

# Transgender 101



## \* \* \* WHAT DOES TRANSGENDER MEAN? \* \*

The term “transgender” is an adjective used to describe a person whose sex assigned at birth does not align with their gender identity along the SOGIE binaries in a way society might not traditionally expect. The term is often considered an umbrella term encompassing the variety of gender identity terms that transcend the gender binary including terms like nonbinary, genderqueer, Two Spirit (2S), agender, and many more. Transgender describes one’s relationship between their sex assigned and birth to their gender, and is not necessarily a gender in and of itself. We do not know elements of one’s SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression) simply by knowing that someone is transgender.

## \* \* \* WHAT ABOUT PRONOUNS? \* \*

Pronouns are the words we use to talk about someone in the English language (and many others) when not using their name. Pronouns are an intrinsic part of the English language and some common examples include they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, and he/him/his. Pronouns are not unique to transgender people; however, due to anti-transgender biases, transgender folks are more likely to be misgendered and/or deadnamed. “Misgendering” refers to the act of referencing another person using the incorrect pronouns and/or name with which they do not use. This could be done intentionally to cause emotional and psychological harm, unintentionally because of assumptions or accidentally mispeaking. “Deadnaming” specifically refers to the act of referencing a transgender person by their birth and/or previous name.



## WHAT IS TRANSITIONING?



Transitioning refers to a transgender person's process of aligning their gender expression with their gender identity. Transition can include but is not limited to: coming out to one's family, friends, and/or community; use of a different name and pronouns; socially and/or legally transitioning. Some transgender people may also access gender affirming/best practice medical care. However, not all transgender people can or do undergo medical transition. Transitioning looks different for all people.

Coming-out refers to process through which a person acknowledges and explains their SOGIE to themselves and others. Often incorrectly thought of to be a one-time event, this can be a lifelong and sometimes daily process. Transgender people are disproportionately "outed" by others, or forced to out themselves in order to receive the care and support they need, which can cause irreparable harm.



## HOW CAN I PRACTICE ALLYSHIP?



The term "cisgender" is the opposite of transgender and is the adjective which describes someone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity align along the SOGIE binaries in a way that society traditionally expects. Cisgender people, including LGBTQ+ cisgender people, can practice allyship by taking a number of active steps including but not limited to: continually learning about the experiences and needs of transgender people; interrupting instances of anti-transgender bias; ensuring equitable access and representation; and, acknowledging the intersections of transgender experiences with other identities like race, class, disability, language, etc.

