

What is gender identity?

Gender identity is how we see ourselves. Everyone has a gender identity and everyone expresses their gender identity. We all make choices about how we present ourselves and move through this world, and it is usually not a linear, clear cut choice. Some of us like to shave our heads but not our legs; some of us like to paint our nails and accentuate certain body parts to feel fierce. Some of us see ourselves as women, as men, as neither, as combinations of both. All of our genders are informed by the cultural context in which we were raised and currently exist. Our ideas about what is *acceptable* femininity and masculinity come from these rituals, roles, and relationships.

What the heck are pronouns?

Pronouns are words used to replace a noun or name like: me, she, herself, you, it, that, they, few, many, who, whoever. In English we usually learn to use gendered pronouns like she/him when we talk about people but some languages use only gender-neutral pronouns, and others have a gender for everything including inanimate objects!

In addition to he and she, there are pronouns that people use that are gender-neutral or do not imply association to any gender. The most common example of this is a singular they/them. Other examples are hir, Ze, Fae. Some people's pronouns may take some time getting used to, and that's okay! We learn new words all the time. The most important part of learning somebody's pronoun is respecting it and doing your best to get it right, and acknowledging and apologizing when you make a mistake.

Misgendering

To misgender somebody is to use a pronoun that is not correct. Because we learn in school to use she/he we sometimes just guess someone's gender based on our own perception, rather than asking. It may not seem like a big deal to you but getting someone's pronoun wrong can make someone feel uncomfortable, nervous, or unsafe. By using a wrong pronoun, you are also misrepresenting them to strangers, other friends, or family - this can put folks in physical and/or emotional danger. It's really important to always ask instead of assume with pronouns (but also with a whole bunch of other things)!

Is that what's up with your nametags?

Yeah! We have these nametags to start conversations about gender and identity, but also so folks know which pronouns we all use. We hope this helps!

Tips and tricks to practicing allyship

Practice not using gendered language when talking to people you are just meeting. There are many ways to be polite and nice without gendering people. Phrases like: "How're you doing today?"; "Did you have a good lunch with your partner?"; "How are you folks doing?" are examples of being friendly and not gendering somebody.

Make sure you are using the right pronoun with a new pal, old pal, co-worker, parent, and if you don't know, it's ok to ask.

Please don't ask intrusive questions about trans people's bodies, partners, or intimate life.

Start or continue learning about gender identity, pronouns, and other trans experiences through some of the amazing resources at the back of this pamphlet.

Continue taking transphobia seriously.

Vocabulary

Transgender: Someone whose gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary: Someone whose gender identity is neither male nor female, or a mix of both. Non-binary people face high levels of erasure, even in trans communities.

The Gender Binary: The belief that there are only two genders, male and female, and that they are opposite.

Gender Identity: How a person self-identifies their gender.

Gender Presentation: How someone expresses their gender.

Pronouns: Words used to refer to someone, like "she", "they", "he", etc.

Transphobia: An irrational fear/hatred/violence towards trans people based on their gender identity and/or expression.

Transmisogyny: Fear and/or violence towards trans women, trans femmes, and transfeminine non-binary people.

Cissexism: The dominant role of cisgender people, which creates the oppression and erasure of trans people. Cisgender privilege refers to the power and privilege held by cisgender people.

Resources

Transgender 101:

A Simple Guide To Complex Issue

Nicholas M. Teich

Columbia University Press, 2012

My New Gender Workbook

Kate Bornstein

Routledge, 2013

Trans Bodies, Trans Selves:

A Resource for the Transgender Community

Laura Erickson-Schroth

OUP USA, 2014

The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook:

A Guide to Gender

Sam Killerman

Impetus Books, 2013

decolonizing trans/gender 101

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biyuti publishing, 2014

Halifax Resources

South House Sexual & Gender Resource Centre

southhousehalifax.ca

The Youth Project

www.youthproject.ns.ca



Venus Envy is an education oriented sex shop and bookstore with stores in Ottawa and Halifax.

Our goal is to provide everyone with a respectful (and fun!) place where they can find toys and tools to explore gender and sexuality.

We believe that one of the best tools to enjoying a healthy and satisfying sex life is knowledge. To that end, we offer our pamphlets series as a way for people to access information even if you're too shy to ask one of us at the shop! You are welcome to download and print any of these pamphlets to share with lovers, friends, clients, or anyone else!

Our goal is to make sex positive and accurate information available to everybody. Our pamphlets offer an introduction to many facets of sex and sexual health and are always evolving. We recognize that language can be limiting and that people have a variety of ways of describing their bits. We've chosen to use medical terms for clarity, but understand that these terms don't work for everyone. We welcome any comments and suggestions that you may have.

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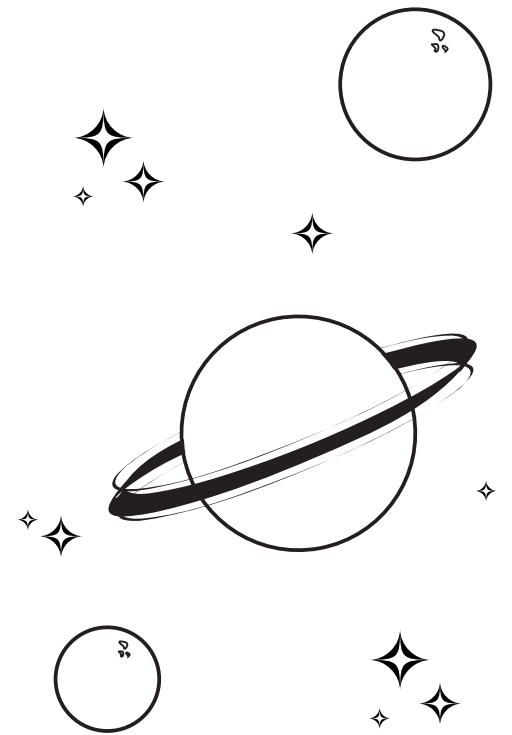
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Gender 101



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