

GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION



WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

- A person's innate sense, or internal experience, of their own gender regardless of whether their assigned sex at birth is male or female.
- Gender is a social and legal status. Many countries legally recognize non-binary or third gender classifications, and many societies throughout history have socially recognized gender expansive identities.

WHAT IS GENDER EXPRESSION?

- Describes the way people present or express their gender. This can include physical appearance, clothing, hairstyles, behavior, and more.

Gender identity is a living, growing, experience that can change over time, and is not necessarily tied to sex.

WHY SUPPORTING GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION MATTERS:

- Attacks on LGBTQ+ identities, transgender youth, and gender affirming healthcare contribute to violence against these communities and cause harm to all people.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION:

- Forge Forward: forge-forward.org
- Trans Student Educational Resources: transstudent.org
- The Trevor Project: thetrevorproject.org

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES:

- Find community. Connect with peers in a supportive environment that encourages them to feel pride in their identities.
- Seek out media that feature and celebrate gender expansive people and relationships.
- Express themselves in ways that feel safe and comfortable, and know that they can still have pride in who they are even if they cannot share that identity with others at this time.

HOW ADULTS CAN SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Work with community partners - including schools - to create gender-inclusive, affirming environments that foster the humanity of transgender and gender non-confirming students.
- Help create safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with the young people in your life.
- Talk with youth respectfully about their LGBTQ+ identity and use names and pronouns correctly.
- Avoid making assumptions about a person's gender identity based on their appearance or their sex assigned at birth.
- Believe that a young person can have a happy and healthy future as an LGBTQ+ adult.
- If you misgender someone (use their wrong name, pronouns, or form of address for their gender) by accident, apologize swiftly without making an excessive show out of the mistake.

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