



Achieve  
together



Transgender

an easy read guide

Developed by Achieve Together,  
CHANGE and Choice Support

Thanks to Persia West



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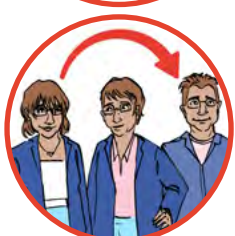
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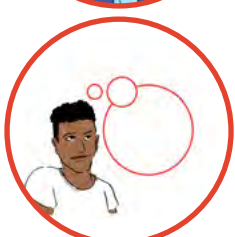
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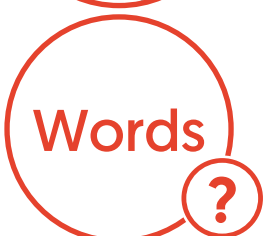
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# Introduction



This easy read guide is about what it means to be transgender and the issues you or someone you know may experience.



**SEX**



**GENDER**

The guide looks at the difference between sex and gender and explains the different words and terms linked to transgender identity.



The guide also looks at where to go to get help, who to talk to, transitioning, and the practical steps to take if you or someone you know is transgender.

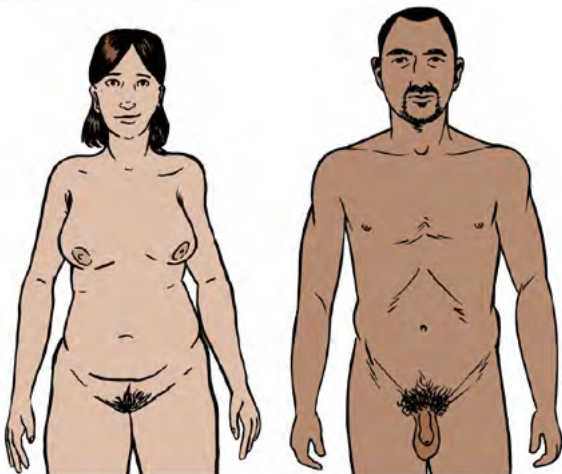


The guide was created with CHANGE after focus groups with people supported by Achieve together and Choice Support.

# Sex and gender



Your sex describes the physical body parts you were born with.



This means whether you were born with a penis or vagina [genitals] and described as male or female based on these body parts.

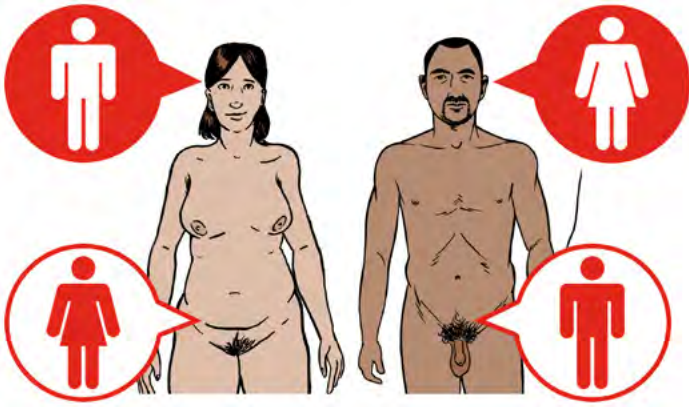


When we talk about sex in this way, this is different to sexual intercourse.



Gender is different to sex and is how male or female you feel you are.





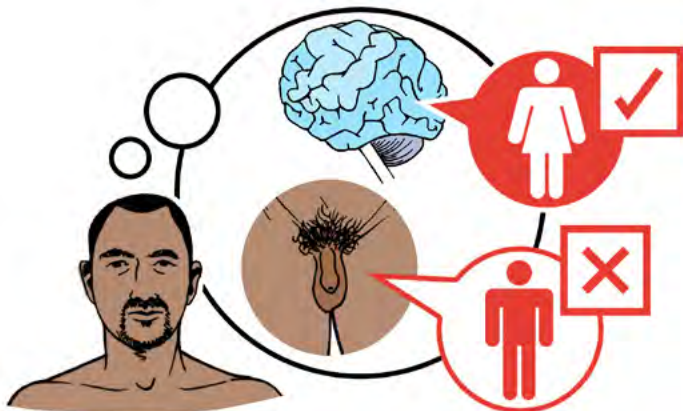
If you have male genitals you may feel you are actually female.

