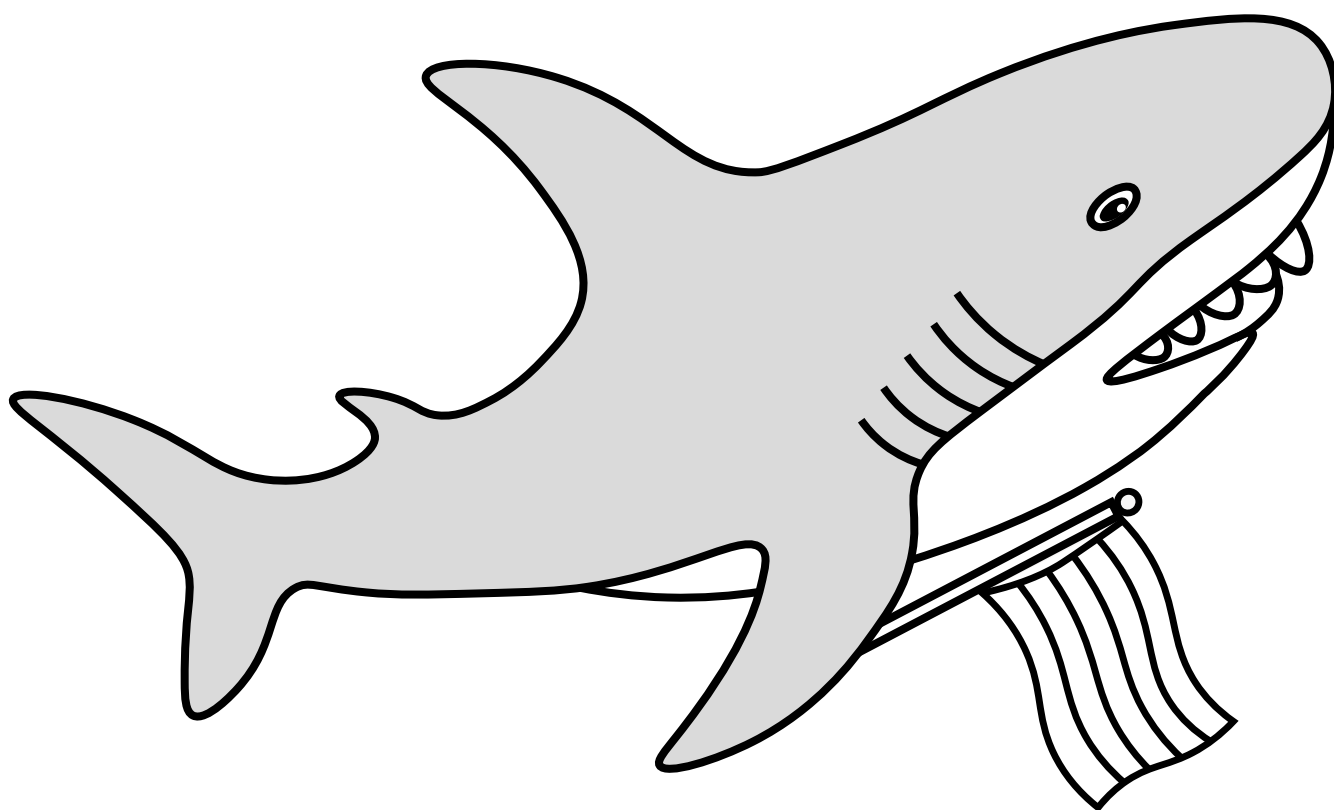


BLÅHAJ

Empathy manual



In collaboration with



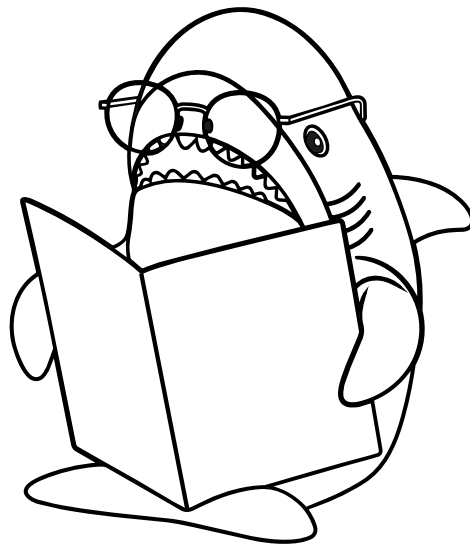
For years, the trans community has embraced **BLÅHAJ** as a symbol of refuge and belonging. A plushie that, besides being huggable, stands for the struggle, companionship and resilience of the community.

