

# Understanding Gender Identity and Gender Dysphoria

## Gender Identity

Is the personal sense of one's own gender.

- It is an internal state of knowing.
- It is not observable to others.

Many people suppress, or do not recognise, their gender identity because of societal expectations and pressures.



## Gender Expression



Refers to the external manifestation of one's gender identity.

It is usually expressed through “masculine,” “feminine” or gender-variant behaviour, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics.

## Sexuality

Transgender people experience the full range of sexual orientations.

Some transgender people maintain a consistent sexual orientation throughout life, while others find their orientation changes during / after transition.



## Did you know?

Sexual orientation is separate from gender identity.

Sex and gender is not the same.

Gender identity and gender expression are separate distinct constructs.

# Important Terminology

## Transgender

Person whose gender identity does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Cisgender

Person whose gender identity corresponds to the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Transgender woman (or transwoman)

Identifies as a woman but was assigned male at birth (AMAB).

## Transgender man (or transman)

Identifies as a man but was assigned female at birth (AFAB).

## Non-binary Gender

Describes any gender identity that does not fit the male and female binary.



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A person may identify as either having a gender which is in-between or beyond the two categories 'man' and 'woman', as fluctuating between 'man' and 'woman', or as having no gender, either permanently or some of the time.  
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## Transitioning

Is the process of a transgender person presenting themselves as their gender identity (through appearance, name, pronouns etc.)

- **Social transitioning** involves a transgender person's transition that can be seen by people around them.
- **Medical transitioning** involves the parts of a transgender person's transition that change their body.

## Gender Dysphoria



GD is the term used to describe the distress felt when someone's gender identity is incongruent with their assigned sex at birth.

- **Body:** discomfort in physical body and the way it functions, may be primary and/or secondary sex characteristics.
- **Social:** discomfort by how one is seen socially, may alter gender expression to cope.
- **Mind:** discomfort when thoughts/feelings are at odds with their sense of identity.

# Cross Hormone Therapy

Hormone therapy and surgery have been found to be medically necessary to alleviate gender dysphoria for many people (AMA, 2008; Anton, 2009; WPATH, 2008)

Others need only one of these treatment options and some need neither (Bockting & Goldberg, 2006; Bockting, 2008; Lev, 2004)

Hormone therapy for adults means taking the hormones of the correct gender identity.

A transman will take testosterone.

A transwoman will take oestrogen.

A non-binary person may or may not have hormone therapy.

May be in the form of a pill, gel patch or injection.



## Psychological Effects of Hormone Therapy

Nguyen et al., (2018):

- Overwhelmingly positive psychological effects in both adolescents and adults.
- Symptoms of anxiety and depression are reduced.
- Lowers social distress.
- Improves quality of life.
- Improves self-esteem.

Two studies showed significant improvement in psychological functioning at 3-6 months and 12 months compared with baseline after initiating hormone therapy (Hughto & Reisner, 2016)

Transgender participants who were prescribed cross-sex hormones had improved scores (statistically significant) on quality of life, anxiety and depression compared to transgender people who had not yet initiated hormone therapy (Stefan et al., 2019).

For further information and free resources visit:

<http://www.aberdeenshirecp.com>

<https://www.fourpillarsuk.org/>

<https://www.lgbt.foundation>