



QUEER CAFÉ LGBTQ INFORMATION NETWORK

Transgender

Gender Identity

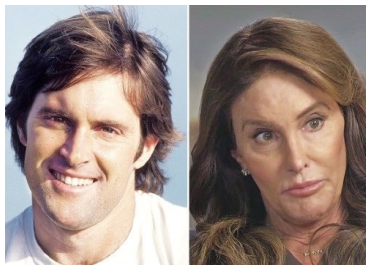
Gender identity is one's psychological understanding of self. It is defined in terms of roles, perceptions, and self concept. A person's gender identity can be described as the way in which he or she views him or herself. A person might be a man (boy) or a woman (girl). Or a person might be transgender, genderqueer, two-spirit, or third-gender.

Transgender Definition

Transgender people are people who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their assigned sex. Transgender people are sometimes called transsexual if they desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another. The term "transgender" can also be used an umbrella term to refer to people whose gender identity is the opposite of their assigned sex (trans men and trans women). It may include people who are not exclusively masculine or feminine (people who are genderqueer, bigender, pangender, genderfluid, agender). Other definitions of "transgender" also include people who belong to a third gender, or conceptualize transgender people as a third gender.

Being transgender is independent of sexual orientation.

Transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, or may consider conventional sexual orientation labels inadequate or inapplicable. The term transgender can also be distinguished from intersex, a term that describes people born with physical sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.



The degree to which individuals feel genuine, authentic, and comfortable within their external appearance and accept their genuine identity has been called *transgender congruence*. Many transgender people experience *gender dysphoria*, and some seek medical treatments such as hormone replacement therapy, sex reassignment surgery, or psychotherapy. Not all transgender people desire these treatments, and some cannot undergo them for financial or medical reasons.



Gender Dysphoria

Gender dysphoria, or gender identity disorder, is the distress, discontent, and discomfort (and possible impairment) a person experiences as a result of the sex and gender they were assigned at birth. In these cases, the assigned sex and gender do not match the person's gender identity, and the person is considered to be transgender.

According to Psychology Today, "gender dysphoria is defined by strong, persistent feelings of identification with the opposite gender and discomfort with one's own assigned sex that results in significant distress or impairment. For instance, a person identified as a boy may feel and act like a girl."

The American Psychiatric Association states that "gender nonconformity is not in itself a mental disorder. The critical element of gender dysphoria (or gender identity disorder) is the presence of clinically significant distress associated with the condition."

The main psychiatric approaches to treatment for persons diagnosed with gender dysphoria are psychotherapy, hormone replacement therapy, or sex reassignment surgery.