If you have female genitals you may feel you are actually male.



Sometimes you may be unsure about how you feel about your gender.

## Transgender – what does it mean?



Being transgender is when you know there is a difference between your physical sex and your inner sense of being.



This means a difference between the genitals you were born with and your inner sense of being male or female.



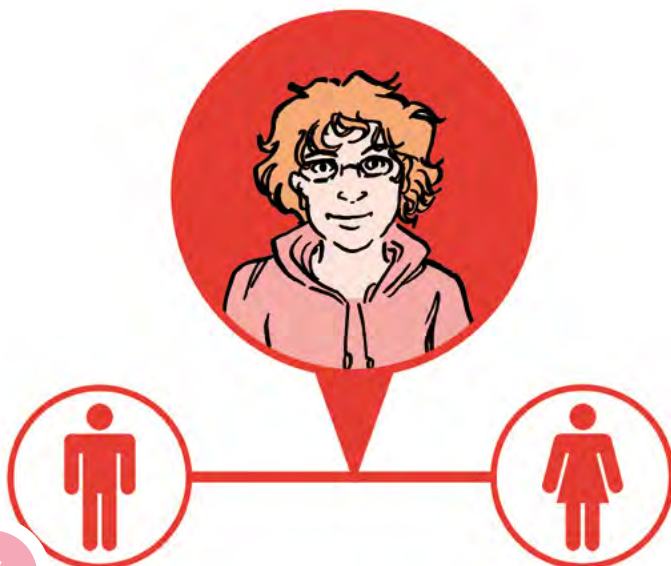
When this becomes distressful for a person it is called Gender Dysphoria.



You may have been born with male genitals but feel you are female.



Or you may have been born with female genitals but feel you are male.



You may feel somewhere in-between.



Gender, or how male or female you feel, depends on the individual.



Most transgender people don't choose their gender, it's just who they are.

## Practical steps and what to do



Whatever stage you are at talk to someone you trust, you will need support and empathy.



Empathy is when someone you trust will understand the feelings you are having.

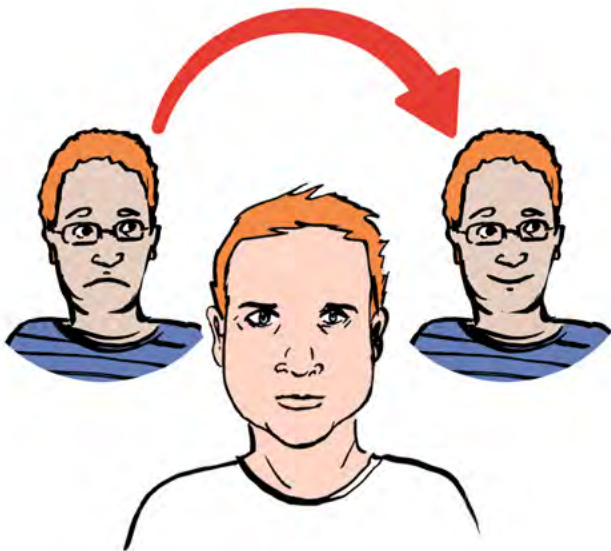


Telling people how you feel can be emotionally and physically difficult.



Telling your family might be difficult.

Agree with people you trust how and when your family will be told.



If any member of your family reacts negatively, you may need support to help them to be okay with you.



If you are supported in Shared Lives, Supported Living or Residential Care your support team will need to be supportive and have information to help you.





Talk to your GP and get advice.

If the GP is not helpful or supportive, ask to see another GP in the practice.



Join a local trans support group if there is one and talk to people who have experienced what you are experiencing.



Gather information from trans resources, publications, and websites.

See pages 25 – 28 for examples



Talk to other professionals who can help you. For example a psychologist.



Have people around you who support you.



When you have support, use those people to understand transitioning.



Take your time, transitioning can take a long time. On average it takes 2-3 years.



Talk to people in your trans support group if you want help with your appearance. For example your clothes and hair.



