

## **Trans in the Wild Podcast Transcription -- TRUTH Podcast Library**

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### Transcript

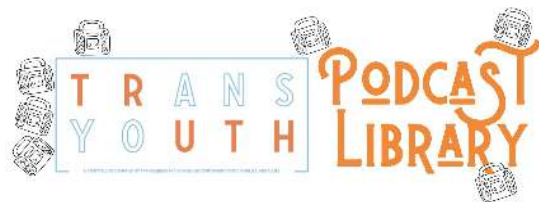
**M** [00:00] Hi y'all, my name is M, my pronouns are they/them/theirs, I'm from California, and welcome to the first episode of Trans in the Wild, where we'll be spelling out what it's like to be a trans person in society today. We want to note that all experiences differ for every person, and all of these experiences discussed on this podcast are unique to the folks speaking, and not to be applied to other trans folks you may know, or generalize the community as a whole. Trigger warning for discussions of genitals, medical procedures, bullying, slurs, suicide, self-harm, and general transphobia. Captions will be in the description below. Let's begin.

**Ella** [00:35] Thank you to Audrey from New Hampshire for doing our sound for this. My name is Ella, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm from Utah. Let's just make sure we're all on the same page, what does it mean to be trans or transgender? First of all, we need to remember that trans women are real women, and trans men are real men. Sometimes there's this misconception that being trans is a completely separate gender, or that binary-identified trans people don't have a place in the gender binary. This, of course, is not correct. I'm as much of a woman as a cis woman is, and trans men are as much men as cis men are.

**Willow** [1:08] Hi, my name is Willow, my pronouns are she/her, and I'm from Arkansas. It's pretty plain and simple. When we're born, a doctor looks at our bodies or our genitals and slaps a letter onto our birth certificates underneath the "sex" category. This is also referred to as our assigned gender at birth. We're then expected to live our lives inside that trivial box that we call gender, but we need to remember that sex does not equate to gender. Sex is also a construct, as well as gender is.

**M** [1:36] Right. When we say trans or transgender, what identities are we talking about?

**Willow** [1:40] So while gender is vast, trans identities typically fall into two subgroups: binary and nonbinary. And within the binary are trans men and transmasculine people, and trans women or like transfeminine people. The nonbinary and gender nonconforming spectrum encapsulates genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and sometimes even transfem and transmasc folks, depending on how they identify.



**M** [2:08] So, when we're talking about this binary, we're talking about the societal belief that gender can only exist in two facets: male and female, or masculine and feminine. There's not a lot of wiggle room at all, or ever, for the in-between or not at all. That's where the idea of being nonbinary or gender nonconforming really comes into play. Nonbinary identities, non-Western genders, and gender nonconforming people have existed forever. The gender binary in and of itself is a colonial concept. It encapsulates cultural myths, such as the nuclear family and virginity. It places pressure. The binary was created to oppress women and femmes, and trap men and masculine people in this insatiable need to be the breadwinner and the strong gender. The shackles of gender can be and should be broken, and this is just how we do it.

**Willow** [2:50] I think before we get started, we should also go around and just kind of talk about our gender in terms of how we identify. M, do you wanna go first, honey?

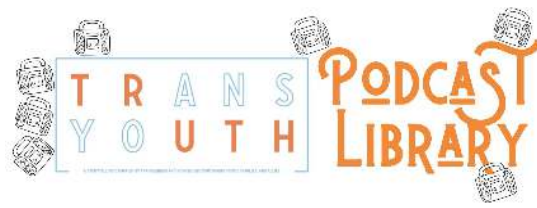
**M** [3:00] Sure! So, I identify as nonbinary, I definitely cling a little bit more toward agender just because I don't necessarily feel like a mixture of both. I feel like my gender expression is just completely different from femininity or masculinity. I do get, you know, depending on the space that I am in, I get clocked as more feminine or more masculine and usually I'm placed in these binary boxes. But I definitely love messing with my gender, messing with my presentation, kind of just making people question. Ella?

