

Management's Role in Gender Transition

Management support is key when someone is transitioning their gender at work. A proactive approach will help to ensure that the process is handled with empathy and respect.

When a team member informs a manager that they are transitioning, it is important that management become part of the workplace planning process. Together, they can:

- ▶ Determine a timeline for the transition
- ▶ Plan solutions for common issues, such as restroom use and updates to company records
- ▶ Involve other parties, such as LifeMatters or experts in the field, to ensure the process is handled with care

The gender transition process is often gradual for both the individual and the organization. A transitioning worker will often notify management of their intent prior to any medical procedure or other major milestone, such as changing their name. Some individuals may opt to come out as non-binary or genderfluid prior to transitioning to another gender. When the person reveals their plans, they may disclose legitimate fears about past or future harassment.

A formal announcement of the individual's gender transition should be made by the highest-level manager on site. The announcement should include:

- ▶ A statement of support for the transitioning person and their value to the team
- ▶ The date the transition will occur
- ▶ The person's new name and pronouns
- ▶ Expectations regarding respectful behavior within the workplace

Prior to the announcement, all managers should review the organization's harassment and/or sexual harassment policy. It may also be helpful to consult with the LifeMatters Management Consultation Service and review reputable information about gender transition so that managers can answer questions as they arise.

Prior to the official day of the person's transition in the workplace, their manager should arrange for the person's next paycheck to be issued in their new name. In addition, on the day of the transition, the organization should:

- ▶ Issue the person an identification badge with their new name and photo
- ▶ Update their email, computer handle, or account identification
- ▶ Provide a new nametag for the person's door, desk, or cubicle

Human Resources and other departments should also update the person's name, pronouns, and gender on organizational charts, mailing lists, and other personnel data. References to the person's previous name (or "dead name") should be removed.

Unless prohibited by local law, the transitioning person should use the restroom that is consistent with their gender identity. If a business uses a public restroom that is not under the direct control of the organization, the matter should be discussed with the landlord. Include the transitioning person in any discussions regarding shower facilities or communal disrobing areas and make sure that they are comfortable with the final arrangements.

A transgender person's transition must happen at their own pace. It is important to avoid rushing them into any decisions. Your organization will benefit from providing a supportive, respectful environment where they feel safe to be themselves.

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