Does a plushie need an instruction manual? Maybe not, but this one was born out of gratitude for all the love BLÅHAJ has received over the years.

What you'll find here aren't assembly instructions. On the contrary, in this manual you'll discover small keys for taking prejudice apart, making everything fit together more easily so that people can feel seen, respected and welcome.

Because empathy shouldn't need a manual, but sometimes it helps to have one.

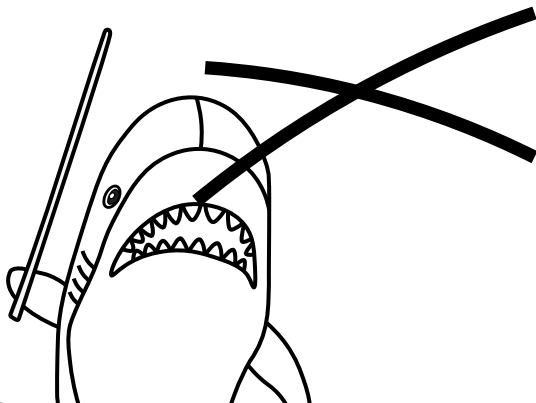
Empathy manual



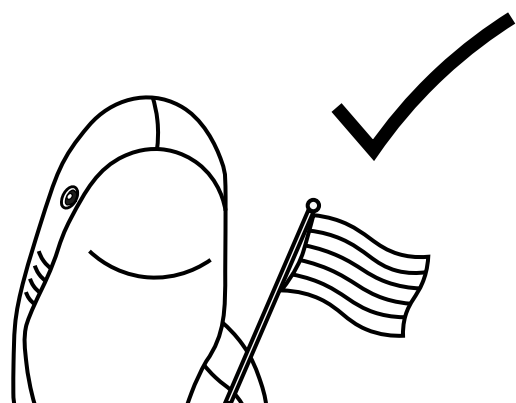
1. Gender isn't a guessing game

When we're unsure about someone's gender, we can't assume it from the name on their ID, their tone of voice or their appearance. What's the safe way to get it right? By letting each person introduce themselves and decide how they want to be treated.

"Good morning, miss..."



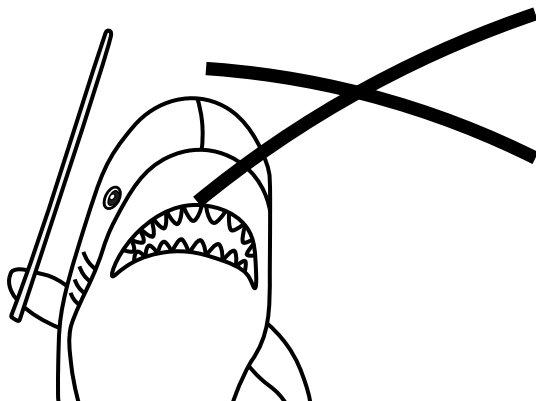
***"Good morning,
what's your name?"***



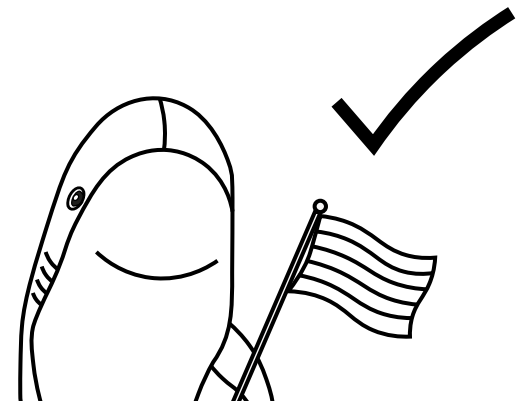
2. We ask the name and embrace it

When someone introduces themselves with a name, that is their name. We don't question it or ask for their "real name". If we need to confirm information, we do it sensitively, focusing only on the details that are needed.