**Ella** [3:35] Hi, I'm Ella, I use she/her pronouns, um, I'm a queer trans woman. Willow, what about you?

**Willow** [3:42] Okay so I identify as a trans woman and for me, my gender is very binary and I tend to be pretty hyperfeminine. But I know for a lot of trans women, you know, that's not the reality of their gender. And that's okay. So I know a lot of times we normalize hyperfemininity, and extreme womanhood, when it comes to trans women. But for a lot of trans women, that isn't the reality. And you know, some trans women can also identify with masculinity or um, can also be masc. And we don't talk about that enough.

**M** [4:14] And we want to remember these distinctions differ based on the person. What part do pronouns play in expressing our gender?

**Ella** [4:22] Pronouns are essential to how we communicate our gender to ourselves, and to other people. It's always a good idea to ask someone's pronouns, rather than just assuming. We'll get more into that in allyship later, though.



**M** [4:32] Great, thanks for the clarification. Now that we have kind of a sense of the basics, let's move on to what it's really like to be Trans in the Wild. Let's start with school. What is or was school like for you, Willow?

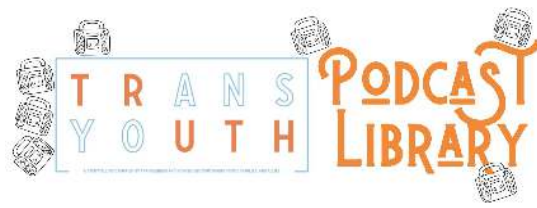
**Willow** [4:46] I grew up in rural Arkansas, where I was told from a very young age that my femininity was bad, or something to be ashamed of. I live in a pretty big city now, but when I lived in other rural towns, I never really had a positive experience with how people reacted to my identities or me. I actually left a school because of how toxic the environment was. I was misgendered and deadnamed by teachers in front of other students, and my principals would misgender me as well. Um, I didn't have a lot of support and being in that environment led to me being very depressed and I actually ended up self-harming and attempted suicide. It's still very hard to talk about sometimes, and it was a very traumatic point in my life. Um, I really just wanted a space where I could be myself and be authentic. What about you, M?

**M** [5:36] High school was rough. Although I went to a relatively liberal arts school, being gay was much more palatable and acceptable than being trans. I actually didn't come out as nonbinary until I left. Ella?

**Ella** [5:51] School was overall a pretty positive experience for me. Um, after I came out. So I came out and started transitioning during the summer before my senior year, and I also switched high schools at that point. So that gave me a lot of anxiety, and I was taking 5 AP classes, so that was pretty stressful. I expected to get some hate because a lot of my peers are LDS, or Mormon, because I'm in Utah, but it actually wasn't that bad. I found a group of friends that supported me, and teachers that were on my side, then I formed a GSA club at my school for other students like me. I did get misgendered sometimes, and I still do, but it wasn't that bad. Definitely worth it!

**M** [6:28] Yeah, the pressure can be a really hard thing to deal with while trying to stay engaged in the classroom, especially when no one's on your side to advocate for you. What about for those who are working? What has that been like?

**Willow** [6:39] For me at least, my coworkers have been somewhat supportive, but I've also had very negative experiences, where coworkers will out me and misgender me to other people. I've also had super supportive coworkers as well though, and some of them are really good friends of mine and one of my managers is amazing and very supportive. I think the worst part is how customers have treated me, to be honest. Um, there was one instance where we had a church group come in, and the leader misgendered me, called me "sir," and threw napkins across the



counter at me. I should also say that I work fast food, so, um, that was a lot [laughs] and it definitely is very hard to feel comfortable in a place where that happens.

**M** [7:30] Yeah, that's always really difficult to deal with. With that being said, I think we should talk about how to lessen these painful occurrences. Let's move on to allyship. Allies are people who hold some sort of privilege who actively advocate for marginalized and oppressed people. Ally is a verb, not an adjective. What are some things allies should know?

**Willow** [7:49] Okay so I think a good rule of thumb is "never assume." So don't insert yourself or your own opinions or narratives into someone else's story. Um, and part of not assuming is also breaking down how we view gender and um you know from a physical aspect, and just personality-wise.

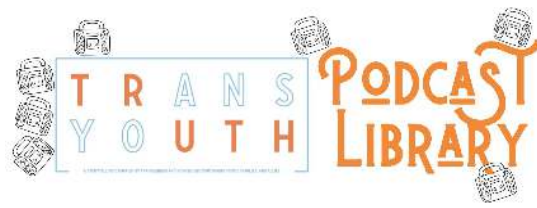
**M** [8:10] Another thing we need to really think about is pronoun use. We need to, as allies, be able to ask pronouns, be able to take those pronouns, and to be able to, even if you mess up, use those pronouns correctly. It's crucial when it comes to trans people to be using these pronouns because they're a way to communicate and they're a way to affirm.

