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WHAT DOES IT MEAN

TO BE TRANS?



From a young age, we are often only given two options when it comes to gender – man or woman, masculine or feminine.

These two options come with a lot of expectations, which can be limiting for not just for transgender people, but for everyone.

It's important to remember that our gender does not always align with the sex we are assigned at birth.

Here is an introduction to gender identity, how to support trans people and guidance on next steps if you think you might be trans.

This booklet was written by members of Creative Support's LGBTQ+ Network. You can get in touch by emailing: LGBTQ.Network@creativesupport.co.uk

WHAT DOES 'TRANSGENDER' MEAN?

"Transgender" or "trans" describes anyone whose gender identity does not fully match the gender they were assigned at birth. This can include trans women, trans men, non-binary people (those whose gender falls outside of only male or only female) or other gender non-conforming people. It is important to note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as trans.

If someone's gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth, then they are "cisgender" or "cis."

Some intersex people (people born with variations in their sex characteristics) also identify as trans, others as cis.



WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?

Pronouns are the words we use to refer to people when we're talking about them rather than directly to them. Many people prefer to be referred to as "he" or "she", but some people prefer "they" or other pronouns.



We can't tell someone's gender just by looking at them. It's best just to ask someone which pronouns they'd like us to use. At first, it can be challenging to use pronouns that are unfamiliar, but it will get easier with time and practice.

HOW CAN I BE RESPECTFUL?

Use the correct name and pronouns – if you don't know someone's pronouns, it is best to use their name in the place of pronouns until they reveal their pronouns in conversation or you know them well enough to ask. Asking for their pronouns immediately can sometimes feel rude. Using they/ them pronouns for a person before you know their pronouns can be a useful way to avoid using the wrong ones by mistake. If you accidentally use the wrong name or pronouns, just apologise once and continue with the conversation.

Avoid inappropriate questions – We can have a lot of natural curiosity when speaking to someone whose experience we don't come across very often, but it's important not to forget they are a person who deserves privacy. Trans people often get asked questions about their bodies, previous names they've had, or what they used to look like. If someone wants to share personal information with you then they will do so in their own time.

Don't reveal someone's gender identity – Sometimes it can be dangerous or scary for trans people to be open about their gender identity in public. It is important not to tell anyone someone's gender identity without their consent, even if they have come out to friends and family.

Be supportive – When someone comes out to you as trans, it is important to be non-judgemental and supportive rather than show any discomfort or judgement. Don't shut them out and trust that what they are doing is right for them.

Educate yourself – Look online or read articles about how to support trans people and for more information rather than asking a trans person to find out more about what it's like to be trans, people who are trans will appreciate your efforts. Organisations below have lots of resources online:

Stonewall

www.stonewall.org.uk/truth-about-trans

Gendered Intelligence

www.genderedintelligence.co.uk

GLAAD

www.glaad.org/transgender/allies



To read more about how to support trans people, check out our resource pack by emailing: communications@creativesupport.co.uk

WHAT IF I THINK I AM TRANS?

If you are feeling uncomfortable with your gender, you may be experiencing gender dysphoria which is when you realise there is a difference between your physical sex and your gender, and this becomes distressing.

If you think you might be trans, don't worry. Being trans is a beautiful thing, and there is lots of support available from your GP and different LGBTQ+ organisations:

LGBT Foundation

<https://lgbt.foundation/trans-resources/>

TransActual

<https://transactual.org.uk/>

Mermaids

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

To find more services available, check out our resource pack by emailing: communications@creativesupport.co.uk



WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

Intersectionality is all about recognising the ways in which different forms of inequality and disadvantage create obstacles in someone's life. For example, a Black trans person may experience greater struggles than a white trans person due to experiencing both racism and transphobia. Gender and race are often treated as separate issues and are therefore sometimes left out from LGBTQ+ friendly services where their racial identities are overlooked.

To find out more about how to support trans people who are also part of other marginalised communities, email the EDI Network on: EDI@creativesupport.co.uk or check out our resource pack by emailing: communications@creativesupport.co.uk



HOW CAN I REPORT HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR?

If someone is causing harm to you or someone else because of their gender, you can report it to staff at your service, or to Head Office on **0161 236 0829**.

If you want to report it elsewhere, you can visit anti-LGBTQ+ abuse websites online. Two of the most well-known are the charity Galop, or the hate crime reporting website True Vision.

To request more information related to reporting hate crime, check out our resource pack by emailing: communications@creativesupport.co.uk

This leaflet was produced solely by Creative Support made with information taken from the websites of the following organisations.