Find safe spaces to appear as the man or woman you want to be.

This could include trans social events, if there are any near you.



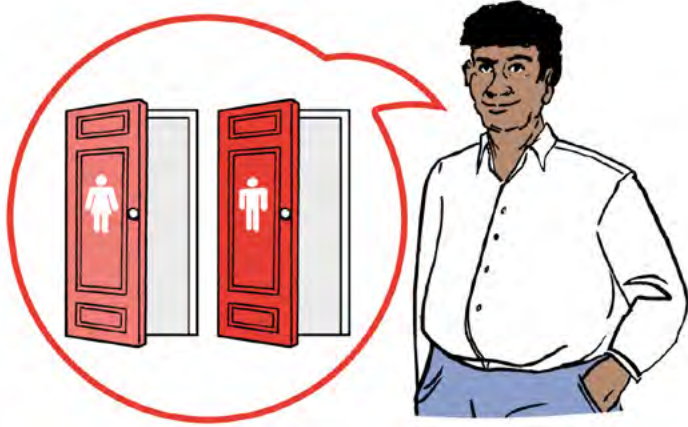
Use your safe space to wear the clothes you want without feeling like you stand out.



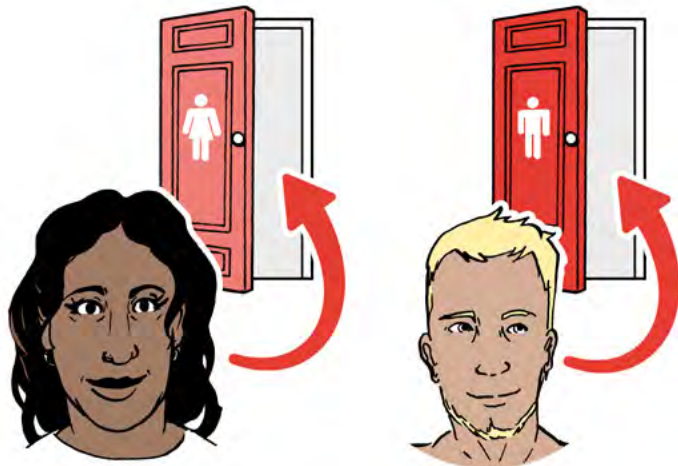
Support people to understand how to address you. For example your name and whether to use he, she, or another term.



Some people may make mistakes when they address you. You can gently correct them. It gets better with time.

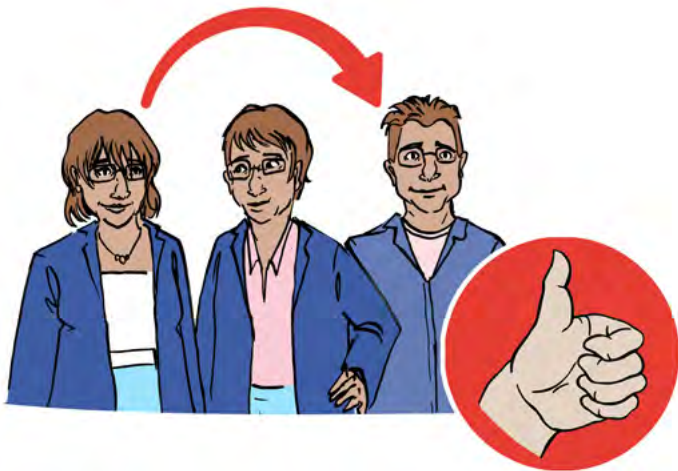


Get support to understand which toilets to use.



The accepted view is that if you are presenting as a gender you use those toilets.

This means if your appearance is female you use female toilets.

