

A Guide To Bathrooms


by Max Tran (he or they)

We all use the bathroom. However, this seemingly simple task can be difficult and distressing for trans and gender diverse people thanks to binary (male or female) bathrooms.

Firstly, requiring trans and gender diverse people to use a toilet that does not align with their gender is discrimination, as stated in the Sex Discrimination Act (2013).

Individuals should be able to use the bathroom that best affirms their gender regardless of where they are at in their legal, medical or social transition. (Ie: bathroom usage should not be restricted based on how people look, what their legal gender marker is, or whether or not they've had gender affirming surgery or hormones.)

Below, I will cover how you can best make your bathrooms inclusive to trans and gender diverse people.



Signage

Signs are the first thing we look for when going to the bathroom. Trans people may not feel safe or appropriate using either the men's or women's bathroom.

It's best to keep it simple and remove gender from the sign altogether. This can be done by just saying what facilities are inside (e.g., stalls and urinals, or just stalls). There are regulations around what signage can look like and how many bathrooms are required in a building, so be sure everything is in line with building code regulations.

The word "unisex" is used a lot. This means 'suitable for both sexes', and the term 'all-gender' is preferred.

Sanitary Bins

If possible, have sanitary bins in all cubicles; or mark the stalls containing bins. People using traditionally 'male' bathrooms may need to dispose of sanitary items too!



Can trans people just use accessible bathrooms (without signage)?

No! Whilst many trans people opt into this as the least distressing bathroom option, it is not preferred.

Not all trans people are disabled, or have disabilities, and it is unfair to take these bathrooms away from people with accessibility needs.

Plus, trans people may receive unwanted attention and questioning, or even harassment, for using these bathrooms.

