



Gender Identity and Expression

Everyone has a gender assigned to them at birth and a gender identity. A transgender person is someone whose gender identity or gender expression does not match his/her anatomical sex. These terms are explained below:

Gender identity: a person's inner feeling of being a male or female.

Gender expression: a person's appearance, dress, speech patterns, and social interactions that reflect his/her gender identity as a male or female.

There are transgender people in all walks of life and in all professions. Caitlyn Jenner's transition raised national awareness of the misperceptions and challenges that transgender people frequently encounter. Some transgender people choose to transition, or undergo gender reassignment via hormones or surgery, to better reflect their gender identity. Others choose to live as members of the other sex without undergoing medical interventions. Being transgender is not dependent upon medical procedures.



Supporting Others

Feeling "different" is often a source of great stress and psychological pain, particularly in adolescence. Many transgender people feel enormous relief when they live their lives aligned with their true gender identity.

Unfortunately there are many misperceptions about transgender people, and they are often the target of discriminatory practices. This is also true for people who are gender non-conforming, and don't follow social norms or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on their gender assignment.

Tips to Support Transgender Friends and Colleagues:

- Address the person by the name and pronoun that reflects his or her gender identity.
- Respect the person's privacy and don't ask questions about his or her medical history, anatomy, or sex life.
- Remember that the term "transgender" is an adjective, not a noun. Never refer to someone as "a transgender."
- Don't make assumptions about the person's sexual orientation, which is different from gender identity. A transgender person can be gay, lesbian, straight, or bisexual just like anyone else.

There is great human diversity regarding gender. We all have a gender identity and ways of expressing it, and we all deserve to be treated with respect.

[Read more](#) about gender identity and transgender people.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in mental health care for children or adults, primary care, or addiction recovery services, contact InterCommunity. To receive services at any of our Hartford or East Hartford locations, please call 860-569-5900.



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