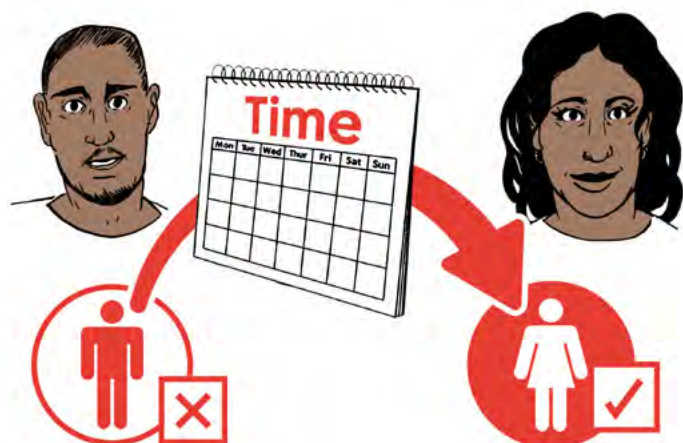


Whatever stage you are at do what is right for you.



Take things slowly, this is the best way to do things.

# Transition



Transition is a period of time where you change your gender identity to what you want it to be.



This means changing the appearance to the gender you feel you are.



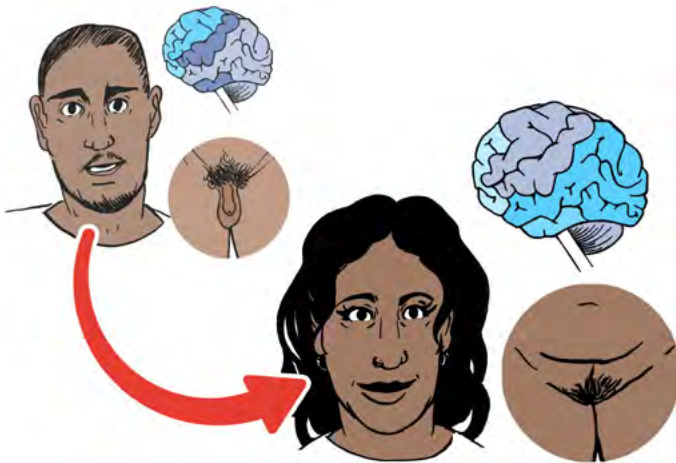
You can change your identity socially, medically or both.



Transitioning socially means changing how you appear and act in the world.



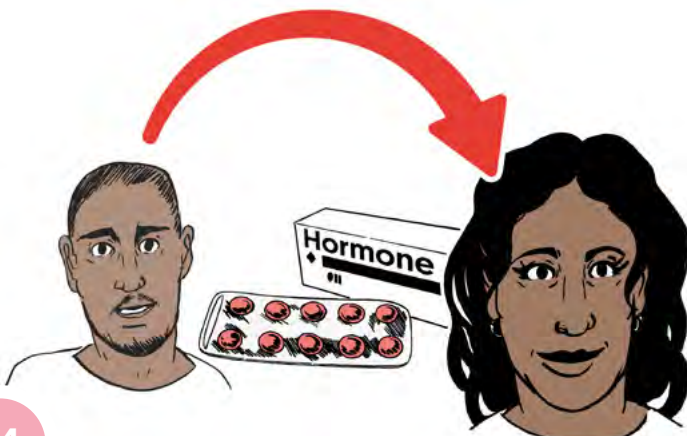
This could include changing your hair, make-up, clothes, behaviours, and voice.



Transitioning medically means changing sex by changing your physical appearance and your genitals.

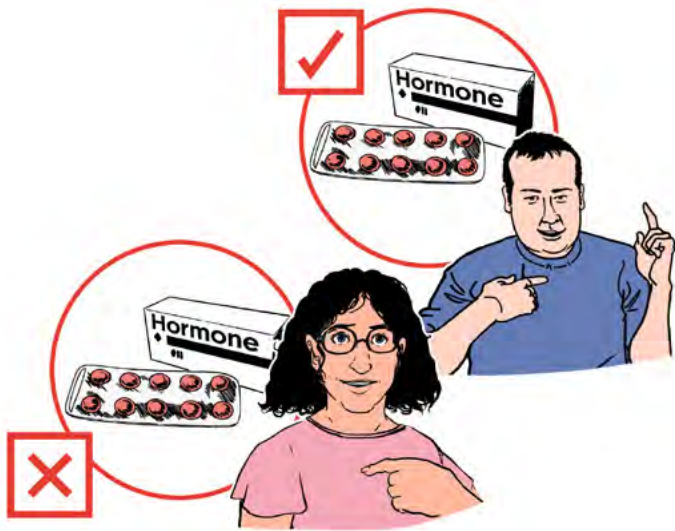


These changes are made with hormone treatment and during surgery.