***"Raúl? Is that your
real name?"***

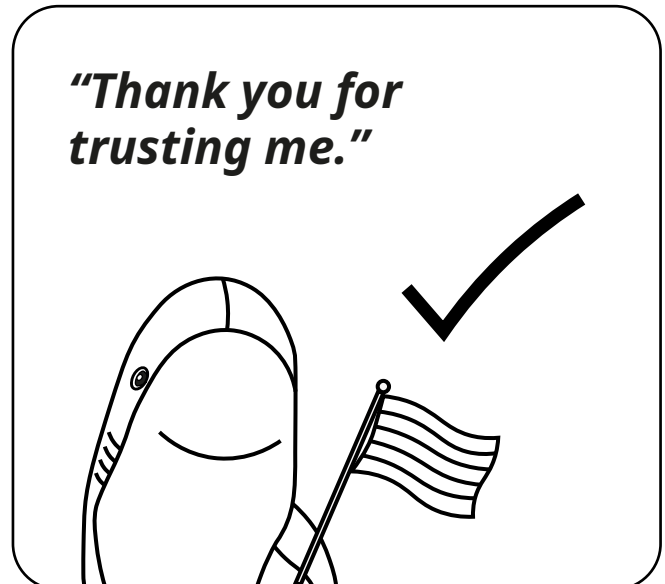
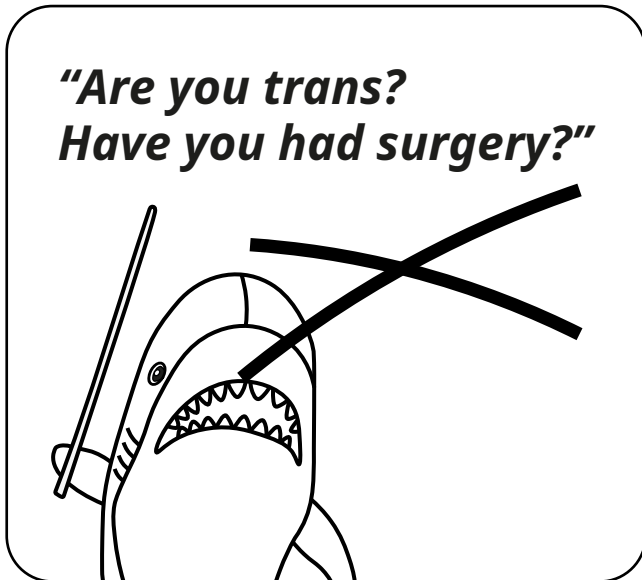


***"Hi, Raúl.
Nice to meet you"***



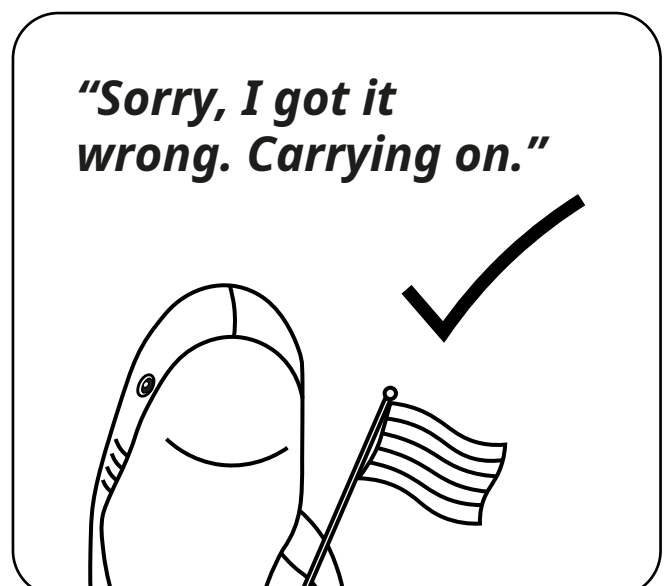
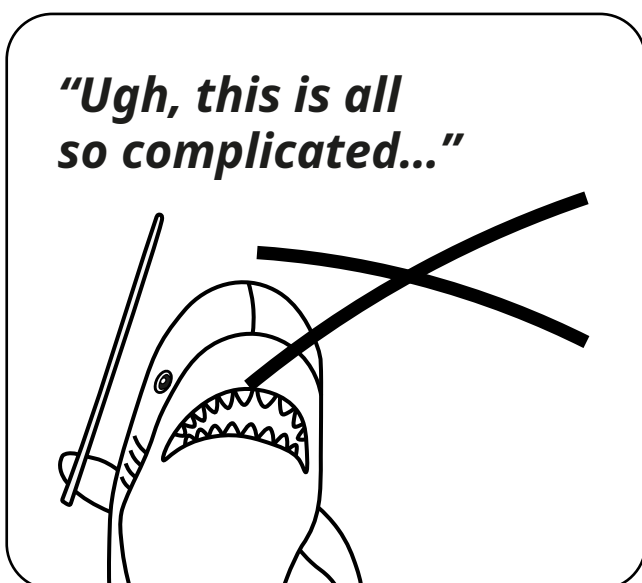
3. We listen but we don't judge

If a trans person shares information about their body, their treatments or their private life, we listen. If they choose not to, we respect that. Empathy is about being present without demanding explanations.



