

# Transfemme.com.au

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



## Understanding men's sexuality

*This tip sheet is for the friends and family of men who date trans women or trans feminine people\* to help them understand men's sexuality.*

### Summary

- Many men are attracted to or date trans women.
- Some people falsely say men who are attracted to trans women are gay. This myth is harmful.
- Some men who are attracted to trans women may identify as straight, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual or prefer no label at all.
- Respect other people's privacy and decisions about how they choose to identify.

\* "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.

# Being a man is not defined by who they find attractive

Many men are attracted to, or date trans women. If someone in your life shares with you that they are attracted to, or are in a relationship with a trans woman, it shouldn't change how you think about them.

You might be wondering what this means about their sexuality. However, this shouldn't really matter. Someone's sexuality doesn't define who they are as a person. It is only one aspect of a person's identity.

*“There's still a lot of people who think men who date trans women are gay.” David*

Unfortunately, widespread myths and misinformation mean that men who are attracted to or date trans women are often falsely labelled as gay. These myths are harmful. Not only do they undermine trans women's “womanhood” or femininity, they often also make false assumptions about other people's sexuality. The only person who can define anyone's sexuality is themselves. This is highly personal and different for everyone.

*“I can't explain why I have an attraction to transgender people, but I do. Does it make me gay, does it make me straight, or does it even matter? For me, I settled on it doesn't really matter. What matters is that I'm happy and I'm with someone that I like being with.” Rob*

Men's sexuality is often more diverse than we think. Some men are attracted to:

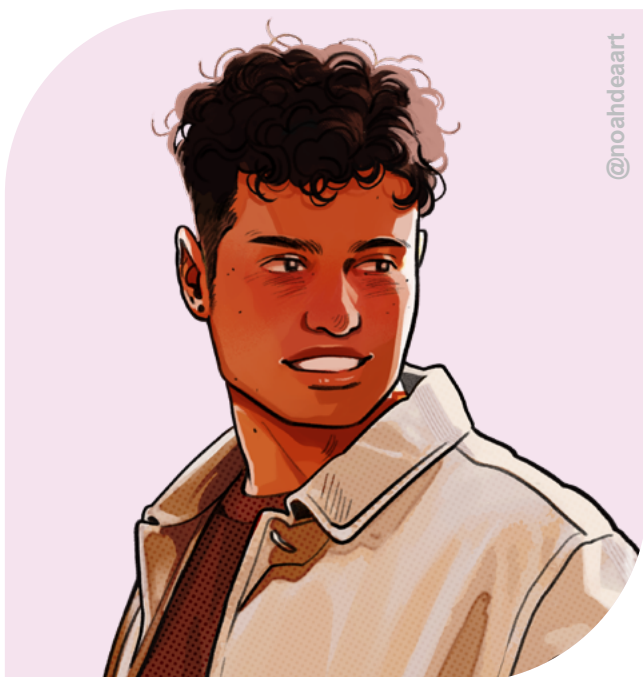
- A range of women, including trans women
- Exclusively trans women
- Femininity or feminine qualities
- A range of different gender identities
- People of all genders.

*“My sexuality developed during my teenage years and I just kind of found that there's a big place in my heart for trans women.” James*

Men who are attracted to trans women might identify as heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual or prefer no label at all.

Ultimately underneath these myths is a layer of transphobia and homophobia and the false idea that being gay makes you less of a man. This type of rigid stereotype discourages men from exploring and expressing their sexuality and their emotions. Some men, if they feel like their sexuality is being questioned use aggression or violence as a way of “proving” their masculinity.

Respect the privacy and identity of others and discourage others from making assumptions about anyone's sexuality. If someone wants to disclose their sexuality, they will generally tell you, if they feel safe to do so.





**Tip:** If you encounter the misconception that a man dating a trans woman is gay and it is safe to do so, respectfully challenge it and state your support for trans women, men who are attracted to trans women, and their relationships.

Start off by saying something supportive about the relationships between trans women and men. Then respectfully name the positive behaviour you're trying to encourage. Finally, if it feels safe to do so, invite them to reflect on why they are being disrespectful.

Here are some examples of how you might do this. Think about how you might say something similar in your own words.

*"I'm really happy for them both. It's important to me that we respect the privacy and dignity of people in our family. Would you ask questions like that of anyone else?"*

*"Hey, I think it's great that they have found each other. I support trans women and their partners. Speculating on other people's sexuality is not anyone's business. What are you trying to say by questioning his sexuality? We should be happy for them."*

*"Lots of men date trans women, and I think that's great. Trying to shame people about their relationships is really disrespectful."*

*"Hey, trans women deserve our respect. We should support them in finding love and happiness. I think they make a cute couple."*

## 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.