Hormone treatment can help make you feel more male or female.

Changes to your body and how you feel can be slow.



There are different options in the transition phase and not everyone has surgery or hormone treatment.



Transitioning socially will mean to begin living as the person you want to be.



To transition medically talk to your GP, they will refer you to a Gender Identity Clinic.



There are eight in the UK.



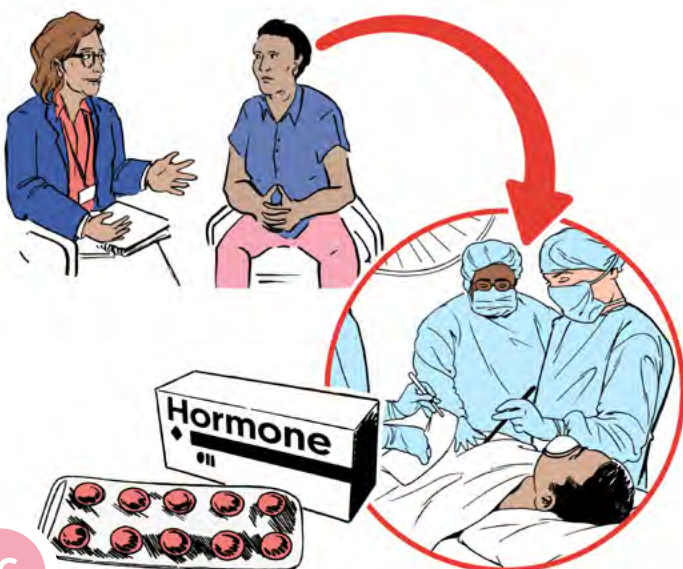
You can also pay privately for your treatment.



You do not need a mental health assessment to be referred to a Gender Identity Clinic.



It may take up to a year or more for your first appointment.



To transition socially and medically you should have access to counselling.





You can find more information about Gender Identity Clinics here: <https://gic.nhs.uk/>

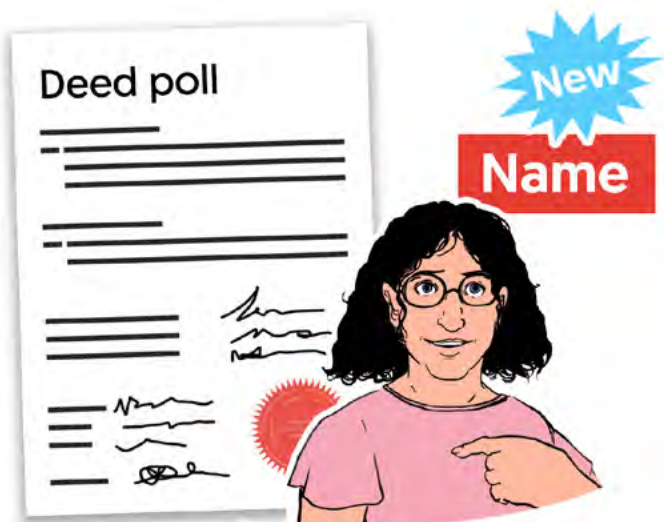


Part of transitioning is changing your name, and your gender and title on official documents.

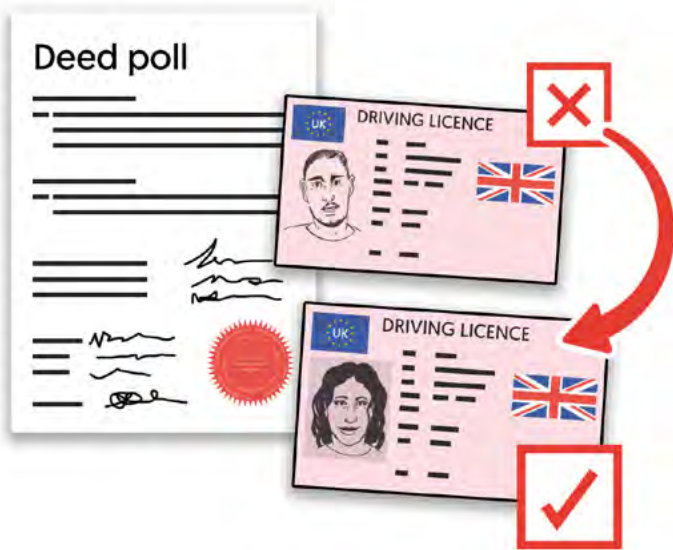


You can change your name to whatever you wish.

