

Being Respectful to Transgender People



Basic Information

The term "transgender" or "trans" is an umbrella term that includes lots of gender expansive identities: transsexual people, cross-dressers, genderqueer individuals, agender people, transmen, transwomen, two-spirit people and many more.

Please don't ask about my genitalia, what surgeries I've had, or how I have sex. These are extremely personal questions.

A transwoman is male-to-female. A transman is female-to-male. It is never the other way around.

Don't assume my gender identity defines my sexual orientation. Who I am attracted to is totally separate from my gender. A simple way to think of it is: one is who I sleep with and one is who I sleep as.

Don't expect me to conform to the stereotypes of my gender. I wear clothes I like and I have a variety of interests, just like everyone else.

The words "transsexual," "transgender" and "trans" are adjectives, not nouns. Please say "trans people" or "trans individuals," not "transgenders" or "the transgender."

I am not here to shock anyone or get attention. Being transgender is not a choice. The only choice I have made is whether or not to live authentically as my true self.

Pronouns

Please use language that corresponds to my gender identity, even if my body does not seem to match, and even when talking about my past. Do not use my old name or pronoun when referring to me in the past.

If you are still adjusting to my transition, it is normal to make mistakes with pronouns. Don't draw attention to it. Just correct yourself and carry on.

If you ask everyone what pronouns they use (for example on forms, at the beginning of classes and workshops, etc.) then I am not singled out. It is a very inclusive best practice tip.

Non-binary individuals may use gender neutral pronouns like: they, ze, ne, xe or others.

Transitioning

Don't immediately assume that sex reassignment/realignment surgery (SRS) and/or hormones are a priority for me. Every trans person is unique and chooses different steps during their transition, based on many factors. Not everyone wants SRS. Not everyone can afford it.

The changes I make to my body are not cosmetic, but rather reconstructive. Having a body I am comfortable with is vital to my health.

If I am a transman getting top surgery, then I am not "getting my breasts removed." I am having chest reconstruction.

Social Situations

Please don't use my old name or ask what it was. Instead of saying "back when you were Fred", say "before you transitioned".

Please don't ask me to explain my life story or my gender situation to people I've just met.

Please don't ask to see an old, pre-transition picture of me.

If I have trusted you enough to share with you that I am trans, please keep it private. I will tell others if I choose to do so.

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