4. The power of an apology

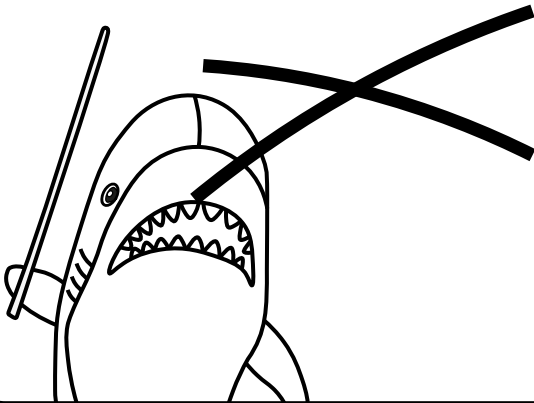
We can make mistakes with a name or a pronoun. What's the best solution? Acknowledge the slip, correct it and carry on naturally, without making the mistake the centre of the conversation. A sincere apology shows respect and a willingness to learn.



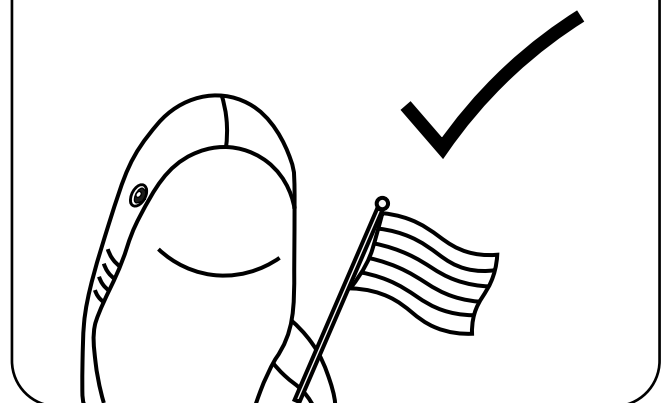
5. The language of respect

The words we use can make a person feel included or excluded. Adapting our language and using the right pronouns shows attention and our will to create a respectful environment for everyone.

"Is she sure about the schedule?"



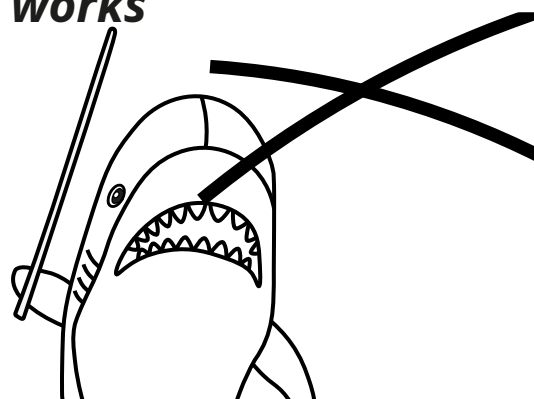
"Is the schedule correct?"



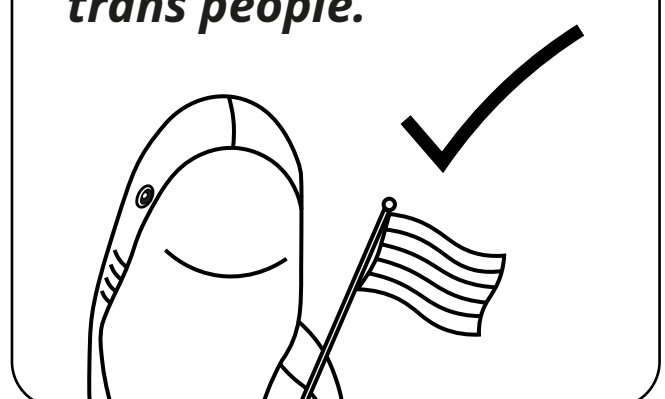
6. Labels are for furniture

Good coexistence comes from relating to each other without stereotypes or intrusive questions. To relate respectfully, we have to leave prejudice aside and avoid awkward or unnecessary comments.

