

CPCS Honors Transgender Day of Visibility

CPCS embraces and celebrates our colleagues who are members across the broad range of queer identities, including people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ). Today, we reflect on people who are members of the transgender community by paying respect on Transgender Day of Visibility, which is recognized each March 31st.

For quick reference, a transgender person has a gender identity that differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Please note also that the word “Queer,” historically used as a pejorative term to deride LGBTQ people, has been adopted across the LGBTQ community in a more positive spirit, not as a synonym for gay, but as a critical and political identity that challenges normative ideas about sexuality and gender. This note will hopefully help us to be more aware and better appreciative of the need for understanding and more respectful relationships with all colleagues, clients, and members of the public. While queer communities are complex and multifaceted, as an agency that represents all people with legal challenges amidst conditions relating to poverty, we must understand the evolving concepts of gender and relationships.

This year, CPCS has a profound reason to embrace and celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility, the nomination of our former colleague, Connor Barusch to become an Associate Justice of the Boston Municipal Court. Judge Barusch brings a wealth of experience and commitment from lifting his community, along with the depth of legal knowledge and practical experience that distinguished his career within CPCS. We are fortunate to have Judge Barusch, with the depth of awareness, empathy, and faith in our justice system he brings to serve in a critical capacity of impact and support to our public defense endeavors, including our fight for due process and fairness to the people we represent before our courts.

For further information here are a few links provided by our queer colleagues and through my own study for guidance on how we can better treat each other, our clients, and the public with respect:

Dos and Don'ts for Supporting Trans Co-Workers

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d6ec9330e63b000010139bb/t/67363c5dd9abe37af13ae8cf/1731607646049/Dos+and+Don%E2%80%99ts+for+Support+Trans+Co-Workers.pdf>

12 Things People Get Wrong About Being Nonbinary

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/9-things-people-get-wrong-about-being-non-binary>

Our colleagues have also shared a couple of links for allies:

Be an Ally - Support Trans Equality - <https://www.hrc.org/resources/be-an-ally-support-trans-equality>

Tips for Allies of Transgender People - <https://glaad.org/transgender/allies/>

Also attached is a link from the Human Rights Campaign in honor of Transgender Day of Visibility, including a series of videos relating stories of achievement and challenge among transgender people, featuring the first transgender student body president at Howard University, a person supporting their community through government service, a discussion on living amidst the repressive legislation and attitudes and a reflection on parenting a trans child. <https://www.hrc.org/campaigns/international-transgender-day-of-visibility>

Diversity across gender identity and sexual orientation is real and of essential meaning to people, especially where the experience of being shunned, discriminated against, or being physically or mentally assaulted continues through today. Queer people, who also have identities based on race, national origin, disability, and other protected categories under the law, have every right to feel slighted, ignored, or insulted when they are treated differently because of their sexuality or gender identity, and especially within this challenging time of vilification on a national scale.

Please remember that few answer the call to provide the zealous advocacy our clients deserve. Our queer colleagues are leading and serving in our commitment to zealous advocacy that reflects the legacy of Gideon in our mission, values, and fight for justice and equity. Many thanks to Craig Gimbrone, Training AA III, who convenes our Queer Defenders and Unconventionally Gendered Humans affinity groups and coordinates activities to bring the members of this community together, for their tireless help in our agency and in support of their community.