

The Solidarity Spectrum: How to Fight Transphobia (For Grades 7-8)

There are many ways in which we can fight transphobia or support it. Some of those ways are listed below. Here they are placed in a spectrum from things that don't fight transphobia to things that do the most to fight transphobia. However, these are not like levels in a video game. One person can do things that support transphobia in some situations and things that fight it in another and the kinds of action we take depend on many things like what we know, who we are with, whether we feel safe to say or do something. Hopefully, if we learn more about being an ally, we will be able to do things that are more supportive more often.

Supporting Transphobia

- You do things that support the idea that there are only two opposite genders.
- You use transphobic language.

Inaction

- When other people do things that support the idea that there are only two opposite genders or use transphobic language you don't do anything.

Fighting Transphobia for Yourself

- You have a friend who is trans. You use their pronouns properly and correct other people when your friend is around without asking your friend what they want you to do. But, when your friend isn't around, you don't correct other people.
- You see the world as a fair place and see acts of discrimination as individual events instead of part of a larger system.
- You don't recognize the privileges that being cisgender gives you.

Fighting Transphobia for Altruism

- You are more aware of the privileges that being cisgender gives you and try to fight transphobia because of guilt, which you may not be aware of.
- You see transphobic cisgender people as the problem and try to prove that you are "one of the good ones."
- If someone tells you you have done or said something transphobic, you get very defensive.
- You do what you think is best to support trans people instead of asking trans people what they need and how you can support them.
- You seek praise from trans people that you are doing the right thing.

Fighting Transphobia for Social Justice

- The goal of social justice is for money, power, and opportunity to be distributed fairly to everyone. This doesn't mean that everyone gets the same thing. It means that everyone gets what they need to live a good life the way they define it and we work to get rid of things (ideas, beliefs, institutions, laws, rules) that stand in the way of this goal.
- You see that everyone, including cisgender people, is hurt by systemic transphobia, while centering trans people in fighting to change this. Because of this, fighting transphobia is something you do for your own humanity, not just other people.
 - Systemic transphobia is the idea that transphobia happens not just between people or within people but through the way power is distributed in our society. Most systems have transphobia built into them. This includes but isn't limited to the economic system, the medical system, the justice system, the education system, the welfare system, and the immigration system.
- You recognize that while oppression takes different forms, oppression is connected. You work to center people who experience more than one kind of oppression by listening to them, supporting them, and using your power in ways that they tell you are useful.
- You make opportunities for others, especially trans people, to critique the ways in which you fight transphobia so you can continue to learn.

Adapted from Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development. *NASPA Journal* 43 (4), 39-60.