

Transgender people

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Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Being transgender is independent of sexual orientation.

Sex assigned at birth, refers to one's biological status as either male or female, and is associated primarily with physical attributes such as chromosomes, hormone prevalence, and external and internal anatomy. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men or girls and women.

Transgender persons have been documented in many Western and Eastern cultures and societies from antiquity until the present day. However, the meaning of gender nonconformity may vary from culture to culture.

There is no single explanation for why some people are transgender. The diversity of transgender expression and experiences argues against any simple or unitary explanation. Many experts believe that biological factors such as genetic influences and prenatal hormone levels, early experiences, and experiences later in adolescence or adulthood may all contribute to the development of transgender identities.

Transitioning from one gender to another is a complex process. People who transition often start by expressing their preferred gender in situations where they feel safe. They try to live full time as members of their preferred gender by making many changes a little at a time. While there is no "right" way to transition genders, there are some common social changes transgender people experience that may involve one or more of the following: adopting the appearance of the desired sex through changes in clothing and grooming, adopting a new name, changing sex designation on identity documents (if possible), using hormone therapy treatment, and/or undergoing medical procedures that modify their body to conform with their gender identity.

A psychological state is considered a mental disorder only if it causes significant distress or disability. Many transgender people do not experience their gender as distressing or disabling, which implies that identifying as transgender does not constitute a mental disorder. For these individuals, the significant problem is finding affordable resources, such as counseling, hormone therapy, medical procedures and the social support necessary to freely express their gender identity and minimize discrimination. Many other obstacles may lead to distress, including a lack of acceptance within society, direct or indirect experiences with discrimination, or assault. These experiences may lead many transgender people to suffer with anxiety, depression or related disorders at higher rates than nontransgender persons.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), people who experience intense, persistent gender incongruence can be given the diagnosis of "gender dys-phoria." Some contend that the diagnosis inappropriately pathologizes gender noncongruence and should be eliminated. Others argue that it is essential to retain the diagnosis to ensure access to care.

In many places, transgender people are not legally protected from discrimination in the workplace or in public accommodations. 90% of transgender people faced discrimination at work and were unemployed at double the rate of the general population, and over half had been harassed or turned away when attempting to access public services. Members of the transgender community also encounter high levels of discrimination in health care.