



Five Steps To Being a Better Ally to the Transgender Community

from NCAA's "Champions of Respect"

Being a strong ally to the LGBTQ community necessitates educating yourself and others about how to be a better ally to the transgender community. The following are five easy things any member of an athletics community can do to help create a safe and welcoming environment for transgender student-athletes, coaches and administrators.

1. Avoid Demeaning Language When Referring to Transgender People

Words that demean and trivialize the experiences of those who identify as transgender can often go unaddressed within athletics departments. By looking out for words like "tranny" or calling someone "too butch to be a girl," we can begin to create a safe and welcoming environment for our transgender peers.

2. Ask About Preferred Pronouns

Respect the names and pronouns that people prefer. If you are unsure, simply ask, "What are your preferred pronouns?" It is OK to make a mistake so long as you take the time to educate yourself about what you should say and are respectful moving forward.

3. Coming Out Is Confidential

A gender identity is personal. If a member of the athletics community chooses to come out to you as transgender, this means that the person trusts you. Make sure to honor that trust by checking with the person before telling anyone else, as the person may not want others to know. Confidentiality is key to creating an inclusive culture.

4. Don't Ask About "Real" Name

Asking what someone's "real" name is implies that the person's chosen name is in some way invalid or not "real." In the same way, asking someone what his or her "real" gender is disrespects his or her gender identity.

5. Know the Difference Between Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

No matter how people identify their own gender, they may identify with any sexual orientation. Everyone has a sexual orientation and a gender identity, and they are separate and distinct from each other. Be mindful of uninformed assumptions in yourself and others.