

# Material

## Puzzelpiece – trans\* allyship

### Definitions:

#### What means trans\*<sup>1</sup>?

When a person's inner sense of gender identity doesn't match with the gender assigned at birth. Terms that are also used for this are transgender or transidentity.

Trans men were categorized as girls at birth and define themselves as men. Trans women were categorized as boys and define themselves as women. Non-binary trans people were categorized as male or female at birth and defined them selfs neither (only) as a woman nor as a man but as agender or gender fluid.

Trans people live very differently in the gender that they feel is the right one for them. Whether they clearly look like a man or a woman, whether they were undergoing surgery, taking hormones, changing their name, pronoun or personal status or whether they behave particularly "male" or "female" does not change that. Because: trans \* is not just who was undergoing sex-adjusting surgery, takes hormones etc.

Trans\* is not a disease. However, some trans people suffer under trans-discrimination that strongly that they get mental illnesses such as depression or even try to take their own lives. Why some people are trans \*, is not known. A trans\*-identity can not be proven by medical examinations. The only "proof" for trans\* is the feeling of the particular person.

Some trans people or doctors also use the older term "transsexuality". In the trans \* community the term trans \*, transgender or transident are preferred.

People that are not trans (what is the case for most of the people) are called cis people. That means they (still) identify with the gender assigned at birth.

(from transgender network switzerland <https://www.tgns.ch/de/information/>, edited by queer\_topia\*)

#### What means allyship?

Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns.

(from [http://www.becominganally.ca/Becoming\\_an\\_Ally/Home.html](http://www.becominganally.ca/Becoming_an_Ally/Home.html))

The concept of allyship describes strategies, how people with particular privileges can fight together with people that don't have these privileges. In the case of this puzzle piece it means: cis people with trans\* people. The question is how that take place in a good way. (queer\_topia\*)

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1 \* here means that trans can have different endings like transgender, transident etc.

# Androgyn

Article form Anonym in Queeulant\_in Nr. 4 (May 2013)

The following text deals with violence against people who don't pass clearly as male or female and the fear of violence. Accordingly: trigger warning.

[The protagonist is an androgynous person in his/her mid-twenties, whose outward appearance does not match to binary gender thought patterns. Which is present in the majority of the German population.]

Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 7:42 PM

[Thought monologue]

I am waiting for my subway, which should leave already 2 minutes ago. I buried my hands deep in the pockets of my black coat. It's cold outside. I do not feel well. These crowds scare me. I try to avoid such situations. This one is unavoidable because my car is in the workshop. My face turned to the ground, I stand there. Caught by the noticeable pairs of eyes, which usually turn away as soon as I let my eyes wander through the room.

The subway arrives.

Many get off. I am looking for a place at the end of a nearly empty compartment. I sit down at the window, where the inside of the train is reflected. An older woman with big shopping bags settles down in a square with two rows of behind me. The bags carry the inscription of a toy shop. Further back, I recognize a young man starring at his smart phone. In front of me sits a woman with a preschool child staring at me.

The subway leaves.

It's just a kid. I only have to drive eight stops. No recognizable danger.

A touch of relief overcomes me.

"Mamaaa, is that a man or a woman?"

I am scared. The child is staring. The mother grabs it on the shoulder and blushes. I am silent.

At the next stop I hear loud noises. The compartment is filling up. A group of four male teenagers is approaching. Panic is spreading inside me. Their seat choice falls on the four-seat group to my left. The subway leaves.

They stare and laugh silly. Please leave me alone! One of the young men gets up and sits down facing me. I look at him briefly and turn my eyes again out of the window.

"... come on!" I hear from the left.

The guy approaches me immediately and puts his hand on my knee. I flinch. Try to control my panic. Try not to show it to him. I must be strong.

"Well, do you want to party with us?"

"No"

He gets more closer to, sits down next to me, his hand slides over my thigh. I push the hand aside in disgust.

"Don't I please you?"

"I'm not interested. Please leave me alone!"

"Are you a perverted fag? Or a tranny? "

The other teenagers bawl and provoke him. I want to get out of here!

"What are you? Let me feel it! Do you have a cock? "

He touches me harder. I try to free myself, he holds my hands together with one hand and touches my chest with the other hand.

"No! I don't want that. Leave me alone!"

Numerous entered pairs of eyes. People stare and keep quiet. The mother takes the child by the hand and pulls it into another compartment. Why does nobody say something?  
He fixes me, touches me brutally in the crotch. The teenagers laugh. The people are staring. Three more stops. I can free myself as the train slows down.  
Absent-minded, my wet hand reaches for my backpack and I quickly leave the subway.  
The eyes of the passengers follow me.  
And steps.  
I hear that the teenagers got off, too.  
Last minute, I get into another subway that goes in the wrong direction, I don't care. As the doors close, the teenagers are still standing on the platform staring at me and laugh.  
The laughter pursues me.  
And the staring eyes of people who ignored my helpless situation.

