

STATE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

Identity Documents

National Center for Transgender Equality transequality.org
Human Rights Campaign hrc.org

Legal Support

National Center for Lesbian Rights nclr.org
Sylvia River Law Project srlp.org
Lambda Legal lambdalegal.org

Health

Gay Lesbian Medical Association glma.org
Fenway Community Health fenwayhealth.org
World Professional Association for Transgender Health
wpath.org
The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health
transhealth.ucsf.edu

Religion

TransFaith Online transfaithonline.org

Political Advocacy

National Center for Transgender Equality transequality.org
Equality North Carolina equalitync.org
Human Rights Campaign hrc.org
National LGBTQ Task Force thetaskforce.org
Freedom Center for Social Justice fcsj.org

Education

Trans Student Educational Resources transstudent.org

For local resources, contact your nearest LGBTQ Center.



Center Hours

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 am - 8:00 pm

Address

SASB South, Suite 3308
385 Manning Drive
CB #5215, Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Contact

V - 919-843-5376
T - 711 (NC RELAY)
lgbtq@unc.edu

BEYOND THE

GENDER BINARY

Concepts and Resources For
Understanding Gender Diversity

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Sometimes people conflate sex, sexual identity, and gender expression. However, these are distinct concepts. In order to be an effective ally, it is important to understand the differences between these terms.

Assigned Sex at Birth

The assignment of someone as male, female, or intersex based on anatomical, chromosomal, and hormonal characteristics.

Sexual Orientation

Refers to who a person is open to being sexually intimate with.

Romantic Orientation

Refers to who a person is open to being romantic intimate with.

Gender Identity

The gender an individual identifies as psychologically, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.

Gender Expression

How someone expresses their gender through appearance, behavior, or mannerisms. A person's gender expression may or may not be analogous to their gender identity.

Gender Binary

A social classification that divides gender identity into the mutually exclusive categories of masculine and feminine with expected gender roles, gender expressions, and characteristics for each one. Many people do not identify within these two categories.

Definitions for the above concepts have been given to emphasize the distinctions among them. However, they are interrelated and not experienced in isolation.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Transgender is a broad term that refers to people who experience their gender identity or express their gender in ways that do not align with their assigned sex at birth.

Transgender-identified people may, but do not necessarily:

Choose to change their pronouns.

Choose to change their names and/or gender markers.

Choose to pursue hormone therapy, surgical intervention, or electrolysis to outwardly reflect their gender identity.

Engage in binding, packing, enhancing, or tucking to outwardly reflect their gender identity.

Conform to societal expectations about gender expression.

Remember, there are infinite ways to arrive at being transgender and of being transgender.

People who identify as transgender are extremely diverse, and one trans-identified person cannot speak for all possible transgender experiences.

People's intersecting identities related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, spirituality, socioeconomic status, and other social categories influence how they experience their transgender identities.

HOW TO BE SUPPORTIVE

The gender binary limits everyone. Challenge yourself and others when judgments about behaviors, actions, or appearances are made based on the gender binary.

Avoid making assumptions about gender identity based on someone's name or gender expression.

Refer to people by the pronoun they use. If you are not sure of the correct pronoun, ask them by saying someone like, "I want to be respectful; what gender pronouns do you use?" Some people use gender-neutral pronouns such as ze/hir, or they/them. Never use the word "it" when referring to someone, unless they have told you that is their pronoun.

Use the name that individuals choose for themselves. It is not appropriate to ask someone what their name used to be.

Gender identity is not dependent on whether someone pursues hormone therapy and/or surgeries. There is no single "sex change surgery;" rather, there are many possible gender-affirming medical procedures that people may or may not pursue.

Do not share someone's gender or medical information without permission. Telling others about one's gender identity is each individual's choice.

Educate yourself and others about the complexities of gender identity and expression, as well as the experiences of transgender people using publicly available, reputable resources.

Work to change policies in areas such as housing, employment, forms, and health care that are based on a binary perception of gender.

Advocate for the inclusion of "gender identity" and "gender expression" in non-discrimination policies.