverse students.