See <https://deedpolloffice.com>



You can change your name officially by a deed poll.



This is helpful if you want to change your name on your passport and driving license.



You can make the changes on most official documents by law without a gender recognition certificate.



A gender recognition certificate is a legal change of gender.



To get a new birth certificate with your change of name and gender you will need to get a gender recognition certificate.



New  
**Name** 

To change your name on your passport and driving licence you will need:

- 1 A Gender Recognition Certificate or,
- 2 A new birth or adoption certificate showing your acquired gender or,
- 3 A letter from your doctor saying your change of gender is permanent.

See <https://gov.uk>



This is an overview of the transition phase. For more information contact one of the organisations in the guide or speak to your GP.

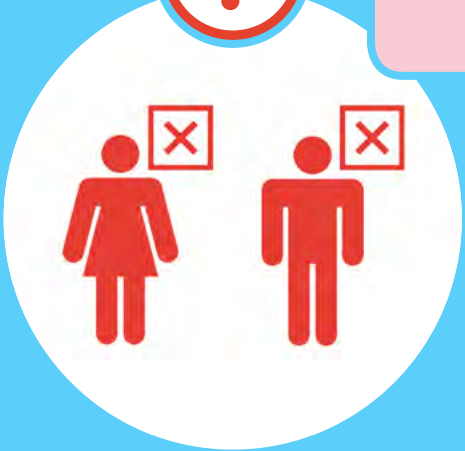
In making this guide we ran focus groups. In these focus groups people gave us their thoughts and talked about the issues they had experienced. These are on the next page.



Being in an in-between place is always hard. It's always hard if you don't fit in a box. Definitions can be difficult.



Families can be controlling.



There is a high suicide rate for people who are transgender.

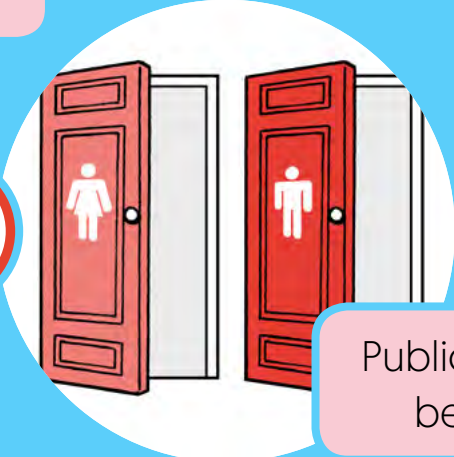
### Thoughts and issues

Transitioning can affect your mental health e.g. pain and depression, shame and guilt.



You can experience hate crimes.

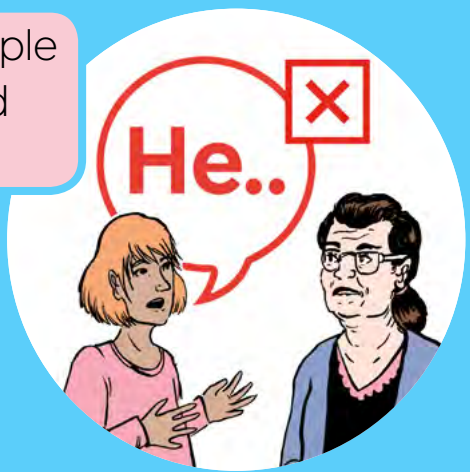
You are recreating your identity. You are rebuilding who you are.



Public toilets can be difficult.