**Ella** [8:32] Also, we should remember that less is more when we're talking about pronouns and being an ally. So don't make it all about yourself. Be respectful. If you mess up on someone's pronouns, just own your mistakes, move along. Like, if you say "he--Oh sorry, she," that's perfect, don't go on and dwell on it. That just makes it awkward for everyone. Just own your mistakes, move on. Keep it pushing.

**M** [8:57] So, we're going to move on to some don'ts. For example, don't ask about deadnames. Don't ask, what was your birth name? Don't ask what gender this person was assigned at birth. Don't ask things that you would not ask another cis person.

**Ella** [9:11] On that train, don't ask about what surgeries we've had, what medical procedures we've had, any of those details about transition. That's like, really personal, so we don't really want to share that with you? [laughs] Can I say that?

**M** [9:26] Yeah! And not everyone is gonna be going through these medical procedures, and not everyone wants to talk about it. If someone will tell you about that, that is their thing to say. But don't ask outright, especially if you just met the person. If they tell you on their own volition, that's their own thing, but don't be invasive.

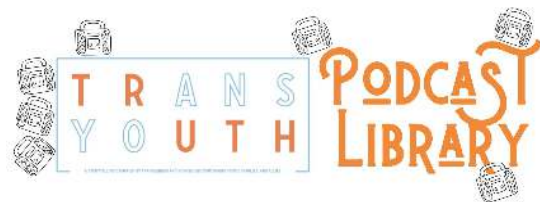


**Ella** [9:43] And having these procedures doesn't define our identities. A lot of trans people don't choose to have these procedures, but that doesn't invalidate that they're trans.

**M** [9:52] Yeah. Validity is not based off of physical...anything.

**Willow** [9:57] On that note, I think we'll always share what we want to share, and if we don't feel comfortable sharing some information, don't push it. Also, I think another important thing is to question your intent when you are in spaces where you're being an ally to a marginalized group of people. If you're just in a space to be around trans and queer people for "brownie points," um, that's not the right intent you need to have and it's not a space you should be in either. When we're outed, a lot of the time, it's unintentional but it happens with little things, like being overly supportive and especially a lot of times cis people want to talk to trans women like "You go, girl! Yaaaaas! Awesome, you're doing amazing sis!" And just like, overdoing it. And that can out us a lot of the time. And also um, I know when we were talking about pronouns earlier, if there's of cis people around and no one else is asking pronouns, maybe do that in private because you could be outing that person in the process.

**M** [11:07] Now that we've kind of gone over vocabulary, we know the terms, we understand it, and now we have the tools to become better allies, now is the time to mobilize. Now is the time to reach out to trans people. It's time to step up. If you hear someone get misgendered and the person is okay with you correcting, you correct them. Use your privilege for good. Utilize your privilege to rise with the people, put them up, listen to them. Utilize your privilege to lift up other identities, not just speaking over them or speaking for them but giving them the space. If you see a marginalized person raising their hand, trying to speak, and no one is doing anything, use your privilege, raise your hand, and deflect the attention to that marginalized person. Be ready to call out your transphobic parents. Be ready to call out transphobic teachers. Be ready to call out these people and if you're within the community, learn how to call in but also don't take anything for granted and don't take anybody's shit. And with that being said, we really need to reevaluate the way we think about privilege and oppression. When we think about privilege and oppression, regardless of where we fall in the spectrum, privilege and oppression are both non consensual power dynamics pushed upon us when we enter society. And with that being said, carrying that burden regardless of where we fall, we need to, at least in the privilege point, use that allyship and use that burden and really take advantage of the privilege and use it for good. And make a more equitable society for everyone, including marginalized people. And for trans people and our allies alike, you know we have the Transgender Law Center. We have the ACLU. If you are still in a school, reach out to GSA Network and be sure to follow us on various social



media networks @ourtranstruth. Thank you so much for listening to Trans in the Wild, and make sure to advocate for marginalized people! Trans out!

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