

What does the word “transgender” mean?

Transgender – or trans – is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression is different from those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g., the sex listed on their birth certificate). Conversely, cisgender – or cis – is the term used to describe people whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

What’s the difference between sex and gender?

Sex refers to the designation of a person at birth as either "male" or "female" based on their anatomy (e.g. reproductive organs) and/or their biology (e.g. hormones). Gender refers to the traditional or stereotypical roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society consider appropriate for men and women.

What does it mean to transition?

Transitioning is the time period during which a person begins to live according to their gender identity, rather than the gender they were thought to be at birth. While not all transgender people transition, a great many do at some point in their lives. Gender transition may include changing appearance, name, identification documents, hormone therapy and/or surgery.

What do the initials FTM and MTF stand for?

FTM stands for female-to-male and refers to someone who was designated female at birth but identifies and expresses himself as a man. Many FTM transgender people prefer the term "trans man" to describe themselves. MTF stands for male-to-female and refers to someone who was designated male at birth but who identifies and expresses herself as a woman. Many MTF transgender people prefer the term "trans woman" to describe themselves.

What is gender non-conforming?

A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

What’s the difference between being transgender and being gay?

Being transgender is about an individual’s gender identity, while being gay is about an individual’s sexual orientation, which is our attraction to people of the same gender, different genders or both. Gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things.

Is there a difference between cross-dressing and being transgender?

Yes, cross-dressing refers to people who wear clothing and/or makeup and accessories that are not traditionally associated with their biological sex. Many people who cross-dress are comfortable with their assigned sex and generally do not wish to change it. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression that is not necessarily indicative of a person's gender identity or sexual orientation.

Is being transgender a mental disorder?

No. Transgender identity is not a mental illness that can be cured with treatment. Rather, transgender people often experience a persistent and authentic disconnect between the sex assigned to them at birth and their internal sense of who they are. This disconnect is referred to by medical professionals as "gender dysphoria" because it can cause undue pain and distress in the lives of transgender people.

What is gender dysphoria?

For some transgender people, the difference between the gender they are thought to be at birth and the gender they know themselves to be can lead to serious emotional distress that affects their health and everyday lives if not addressed. Gender dysphoria is the medical diagnosis for someone who experiences this distress.

How do I know which pronouns to use?

Transgender people should be identified with their preferred pronoun. Often this is the pronoun that corresponds to the gender with which they identify. Not sure? It's appropriate to respectfully ask their name and which pronouns they'd prefer.

Can someone be fired for being transgender?

In 31 states there is no state law protecting transgender people from being fired for being who they are. Only 19 states (CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, IA, MA, ME, MD, MN, NH, NJ, NM, NV, OR, RI, VT and WA) and D.C. currently prohibit discrimination based on gender identity.

In the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 47 percent of respondents reported experiencing a negative job outcome – such as being fired, not hired or denied promotion – because they were transgender or gender non-conforming.