

let's
talk
about
gender

AND
/OR

What is it?

It's honestly a bit difficult to define. But, generally speaking, gender is an individual's inner concept of themselves, typically understood in relation to societal perceptions of 'male' and 'female.' A person's gender may line up with their biological sex assigned at birth (ie. man/male, woman/female, intersex, etc.) However, it does not—and should not—have to. There are many, many diverse and intersecting ways to identify and express ones gender. Some gender identifiers include agender, androgynous, bigender, feminine or masculine-of-center, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, intersex, third gender, transgender and two-spirit. All of these and any other ways someone wants to describe and express their gender is valid. Gender is a beautiful and complex spectrum. It's not just man or woman.

Why does it matter?

Even though more and more people are recognizing that gender is a spectrum, our society is still largely structured for the gender binary. In other words, everything is laid out to cater only to two supposedly opposite genders, male or female. If you look closely you can see it in everything from bathrooms, to clothing, to food and even shampoo. And for individuals who do not conform to these traditional gender roles, this can be extremely alienating and upsetting. It also puts an enormous pressure on everyone to act in a way that is deemed societally acceptable instead of just being themselves and doing what feels right. Eliminating the gender binary is beneficial for everyone. Those who feel comfortable with their gender normative identifiers can exist just as they did before and individuals who are gender non-conforming can exist freely in any way they want to exist.

How to be an advocate

It's really not hard to be supportive of gender non-conforming individuals, in fact, you're already doing it by taking the time to read this guide! Even if you don't fully understand it, you can still take steps to be respectful and helpful.

- Use the name a person asks you to use and don't ask someone what their old name was.
- Try not to make any assumptions about people's gender.
- If you're not sure what pronouns someone uses, ask. It may feel awkward at first, but is one of the simplest and most important ways to show respect for someone's identity.
- Advocate for non-binary friendly policies. It's important for non-binary

people to be able to live, dress and have their gender respected at work, at school and in public spaces.

- Understand that, for many non-binary people, figuring out which bathroom to use can be challenging. Using either the women's or the men's room might feel unsafe, because others may verbally harass them or even physically attack them. Non-binary people should be supported by being able to use the restroom that they believe they will be safest in.

- Talk to non-binary people to learn more about who they are. There's no one way to be non-binary. The best way to understand what it's like to be non-binary is to talk with non-binary people and listen to their stories.

Learn more: lifeoutsidethebinary.com
& transequality.org

Terms you should know

cisgender

/“siss-jendur”/ – adj. : a gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. Can also be shortened to “cis.”

cisnormativity

noun : the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.

gender binary

noun : the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

genderqueer

1 adj. : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. 2 adj. : an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

sex assigned at birth (SAAB)

abbr. : a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called "designated sex at birth" (DSAB) or "sex coercively assigned at birth" (SCAB), or specifically used as "assigned male at birth" (AMAB) or "assigned female at birth" (AFAB).

transgender

1 adj. : a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. 2 adj. : an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way.

gender expression

noun : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity.

gender identity

noun : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex.

gender non-conforming

1 adj. : a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). 2 adj. : a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as "GNC."

**Pizza rolls,
not gender
roles.**

AND
/OR

**Gender is
a social
construct.**

AND
/OR

Gender is like a
Rubik's Cube with one
hundred squares per
side, and every time
you twist it to take a
look at another
angle, you make it
that much harder a
puzzle to solve.

- Sam Killermann



**I've never been
interested in
being invisible
and erased.**

- Laverne Cox



**A gender-equal
society would be
one where the
word 'gender'
does not exist:
where everyone
can be themselves.**

- Gloria Steinem

