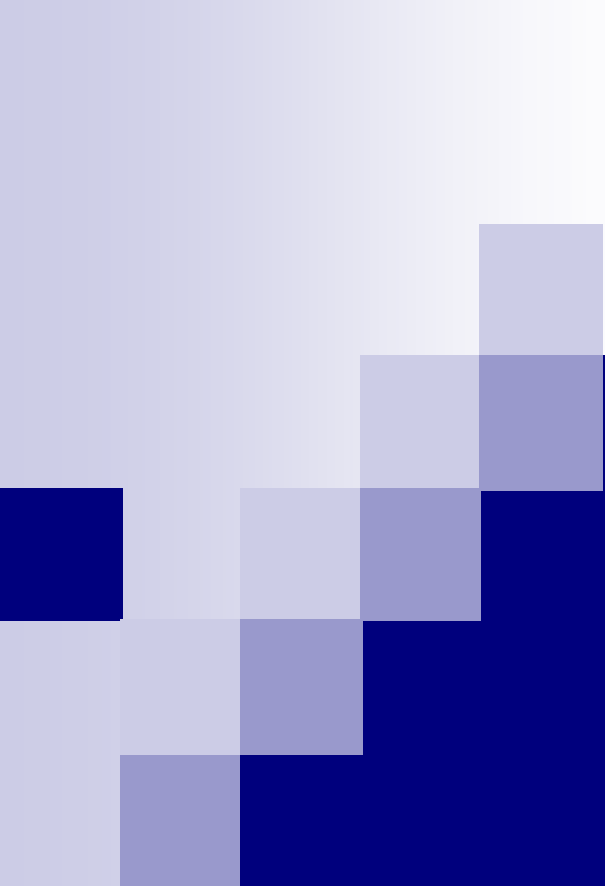




Transgender Youth 101: The Basics

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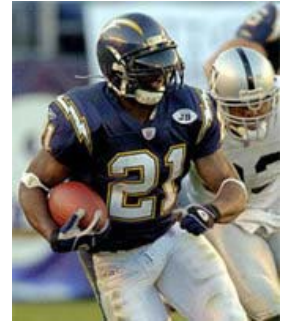
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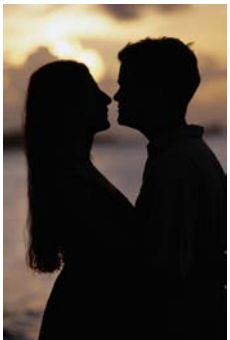
**Gender is a
spectrum.**



Gender Stereotypes:



- **Presentation:** Clothing, Hair and Makeup
(i.e. suit, short hair, eyeliner)
- **Occupation**
(i.e., law enforcement, nursing)
- **Social behavior**
- **Sexual behavior** (i.e., a “real” woman partners with men, and vice versa)



**Most people, transgender or not,
do not fit every stereotype
for their assigned gender.**



Gender is a spectrum:

There are many options between
“feminine woman” and “masculine man.”



Sexual Orientation vs. Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation:

who we are attracted to.

Gender Identity:

our sense of being male, female, etc.



Sexual Orientation is separate from Gender Identity.

- Every person has a *Gender Identity* and a *Sexual Orientation*.
- Who you are ***attracted to*** is different from who you ***feel yourself to be***.

Sex vs. Gender

- **Gender** – *someone's internal sense of being male, female, both, other, etc.*
- **Sex** – *a category we are put into at birth (usually male or female).*
 - *Sex is often judged by a person's chromosomes, genital appearance and reproductive organs.*

Sex vs. Gender

(cont'd)



- *“Sex is what’s between your legs; gender is what’s between your ears.”*
- It is possible to change one’s gender, or one’s sex.



Transgender & Transsexual

- **Transgender** – *Umbrella term describing all gender variant people (including drag kings/queens, transsexuals and genderqueers).*
→ Sometimes abbreviated as “**Trans**”.
- **Transsexual** – *A person whose gender does not match their birth sex. Most commonly, they take hormones and have sexual reassignment surgery make their body match their gender.*

FTM, MTF, and Genderqueer

- **FTM / Transman** - *Female To Male transgender person.*
- **MTF/ Transwoman** – *Male To Female transgender person.*
- **Genderqueer** – *someone who feels they are neither male nor female, are a little of both genders, or their gender is fluid.*



How are Trans Issues different from Gay or Lesbian Issues?



- Homophobia is different than Transphobia.
- Anatomy does not determine sexual orientation.
- Gender variance is often only seen in a gay context:
 - Masculine females and feminine males are assumed to be gay.
 - “anti-gay” discrimination and violence often targets the way people appear (*gender expression*), not sexuality.

How are Trans Issues different from Gay or Lesbian Issues? (cont'd)

- Transgender people are often outcast in gay and lesbian communities.
- Some transgender people identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual; however, many identify as heterosexual.
- Heterosexual transgender people:
 - A transgender woman [male-to-female] who is attracted to men
 - A transgender man [female-to-male] who is attracted to women.

Make No Assumptions!

- **Don't assume** that all of this information holds true for all transgender people.
- Transgender people have a variety of different life experiences, cultural contexts, etc., which inform how they see and identify themselves.



Trans Youth Communities

- There is more than one transgender community, especially for youth.
- Transgender community is different for each sub-group and subculture.
- These communities are often formed along ethnic, geographical and socioeconomic lines.

Self-determination is key. When in doubt, ask.

- Many gender-variant youth, who we might characterize as “transgender,” do not self-identify that way.
- Take youth, and their gender identity and expression, seriously.
- If you are not sure what pronoun (*“he,” “she,” etc.*) or name to call someone, ask them.





Issues Facing Trans Youth

- **If under 18:** Lack of jurisdiction over their bodies and medical choices. Risk of institutionalization for gender-nonconforming behavior.
- Youth are often not taken seriously; their **behavior is stereotyped as rebellion.**
- **Isolation:** due to lack access to resources, peer support, information and transportation.

Issues Facing Trans Youth (cont'd)

- **Having to educate people:** Trans youth are often expected to explain transgender issues to everyone in their lives. This puts a client seeking services in a difficult situation.
- **“High-Risk behavior”:** The concepts of risk and mortality are often foreign to youth. They take more risks than adults.
- **Cycle of Marginalization:**
Coming out young → Harassment → Dropping out of School → Lack of Education → Unemployment → Homelessness, Disenfranchisement, Lack of Options

Breaking the Cycle:

What can providers do to help?*

- **Advocacy** for clients
- **Respectful** interactions
- **Educate** other providers
- **Accessibility**

**Please refer to Youth TIES fact sheet, “21 Ways to be an Ally to your Trans Youth Clients” for additional information.*