

# Trans at the TUD

Improving transgender acceptance at Delft University of Technology

*A Virtual Reality (VR) that informs, immerses, and improves the cisgender user to become more inclusive towards transgender peers.*

By showing the user uncomfortable scenarios from the perspective of transgender and non-binary people they become more aware of how their behaviour, and that of their peers, may come across. With hands-on tips, the cisgender user is motivated to go beyond their phase of acceptance into the role of being an active ally. In doing so, these allies not only improve their own behaviour but become spokespersons for the trans community within Delft University of Technology, affecting others in the process.

## Research

The design was created based on research with 5 transgender people from the TUD. The conducted interviews lead to the 6 insights below:

1. Visibility is important but willingness varies
2. Faulty assumptions are hard to change
3. Knowledge on trans issues is insufficient
4. Willingness to explain is decreasing
5. Relationship duration and closeness impact the openness of transgender people
6. Concepts around transgender people confuse cisgender people

## Personas

To present these insights in a human-centred manner, 8 personas were created: 4 transgender and 4 cisgender. These personas are based on quotes by the trans participants.

The transgender personas each present a different level of visibility. The cisgender personas all show a different level of inclusiveness.



### Michael They/he

Level of openness about being queer



**Experimenter**  
Michael looks for safe spaces to experiment, whether this is at Outsite or the university. They rather make their own project groups to be with people they feel comfortable around.

## Quotes

*Sometimes you feel like wearing one sweater, and sometimes you're like, "Now, I really feel like wearing these brightly coloured t-shirts." Sometimes, you don't feel like wearing any colours at all, it's like that. Sometimes, I feel a bit more comfortable in my body, and then I don't mind wearing clothes that show a bit of my chest. In fact, I enjoy seeing the slight confusion it may cause.*

## Experiences

*What I really appreciate is when, let's say, we're in a circle and everyone is introducing themselves, and immediately, a cis person brings up their pronouns. It makes me feel like I don't have to come out of the closet in a big way. It's like, I can also share my pronouns without having to stand up and say, "Hey, guys, could you please use 'they' for me?" Because then it feels like I'm begging them not to misgender me, while if they start with it, it feels less like I'm asking for something big from them. Many people still perceive it as something difficult and an effort they have to make for me.*



## Step 1: Inform yourself

The first part of the VR experience is about educating the viewer. Without the proper knowledge, they might miss what the following scenario is about. The video explains core concepts such as cis- and transgender, gender identity and expression, pronouns and the process of transitioning.

## Step 2: Immerse yourself

In the second step, people step out of their bodies and into the perspective of a transgender person. The scenarios show different uncomfortable experiences and give a frame for the user to reflect on. The experiences offer 6 different scenarios: *Gender-neutral bathrooms, Pronouns, Visibility, Offensive jokes, Faulty assumptions and Taking queer peers seriously*

## Step 3: Improve yourself

To help the user take the first steps towards improving themselves they need to know what to do. In the final step, they are given tips and tricks relating to pronoun use and inclusive language. They are told it's okay to make mistakes if you don't mean harm and to help each other by correcting mistakes. Finally, the user is given some useful research to further expand their knowledge.

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