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What is Transgender Day of Visibility and Why Does It Matter?

March 31 will mark the 12th annual International Transgender Day of Visibility. Each year we acknowledge this day and celebrate transgender and gender diverse people around the globe and their experiences and achievements. The day also creates an opportunity to reflect on the barriers and violence trans and gender diverse people face in the workplace, at school and the broader community.

The term transgender or trans refers to a person whose gender identity is different from their assigned or presumed gender at birth. People who identify as transgender are more likely to experience abuse, harassment, and violence in their lifetime. Many of these experiences happen in environments where trans and gender diverse people should be flourishing or receiving support. This includes their work, home, school, university, sports club, health care provider and more.

In a recent study of young LGBTQA+ Australians, “two-thirds of all the trans and gender diverse participants (67.9%; n = 1,070) reported feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in the past 12 months at their educational setting due to their sexuality or gender identity”. The study also reported that trans and gender diverse participants experienced high levels of psychological distress, suicidal ideation, self-harm, and verbal harassment related to their sexuality or gender identity.

It is clear that we need to take action to celebrate visibility and inclusivity to support the wellbeing of trans and gender diverse people.

As individuals and workplaces, we can start supporting trans and gender diverse people by taking some simple steps. This could include:

- Respecting pronouns – it is polite to ask people what their pronouns are, rather than just assume. It is also important to understand what is offensive and avoid using phrases like “they used to be a man/ woman”, instead some trans people use the terminology “assigned or presumed [gender] at birth”. Understanding the basic terms around trans and gender diverse experiences can help you be more respectful and inclusive.
- Being compassionate – listen respectfully to the experiences of gender diverse people and avoid invasive questions that will make someone feel uncomfortable.
- Never making assumptions – it is best not to assume someone is trans or tell others that someone is trans. Just as we see ourselves as unique, every trans person and their experiences are unique.

These are just some of the simple ways we can support and celebrate trans visibility.

Natasha Miliotis, CEO of SHINE SA said,

“For SHINE SA our capacity to be inclusive and to support diversity benefits everyone – staff, clients, stakeholders and our organisational culture as a whole. It supports us to be more flexible, more productive and better able to respond to the needs of all.”

We encourage people to read Minus18’s list on [how to be a trans ally](#) and consider how you and your communities can celebrate trans and gender diverse people.

For further information on supporting trans and gender diverse people:

- SHINE SA offers a range of LGBTIQ+ workplace education opportunities. Visit SHINE SA’s website to learn more.
- SHINE SA offers a [Gender Wellbeing Service](#) which is a free peer-based service for those who identify or support someone that is trans, gender diverse or gender questioning in the Metropolitan Adelaide area. For those who live or work in rural or regional SA please visit this service via [Gender Connect Country SA](#).
- SHINE SA also provides education opportunities, useful links and resources for individuals and organisations that want to encourage and support diversity. Visit SHINE SA’s [Sexual & Gender Diversity](#) page for more information.
- Local group TransMascSA have also created fact sheets to help encourage safer conversation skills around trans identities and experiences. They have also created language guides and other resources. Learn more via the Trans Health SA page [here](#).

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