

Transfemme.com.au

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



Can trans women have children?

This tip sheet is for the friends and family of men who date trans women or trans feminine people to help them be respectful about the topic of having children.*

Summary

- Some men and trans women in relationships may already have children.
- There are lots of ways to have children - through surrogacy and IVF, fostering and adoption.
- Some people pressure men to leave trans women because she can't bear children.
- This is a form of abuse that is harmful.
- Be an ally and support trans women in their relationships with men.

* "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.

Families come in all shapes and sizes, each one deserving of respect and love

Some men and trans women have already had children together. Others have children from previous relationships.

“I was married 25 years. My husband and I adopted two children because we wanted a family. We’re not together anymore but we still talk and he is still the father to my children. My children have grown up now and they accept me for who I am. I am proud of them. We have had some challenges along the way, but as they grew up we overcame them together. They are close to my heart. I love them.” Jessie

Whether or not to have children is a personal decision for anyone, and there is no right or wrong way to start a family. What makes a family is how much love and support everyone gives to each other.

Many couples may consider having children as part of their relationship. There are lots of options for trans women and men to have children, including surrogacy and IVF, fostering and adoption.



“I do want to have kids. I would like to adopt in the future as I know I can’t bear any children. I don’t really mind not having genetically related children and that’s something my partner and I have talked about. It’s not a big barrier for us in our relationship, but it was an issue for his mum. She told him that he needed to have a family, to have children, and that being with me it wasn’t possible. But we can have a family if we want.” Liz

Some men may experience pressure from their friends or family to leave their trans partner because she can’t give birth, but it is never appropriate to reduce any woman’s worth to their capacity to bear children. Trans women can be fantastic mothers. What’s important is her capacity to offer unconditional love and support.

“I’ve been in situations where my partner’s friends have pressured him to leave me, saying things like ‘Oh, you’re never going to have children with this woman, so why are you wasting your time with her.’ I know that there’s a lot of societal pressure on men from their family and friends to have children, I wish people would have a little more compassion and understanding.” Gretchen

Culture, religion and societal values can create a lot of expectations and put pressure on new families.

*“If I fall in love with a guy who literally is the only one son for the family, then there’s a big problem, because the mother and father want their son to get married to a *cisgender (not transgender) women, to develop the culture and traditions of their family. It’s the same here in Australia.” Eliza*

It’s important to respect and support the couple’s decision to be together. Ask yourself - do they share a love that enriches each other’s lives? Does the relationship bring joy and fulfilment? Is there mutual respect and a shared vision for the future? These are the elements that form the foundation of a strong family.

Tip: Whatever decisions people make around parenting in their lives, they should be respected. Pressuring or coercing men to leave trans women because they cannot bear children is harmful, and within family contexts is a form of family violence. Do women only have value if they can give birth? Challenge these attitudes in your family or friendship groups if it’s safe to do so.

For example, you might say:

“Would we say the same thing if she wasn’t able to give birth for other reasons? There are lots of different ways to start a family. I think what matters is that they are happy. And it’s their choice whether they want children or not.”

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

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

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

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.