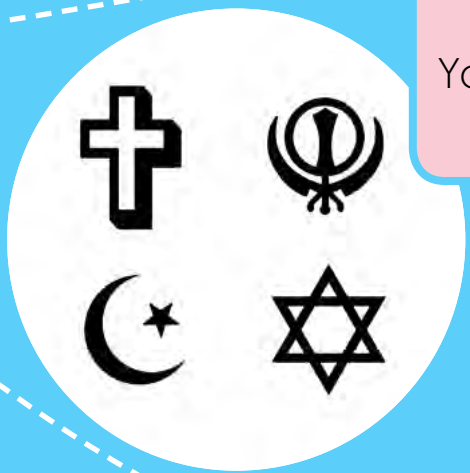


It's difficult when people get your name and gender wrong.



You experience stigma. You have to deal with peoples' opinions and people judge your appearance.

The in-between stage leaves you vulnerable.



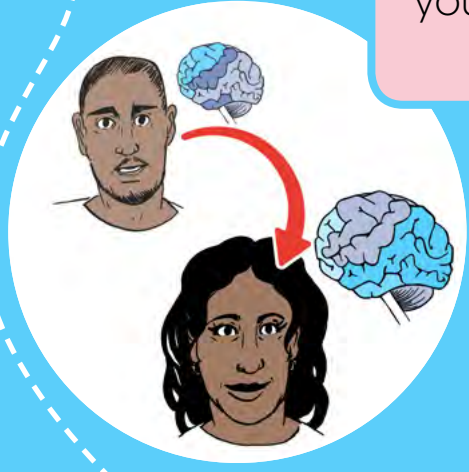
Religious beliefs can affect your decision. You can lose a sense of belonging.

There is social pressure to be a certain way.

Shifting identity can be isolating for a person.



Transitioning is a change in your physical and mental make-up.



You have to re-learn how to dress.

# Who to talk to and where to go to get the help you need



Speak to someone you trust, this could be:

A family member



A friend



Someone who supports you



An advocate



A professional like your GP



A counsellor or a psychologist



A staff member



At a face to face trans support group



A local trans night or event



In the following section is a list of support groups you can contact or places to find resources and information online.



# Organisations

## Allsorts Youth Project

Support LGBTU young people between the ages of 5 and 25 years.

[allsortsyouth.org.uk](http://allsortsyouth.org.uk)

## Clare project

Transgender support and social group in Brighton

[clareproject.org.uk](http://clareproject.org.uk)

## Depend

Support group for families and friends in the UK

[depend.org.uk](http://depend.org.uk)

## Gender Trust

Supporting adults whose lives are affected by gender identity issues

[gendertrust.wordpress.com](http://gendertrust.wordpress.com)

## GIRES

Gender Identity Research and Education Society

[gires.org.uk](http://gires.org.uk)

## Imaan

Support for LGBT Muslims and trans Muslims

[imaanlondon.wordpress.com](http://imaanlondon.wordpress.com)

## **Intersex UK**

Education, advocacy, campaigning and support organisation

[ukia.co.uk](http://ukia.co.uk)

## **Press for Change**

Legal advice, training, and research for trans people as well as representative, public and private bodies

[pfc.org.uk](http://pfc.org.uk)

## **Mermaids**

Support for teenagers and children

[mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://mermaidsuk.org.uk)

## **Trans Bare All**

Events and retreats to help members of the trans community

[transbareall.co.uk](http://transbareall.co.uk)

## **Trans\*formation**

Advocacy group for professionals who identify as trans

[transformationuk.com](http://transformationuk.com)

## **Trans London**

Support and social group for trans people in London

[translondon.org.uk](http://translondon.org.uk)

## **Trans Resource and Empowerment Centre**

Based in Manchester with monthly meetings, talks and workshops

[transcentre.org.uk](https://transcentre.org.uk)

## **TransUnite**

Resource for people in the UK searching for support in the transgender community

[transunite.co.uk](https://transunite.co.uk)

## **Twilight People**

London based project that celebrates the hidden history of transgender and gender variant people of faith in the UK

[twilightpeople.com/the-project](https://twilightpeople.com/the-project)

## **The Beaumont Society**

National self-help body

[beaumontsociety.org.uk](https://beaumontsociety.org.uk)

## **Scottish Transgender Alliance**

Support for trans people, equality organisations, policymakers, and employers in Scotland

[scottishtrans.org](https://scottishtrans.org)

For more organisations connected to transgender training, youth, activism, health, housing and sport go to:

[allabouttrans.org.uk/support-organisations/](https://allabouttrans.org.uk/support-organisations/)

For more resources and information go to:

[genderedintelligence.co.uk/  
trans-community/resources](https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-community/resources)

[susans.org](https://susans.org)

[transgenderzone.com](https://transgenderzone.com)

[tsroadmap.com](https://tsroadmap.com)

# Words and terms



## Gender Identity

Gender Identity is your personal experience of your gender.

