



MODULES

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We make a binding commitment to recognize, include, and support trans, intersex, and non-binary athletes.

What does recognition have to do with trans, intersex, and non-binary (TIN) participation in sports?

1. An organization's willingness to show recognition and acceptance is a basic prerequisite for TIN participation.

Ola has been boxing for many years. She is trans, identifies as a woman, and is looking for a new boxing club. At her old club, she came out as trans and had problems there ever since. She had been training with the men, but she wanted to switch to the women's group. Her old club would not allow her to switch groups until she legally changed her name and gender marker. She has now been waiting for over a year for these changes to be made. On top of that, she doesn't feel comfortable at a club that does not recognize her self-determined gender identity.

TIN people must repeatedly qualify and “prove” their own gender to other people in many areas of their lives. This can be very tedious and stressful. The gender marker in a person's official records may not always match the person's gender identity, or what that person knows about their gender and experiences as their true identity. By showing a willingness to recognize and accept TIN people, sports organizations can set a positive example and significantly improve the lives of these individuals.



Demonstrating a willingness to recognize TIN people

Show your willingness to be open to TIN people and accept individual gender identities:

You can do this by using gender-inclusive language in your public communications and directly addressing TIN people as a target audience. Another way to show recognition is to make it your aim to fight discrimination; then publicly announce your goal and document your progress.

Allow TIN people to join the “right” team: A person’s gender is the gender with which they personally identify. There is one simple rule: A trans woman is a woman, a trans man is a man, and a non-binary person is non-binary. Within an organization, every person should be able to practice with the team of their choice. Depending on the type of club or sport, competitions may be subject to different rules governing who can compete in which category (men, women, mixed). There are generally no set rules governing the participation of TIN people. That also means that small commitments on your part can make a big difference.

Discrimination is defined by the person experiencing it: When a diverse group of people get together, it is almost a given that discrimination – albeit mostly unintentional – will occur. In addition to making an ongoing commitment to reflecting on our own prejudice, it is important to create an environment in which hurt caused by discrimination is taken seriously. It can be helpful to have dedicated contact persons available to handle such cases. You may also wish to hold training sessions or develop concrete strategies for handling experiences of discrimination within a team or an association.

2. An accepting attitude makes it easier for TIN people to come out

Ola hat die Homepage eines Vereins gefunden, der mit Gender-Sternchen gendert. Beim weiteren Durchstöbern der Webpage sieht sie, dass die Mitgliederversammlung eine Selbstverpflichtung verabschiedet hat, dass sich der Verein gegen Diskriminierung einsetzen möchte. Das macht Ola Hoffnung, dass sie bei diesem Verein mehr Anerkennung erfährt. Sie vereinbart einen Termin zum Probetraining. Sie fragt die Trainerin vorab, ob es möglich sei, dass sie sich 10 Minuten vor Trainingsbeginn alleine mit ihr unterhält. Es freut Ola, dass die Boxtrainerin dem zustimmt. Ola möchte sich nämlich zunächst bei ihr outen und schauen, wie sie darauf reagiert.

TIN people frequently find themselves in situations in which they have to come out or correct false assumptions about their gender. Clubs and teams that show an openness to recognizing TIN people may encourage them to speak openly about their own TIN issues. At the same time, no TIN person is obligated to out themselves; people who do not wish to do so have good reasons that must be respected.



Showing acceptance when a TIN person comes out

Thank that person for their openness: Many TIN people have experienced hurtful responses when they came out in the past; for example, they may have been asked invasive questions. For that reason, it can be challenging for them to share their gender identity openly. When someone comes out, a good first response might be: “Thank you for sharing that with me.”

Offer support if necessary: Sometimes a person comes out in order to make a request or because they have a particular goal in mind. In this example, Ola comes out so that she can be allowed to train on the women’s team. Help the person out if you can. But be honest if you are feeling uncertain. If you find yourself in a situation in which you feel like you might benefit from learning more about gender diversity, turn to one of the many available resources for more information.

Offer support if possible: Sometimes someone comes out because they do not appreciate the fact that so many other people make false assumptions about them or because they need someone else to talk to about it. In such cases, you can ask the person what they need from you or how you can support them. It can also be helpful to refer them to a professional organization, such as a local TIN counseling center.

3. Allowing TIN people to have a voice in your organization without forcing them to take responsibility for “TIN issues”

Ola has gotten off to a good start in her new boxing club. One of the board members asks her whether she would be willing to volunteer to create an anti-discrimination policy because Ola “knows so much about what TIN people need.”

TIN people are frequently asked to take on the responsibility of making existing structures more TIN-inclusive. Some TIN people enjoy doing this, while others do not or do not have the time to volunteer for such tasks. It can also be stressful for TIN people to take on the responsibility of dismantling discriminatory systems on their own.



“Nothing about us without us”: This means that it is important to ask TIN people whether they would like to be included in discussions on topics that are relevant to them. Here, the emphasis lies on whether they would “like to” be involved. The opposite would be forcing them to take responsibility for making changes in the organization to increase participation by TIN people.

“If you know a TIN person, you know exactly one TIN person”: TIN people can have very different lives and experiences depending on whether they are trans, intersex, or non-binary and whether they experience discrimination or privilege based on other factors in their lives. So, a TIN person is never in a position to speak for all TIN people.



Questions for consideration

- What arguments have you heard for why a TIN person should not be allowed to play on the team that matches their gender? How can you debunk such arguments?
- How can your organization publicly show its openness to recognizing gender self-identification?
- What support offerings, associations, or counseling services for TIN people are available in your area or online?