"But explain exactly how your process works"



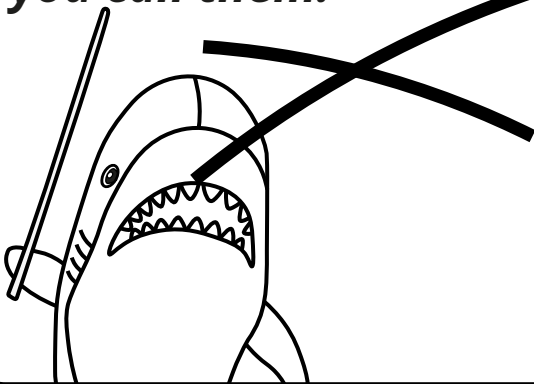
We don't assume stereotypes about trans people.



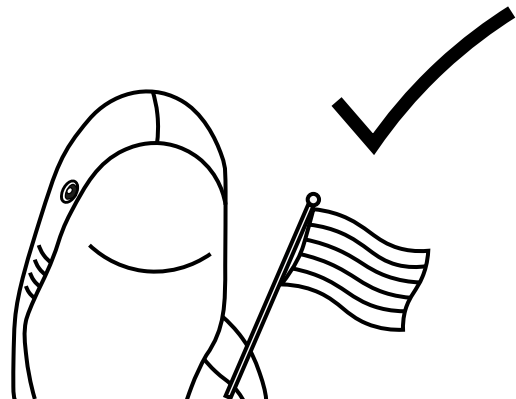
7. Respect isn't optional

We don't use the correct name and pronouns only in front of the person, but also when they're not there. Also when you talk with other people. Also once the interaction is over. We always keep respect and never reveal someone's identity without their consent.

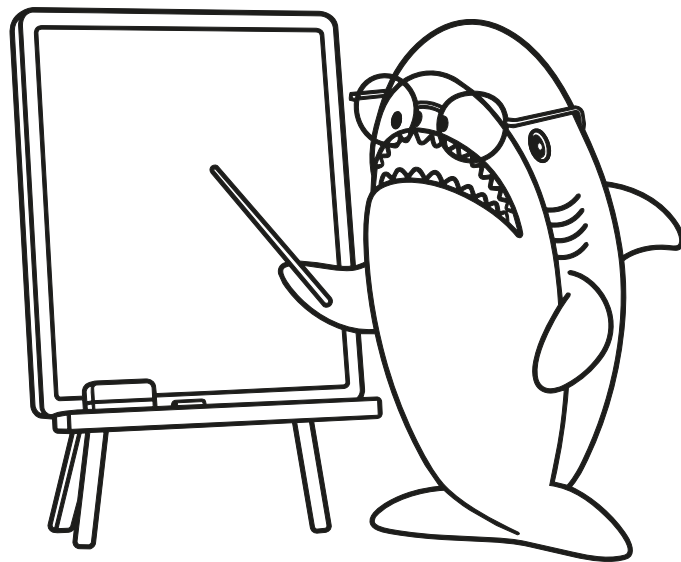
***When they're not there,
it doesn't matter what
you call them.***



***"María is a lovely
girl."***



What to do if...



Someone makes their sexual orientation or gender identity visible:

When a person is sharing something intimate in a setting that may not feel entirely safe:

- We receive it naturally, with no exaggerated gestures or changes in body language.
- We listen and validate. More than “information”, it's an act of trust.
- We make sure to ask what they need and how we can help.

Someone makes a hateful comment:

Are we witnessing an LGBTI-phobic comment?

We attend to the affected person first, asking what they need and without playing down what happened.

Can we identify who said it?

We speak with that person in private, avoiding an accusatory tone, explaining why it's wrong and the impact it has had. Always without the affected person present.

Is it an assault or a threat?

We contact the authorities and gather as much information as possible. If it happens in a workplace, we report it to HR or use the channels set up to report these situations.

This Empathy manual was created together with the Federación Estatal LGTBI+ (the Spanish State LGBTI+ Federation) and carries the Yes We Trans seal.

It grows out of the real experiences of trans people, their everyday lives and everything they've learned along the way. Thanks to their voices, we now have a guide that doesn't speak about them, but from them.

BLÅHAJ is the first IKEA plushie that needs an instruction manual. Not for learning how to assemble it, but for learning how to be there for the people who take it home and to help them feel, precisely, at home.

Because like any good shark, BLÅHAJ knows that sometimes the sea isn't calm, and that what matters isn't swimming alone, but having company when you need it most.

Translated with love by Nanka.

This English version is an independent, unofficial translation from the original Spanish. It was not made by IKEA, nor commissioned or endorsed by them — it exists only to help this kind message reach more people.

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