Gender Identity can be the same as your sex at birth or it can differ from it.



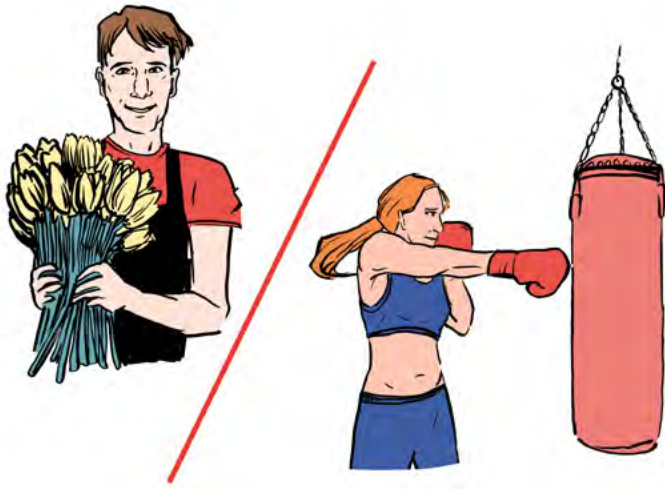
## Gender Binary

Gender Binary is where people think a person can only be either male or female, or either masculine or feminine.



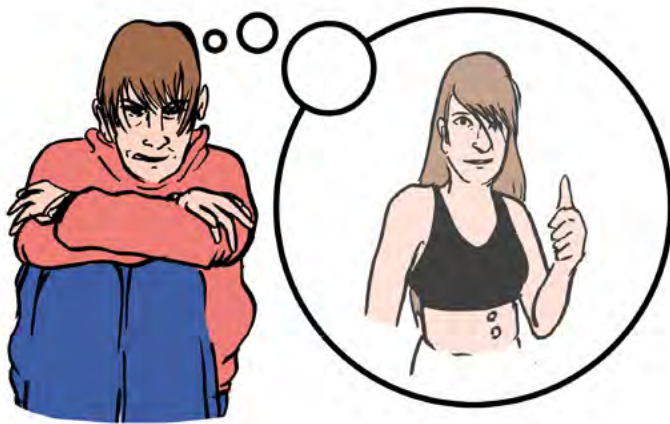
## Non-Binary

Non-binary is a term for gender identities that do not fall into the male and female opposites.



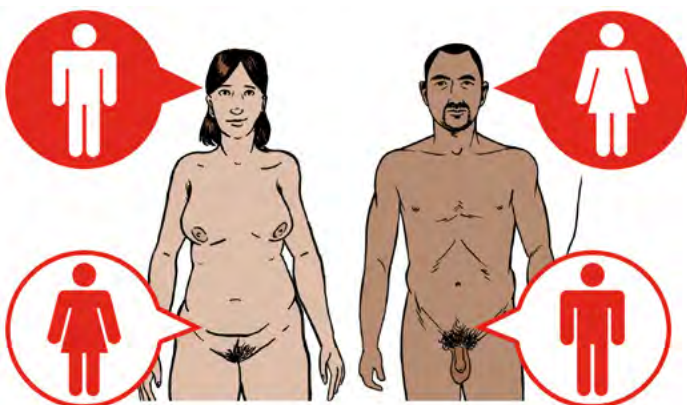
## Gender variance

Gender variance is behaviour or expression by a person that does not match male and female gender norms.



## Gender Dysphoria

A medical term for when a person is distressed about the difference between the gender that they feel and their physical sex.



## Trans / gender

Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from their birth sex.



**CHANGE** Design and illustration ©CHANGE

# Transgender

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Thanks to Persia West