## **30+ examples of cisgender privilege**

(by Sam Killermann <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/11/list-of-cisgender-privileges> and reprinted by queer\_topia\*)

If you're not familiar with the term, „cisgender“ means having a biological sex that matches your gender identity and expression, resulting in other people accurately perceiving your gender. If you are cisgender, there's a good chance you've never thought about these things (or even your cisgender identity).

1. Use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.
2. Use public facilities such as gym locker rooms and store changing rooms without stares, fear, or anxiety.
3. Strangers don't assume they can ask you what your genitals look like and how you have sex.
4. Your validity as a man/woman/human is not based on how much surgery you've had or how well you „pass“ as non-transgender.
5. You have the ability to walk through the world and generally blend-in, not being constantly stared or gawked at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of your gender expression.
6. You can access gender exclusive spaces such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Greek Life, or Take Back the Night and not be excluded due to your trans status.
7. Strangers call you by the name you provide, and don't ask what your „real name“ [birth name] is and then assume that they have a right to call you by that name.
8. You can reasonably assume that your ability to acquire a job, rent an apartment, or secure a loan will not be denied on the basis of your gender identity/expression.
9. You have the ability to flirt, engage in courtship, or form a relationship and not fear that your biological status may be cause for rejection or attack, nor will it cause your partner to question their sexual orientation.
10. If you end up in the emergency room, you do not have to worry that your gender will keep you from receiving appropriate treatment, or that all of your medical issues will be seen as a result of your gender.
11. Your identity is not considered a mental pathology („gender identity disorder“ in the DSM IV) by the psychological and medical establishments.
12. You have the ability to not worry about being placed in a sex-segregated detention center, holding facility, jail or prison that is incongruent with your identity.
13. You have the ability to not be profiled on the street as a sex worker because of your gender expression.
14. You are not required to undergo an extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.
15. You do not have to defend your right to be a part of „Queer“, and gays and lesbians will not try to exclude you from „their“ equal rights movement because of your gender identity (or any equality movement, including feminist rights).
16. If you are murdered (or have any crime committed against you), your gender expression will not be used as a justification for your murder („gay panic“) nor as a reason to coddle the perpetrators.

17. You can easily find role models and mentors to emulate who share your identity.
18. Hollywood accurately depicts people of your gender in films and television, and does not solely make your identity the focus of a dramatic storyline, or the punchline for a joke.
19. Be able to assume that everyone you encounter will understand your identity, and not think you're confused, misled, or hell-bound when you reveal it to them.
20. Being able to purchase clothes that match your gender identity without being refused service, mocked by staff or questioned on your genitals.
21. Being able to purchase shoes that fit your gender expression without having to order them in special sizes or asking someone to custom-make them.
22. No stranger checking your identification or drivers license will ever insult or glare at you because your name or sex does not match the sex they believed you to be based on your gender expression.
23. You can reasonably assume that you will not be denied services at a hospital, bank, or other institution because the staff does not believe the gender marker on your ID card to match your gender identity.
24. Having your gender as an option on a form.
25. Being able to tick a box on a form without someone disagreeing, and telling you not to lie. Yes, this happens.
26. Not fearing interactions with police officers due to your gender identity.
27. Being able to go to places with friends on a whim knowing there will be bathrooms there you can use.
28. You don't have to convince your parents of your true gender and/or have to earn your parents' and siblings' love and respect all over again.
29. You don't have to remind your extended family over and over to use proper gender pronouns (e.g., after transitioning).
30. You don't have to deal with old photographs that did not reflect who you truly are.
31. Knowing that if you're dating someone they aren't just looking to satisfy a curiosity or kink pertaining to your gender identity (e.g., the „novelty“ of having sex with a trans-person).
32. Being able to pretend that anatomy and gender are irrevocably entwined when having the „boy parts and girl parts“ talk with children, instead of explaining the actual complexity of the issue (one „how-to“ in the comments below).

# Points about allyship from „no more allies“

by mia mckenzie (person of color, queer\_feminist, lives in the usa)

can be found under: <https://everydayfeminism.com/2013/11/things-allies-need-to-know/>

- **Being an Ally is About Listening**

As McKenzie puts it, “Shut up and listen.”

*As someone striving to be an ally, the most important thing we can do is listen to as many voices of those we’re allying ourselves with as possible.*

- **Stop Thinking of ‘Ally’ as a Noun**

Being an ally isn’t a status.

- **‘Ally’ is Not a Self-Proclaimed Identity**

*Being in solidarity is something we can strive for, but in the end, it is the choice of those we are attempting to ally ourselves to as to whether they trust us enough to call us an ally.*

- **Allies Don’t Take Breaks**

And in the end, part of the privilege of your identity is that you have a choice about whether or not to resist oppression. And falling back into your privilege, especially when you are most needed, is not being in solidarity.

