

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER (LGBT) RESOURCE CENTER

Transgender Information

Transgender person: Person whose gender identity or gender expression is not congruent with his or her biological sex. Transgender persons usually live full or part time in the gender role opposite to the one in which they were born. "Transgender" sometimes may be used as an umbrella term encompassing transsexuals, transvestites, and cross-dressers.

Transsexual: Individual whose gender identity is that of the opposite sex. There are female-to-male and male-to-female transsexuals. A transsexual may or may not have had sex reassignment surgery.

Gender identity: A person's sense of self as being either male or female. Gender identity does not always match biological sex; for example, a person may be born biologically male yet have a female gender identity; at birth, we are assigned one of two genders, usually based on our visible genitals.

Gender-neutral: Nondiscriminatory language to describe relationships—e.g. "spouse" and "partner" are gender-neutral alternatives to the gender-specific words "husband" and "wife."

Gender-variant: Displaying gender traits that are normatively more typical of the opposite biological sex. "Feminine" behavior or appearance in men is gender-variant as is "masculine" behavior or appearance in women. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific.

Gender role: How "masculine" or "feminine" an individual acts. Societies commonly have norms regarding how men and women should behave, although the argument is made that dominant normative behavior is a dynamic, often evolving, process.

Day of Remembrance, November 20th: The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder in 1998 kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Since then, the event has grown to encompass memorials in dozens of cities across the world.

Stages of transition that a transgender person may experience:

1. Awareness of difference between male and female (c. age 4).
2. Persistent discomfort with own sex, or sense of inappropriateness in gender role of that sex.

3. Strong/persistent cross-gender identification.
4. Identification with gender role of other gender.
5. Wishing to have anatomy of other gender.
6. Clinical distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas.
7. Cross dressing behavior, experimenting or in secret.
8. Coming out to others, usually friends.
9. Starting hormone therapy either on the street or in a clinic.
10. Dealing with "passing" (being identified as the preferred sex by the public).
11. Starting to cross dress full-time (24/7).
12. Seeking treatment, hormonal and mental health counseling.
13. Living life as the preferred sex.
14. Coming out to family.
15. Changing ID to preferred sex and name.
16. Having care providers treat as preferred sex.
17. Attempting job interviews as preferred sex.
18. Acceptance in job, home, friends, and family as preferred sex.
19. Then, and only then (at least, according to medical preference), formal consideration of surgery.