

# Transfemme.com.au

INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF MEN  
WHO DATE TRANS WOMEN OR TRANS FEMININE PEOPLE



## How can I support healthy relationships between trans women & men?

*This tip sheet is for the friends and family of men who date trans women or trans feminine people\*, to help them understand harmful gender stereotypes and beauty myths.*

### Summary

- Trans women and men have a right to healthy relationships.
- Some people may have negative views about trans women and their partners.
- This can lead to men feeling ashamed about their relationships or feelings towards trans women.
- Shame can contribute to some men's behaviour who are disrespectful or violent towards trans women.
- Talk to the men in your life and let them know you are supportive of trans women.

\* "Men" in this resource refers to cisgender men. "Trans women" refers to trans women, trans feminine people, women who have a trans and gender diverse history or experience, but do not identify as transgender - and other trans feminine culturally-specific identities such as Sistergirls, Fa'afafine and Kinner.

# Understanding the relationships between trans women & men

Everyone has the right to access healthy and respectful romantic relationships, and relationships between trans women and men might be more common than you think. Many couples are in long-term relationships, or married, or have started families and are supported by their relatives and their communities. Our relationships are more than romantic or sexual connections - they are an important connection to family, friends and our broader community.

*“I recently got married to my partner. I feel so happy! He makes me feel so beautiful. He’s a very kind and understanding man. I couldn’t legally get married in Malaysia but I can here in Australia. As a transgender woman it was important to me to get married to feel secure and stronger in our relationship. On our wedding we had all our friends and family come along. We celebrated with a full heart.” Sanu, trans woman*

*“Ideally I would like to have a partner in my life, though it doesn’t necessarily have to be marriage. I want that person to embrace me for who I am. We all have the right to be safe and respected.” Katrina, trans woman*

Unfortunately, some people have negative views about trans women and their partners. This means these relationships aren’t always as visible or as celebrated as other relationships. For example, you may not have seen many happy relationships between men and trans women shown on television, in films, or within your community, family and friendship groups.

*“I don’t think my family would be accepting if my girlfriend was trans.” David*

As a result, many men feel ashamed, isolated, unsafe, or nervous about their relationships and desires. Sometimes this can lead to men being secretive about their relationships with trans women.

*“I was anxious, worried about people knowing—and not once did I ever think I was going to tell anyone.” Mark*

The support of family and friends is important for any relationship. Some men may assume that their friends and family won’t be supportive even if that may not be the case.



**Tip:** Find opportunities to voice your support for trans women and say that all women, including trans women, deserve respect. This sends a positive message that trans women are welcome in your family and your community.

For example, you might say:

*"I want to let you know I will welcome and support your partners regardless of their gender or whether they are cisgender or transgender. What's important to me is that you love each other and treat each other with respect."*

*"I've seen a lot of discussion about trans women in the media and I don't think it's OK to debate their right to exist or be safe. All women, including trans women, should be respected."*

Learning more helps you be an informed ally. Check out our other tip sheets for family and friends on the [Transfemme website](#).

Topics include:

- Understanding men's sexuality
- Why is privacy important to trans women & their partners?
- Welcoming trans women into your family or community
- Talking respectfully with trans women & their partners
- How do I challenge harmful gender stereotypes & beauty myths?
- Can trans women have children?

## Learning more helps you be an informed ally.

Check out our other tip sheets for family and friends on the [Transfemme website](#).

If you need further advice on how to respond to transphobia or homophobia or need some emotional support and you're in Australia, you can contact:

### Qlife

National anonymous and confidential LGBTIQ+ peer support service

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

Phone: 1800 184 527

Opening hours: 3PM to midnight, every day  
Telephone and web chat support service

## Where to get more information and support

### Say It Out Loud

ACON's sexual, domestic and family violence website Say It Out Loud provides information and guidance relating to sexual, family and intimate partner violence in the Australian LGBTIQ+ community. For information on services in your area, click "Find Help Near You".

Website: [sayitoutloud.org.au](http://sayitoutloud.org.au)

### Transhub

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

Website: [transhub.org.au](http://transhub.org.au)

If you're outside Australia, you can try searching for "LGBTIQA+ help line in my area". Many LGBTIQA+ services provide support to friends and family members.