

Being Respectful to Transgender People



Basic Information

If you are still adjusting to my transition, it is normal to make mistakes with pronouns. Don't draw attention to it. Just correct yourself and carry on.

A trans woman is male-to-female. A trans man is female-to-male. It is never the other way around.

Don't assume my gender identity defines my sexual orientation. Who I am attracted to is totally separate from my gender. If I am a trans woman who likes women, treat me no differently than any other lesbian.

Don't expect me to conform to the stereotypes of my gender. I wear clothes I like and I have a variety of interests, just like everyone else.

Please don't use my old name or ask what it was. Instead of saying "back when you were Fred", say "before you transitioned".

Don't use my name in the 3rd person as if I was someone else, e.g. "Are you dressing as Lisa now?"

Please use language that corresponds to my gender identity, even if my body does not seem to match, and even when talking about my past.

If you use the word transsexual, transgender or trans, it's better to use it as an adjective to describe a person, not as a noun, e.g. trans people, trans folks, trans guy.

The term "transgender" is an umbrella term that includes any and all gender variant people: transsexual people, cross-dressers, drag kings and queens, intersexuals, genderqueers, bigendered people, and many other types. Drag performers and cross-dressers are typically not transsexual people. Please don't call it cross-dressing if I am wearing clothes that match my gender.

Don't assume that I have chosen to be a trans person. The only choice I have made is whether or not to live authentically as my true self.

Transitioning

Use the word "transition" to describe what I am going through or went through.

The changes I make to my body are not cosmetic, but rather reconstructive. Having a body I am comfortable with is vital to my health.

Please don't openly talk about my genitals any more than you would for a cisgender (non-trans) person.

If I am a trans guy getting top surgery, then I am not "getting my breasts removed." I am getting chest reconstruction.

Don't immediately assume that sex reassignment/realignment surgery (SRS) is my priority. Every trans person is unique and chooses different steps during their transition, based on many factors. Not everyone wants SRS.

Social Situations

I am not here to shock anyone or get attention. I'm just a person like anyone else, and I have a right to be healthy and live in my honest gender.

If I have trusted you enough to share with you that I am a trans person, please keep it private. I will "out" myself to others if I choose to.

If I am visibly gender variant, or I don't fit into the binary of man or woman, and I am out as a trans person, it's ok to educate your friends about pronouns before meeting me in person.

Please don't introduce me as your trans friend.

Please don't ask me to explain my life story or my gender situation to people I've just met.

Please don't ask to see an old, pre-transition picture of me.

Please don't call me whenever a documentary about trans people is on the television. I already know what being trans is about.

If you are unsure what to do or say in a specific situation, please just ask in a respectful way.