- **Allies Educate Themselves Constantly**

- **You Can’t Be an Ally in Isolation**

- **Allies Don’t Need to Be in the Spotlight**

*True solidarity means supporting the work of those you’re allying yourself to, not solely creating a platform for your own voice and work.*

- **Allies Focus on Those Who Share Their Identity**

*Beyond listening, arguably the most important thing that I can do to act in solidarity is to engage those who share my identity.*

- **When Criticized or Called Out, Allies Listen, Apologize, Act Accountably, and Act Differently Going Forward**

*“If you choose to do social justice work, you are going to screw up – a lot. Be prepared for that. And when you screw up, be prepared to listen to those who you hurt, apologize with honesty and integrity, work hard to be accountable to them, and make sure you act differently going forward.”*

*When you screw up and damage trust and hurt and anger those you have allied yourself to, listening is important, but it’s not enough.*

- **Allies Never Monopolize the Emotional Energy**

*[T]he people who experience racism, misogyny, ableism, queerphobia, transphobia, classism, etc. are exhausted.”*

## Points about trans\* allyship

from the diploma thesis by René Hornstein (white trans\*activist, lives in Germany)

to be found under: <http://rhornstein.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/diplomarbeit-transunterst%c3%bctzung-r.-hornstein-version-homepage-19.05.17.pdf>

### ***open, holistic and comprehensive thinking about trans\*people without stereotypes and without reduction of the body***

- to be open for trans\* topics
- to not reduce trans\*people on stereotypes but to think about them in a comprehensive and differentiated way

### **trans\*friendly appropriation of knowledge about trans\***

- to inform oneself and use specific sources before concerted contact with trans\*people
- the will of getting more knowledge about it
- work distribution: not just ask trans\*persons about it
- exchange with other cis-persons about trans\*

### **reflected handling with your privileges and their use**

- reflection of your own (cis)identity and the privileges connected with it
- knowledge about the use of your own privileges
- to reflect privileges of trans\*people

### **to imply trans\***

- to imply trans\*identity
- reflect your use and invitation of specific spaces in matters of trans\*discrimination
- informed and sensible handling with coming-out

### **understanding the independence of look, name, pronoun and gender identity**

- knowledge about the independence of look, name, pronoun and gender identity also if binary gender is refused

### **receptive conversation behavior: listener in conversation**

- listen well, to be open for conversation, appreciate words of the other
- openness for critic, no defense of critic
- accept unsatisfying answers

### **active conversation: as a sender \* in conversation**

- control of your own curiosity
- use your own imagination and review questions to reflect on appropriate conversational behavior
- directly ask to avoid stereotypes
- do not speak directly, but wait and see; do not discuss trans\* independently
- to speak about other topics as trans\*-identity
- not ask any unpleasant, too many or too intimate questions
- not address body and genitals
- not address sexuality
- ask questions of interest
- only speak about trans\* if necessary
- to ask for wishes concerning the handling and concerning the topics of conversation
- ask for gender identity
- ask burning questions in a respectful and non-reducing way
- ask questions of understanding
- Demands are all right when trusting in the relationship

- not make any foreign descriptions
- not make any assumptions or ascriptions
- not make any unsolicited assessments
- no othering, no dehumanization, no asexualization
- respectful handling of names and pronouns
- speak sensitively about trans\*, reflect and change your own gendered language

**dealing with errors, support and alliance**

- take responsibility for discriminating actions, apologize
- ask what the person needs
- give support and strengthen
- give individualized support
- intervene
- protect
- reflection and knowledge about the limits of one's own role as an ally, - knowing about the definition of the authority of trans\* individuals above the allied status
- Normalized handling of confederate behavior, do not claim a reward
- intersectional engagement
- want world change



## Thank you!

- I thank you for getting used to my favorite name.
- Tank you, that you regularly ask for my pronoun.
- Great, that you use my current name when talking about times before my name change.
- Thank you very much, that you check your questions, if you would ask them a not trans\* person.
- I thank you for believing me, that I know by myself which toilet to use.
- Thank you, that you ask me, what I need when I am mobbed on the street.
- I am so happy that you take my thoughts and decisions seriously.
- Thank you for asking before you tell my name and pronoun to others.
- I thank you for recognizing that things that are easy for you can be difficult or complicated for me.
- Thank you, for asking me first before telling others about my trans\*gender.
- Thank you for seriously apologizing for misgendering me.
- It's good that you practice using the right pronoun.
- Thank you for informing yourself about trans\* discrimination.
- Thank you very much, that you are not writing about "us", but talk to me.
- Thank you, that you for not expecting to recognize a trans\* person by the outer appearance.
- Great, that you for not guessing my sexual orientation.
- Thank you for listening.
- I am very happy, that you don't tell my life as exciting story.
- Thank you, that you don't think I'm strange, but the society that treats me like a stranger.
- Thank you, for not giving me tips how I can look more "masculine", "feminine" or "undefined".