

TRANSGENDER 101

What does transgender mean?

As the name implies, someone who is transgender is someone who transgresses gender boundaries. Transgender behavior encompasses everything from a boy wearing fingernail polish to someone having surgery to change their sex. Transsexuals are people whose gender identity is opposite of their anatomical sex. Many (but not all) transsexual people take hormones and/or undergo sex reassignment surgery. Female to male (FTM) people were born physically female but see themselves as partially to fully masculine. Male to female (FTM) people were born physically male, but see themselves as partially to fully feminine.

Helpful terms to know

Transgender: A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

Transsexual: A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Transgendered (Trans) Community: An umbrella term for people who transcend gender norms in a wide variety of ways. The central ethic of this community is unconditional acceptance of individual exercise of freedoms including gender and sexual identity and orientation.

FTM / F2M: - Abbreviation for female-to-male transgender or transsexual person.

MTF / M2F: - Abbreviation for male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

Cisgender (adj.): refers to a person who does not transcend traditional gender boundaries or a person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society

Cissexual: A person whose preferred gender identity matches the one designated to them at birth; i.e. non-transsexual people.

Cisgender Privilege: The set of privileges conferred to people who are believed to be cisgender. (E.g. having one's preferred pronouns used, no harassment in public restrooms, no denial of expected access to health care, etc.)

Sex: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female' to the exclusion of any others.

Gender Identity: A person's sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

Gender Normative: A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society.

Gender Variant: A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.).

Genderqueer: A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Often includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.

Passing: Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual.

Transition: This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

A note about these definitions: due to the ongoing learning of trans people and their allies, definitions and popular terms change over time. This sheet represents information at the time of publication, and is designed to be helpful in understanding some basic terms with the community. It should not be considered definitive.

This terminology sheet is based on a document created by Elizabeth R. Green and Eric N. Peterson at the LGBT Resource Center at UC Riverside □ 2003-2004 , with additional input from www.wikipedia.org and many kind people who helped use create and revise these definitions.

FAQ'S AND ANSWERS REGARDING TRANSGENDER ISSUES

1. What is the transgender community like at UCSD?

There are a number of folks who frequent the LGBT Resource Center who are non-gender conforming. Identities and labels are fluid, and some have identified as gender queer, transgender, MtF trans (pre-op and post-op), FtM trans (pre-op and post-op). A number of staff across campus identify as post-operative transsexual, and although they are living full time as their understood sex, they are still connected with our community.

The staff and communities of folks who frequent the LGBT Resource Center provide a warm, welcoming family for everyone, including and especially our transgender family.

The transgender community at UCSD is small, and fluctuates from year to year, as people start and leave UCSD, through transferring, graduating, finding new jobs, etc. The transgender community at UCSD has been integrated into the significantly larger lesbian, gay and bisexual community at UCSD and specifically at the LGBT Resource Center. The center provides a home for everyone in our community, regardless of (and especially because of) their gender identity or sexual orientation.

2. Is there a non-discrimination policy regarding gender identity?

Yes. On December 18, 2003, the University of California nondiscrimination policies were revised to clarify that discrimination on the basis of gender identity is prohibited. The affected policies and statements, which can be found online at <http://lgbt.ucsd.edu>, are:

- University of California Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy Regarding Academic and Staff Employment;
- Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy Statement for University of California Publications Regarding Employment Practices;
- Nondiscrimination Policy Statement for University of California Publications Regarding Student-Related Matters;
- Personnel Policies for Staff Members 12, Nondiscrimination in Employment; and
- Academic Personnel Policy 035, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination in Employment.

The changes incorporate the addition of "gender identity" as a protected status under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, which became effective January 1, 2004.

3. I have heard of a group called the Transgender Intersex Alliance. What is it?

The Transgender Intersex Alliance is a safe supportive environment to discuss gender, the gender/sex matrix, sexuality, female/male dichotomy, transgender identities, and anything else that comes to mind... All identities are welcome.

The Transgender Intersex Alliance has met in different forms and styles since 2001 at UCSD. The group is currently not meeting regularly, but if there is interest expressed by a core group of people, the group often reforms itself for periods of time. If you are interested in re-invigorating the group, please contact Jan Estrellado, Assistant Director of Education, at jeestrellado@ucsd.edu.

4. In what ways can I get involved?

All of our student organizations are open and inclusive of the transgender community. For a listing of those organizations and contact information, click on the word meetings to the left. Our Women's Peer Counseling Group and Men's Peer Counseling Group are open to trans women and trans men, respectively. Of course, bio women who are non gender conforming are welcome in Women's Group, and bio men who are non gender conforming are welcome in Men's Group.

In addition to the groups and organizations, the UCSD LGBT Speakers Bureau is a powerful way to educate the broader UCSD community regarding gender identity and sexual orientation. If you are interested in joining the UCSD LGBT Speaker's Bureau, go to <http://lgbt.ucsd.edu>.

5. Do you have any counselors on campus that know about transgender issues?

The LGBT Resource Center has excellent relationships with the staff of Psychological and Counseling Services. Training with the staff has been regular and recurring. Specific counselors on staff have lived experiences with the LGBT community that provides them with specific insight into our community. Certain individuals are excellent resources for our transgender student community, and contacting the LGBT Resource Center for connections will ensure the best quality service possible.

Counseling may be helpful for a range of issues affecting transgender students, such as adjustment to UCSD; identity expression and transformation; coping with stress, depression, or anxiety; relationship issues; and family concerns.

However, the services provided of Psychological and Counseling Services would not meet the requirements set about by the DSM IV to diagnose and treat Gender Identity Dysphoria, and therefore, students interested in hormone treatments and surgical transitions would need to seek services off campus. The staff of Psychological and Counseling Services can make excellent referrals to local physicians and counselors who are sensitive to transgender people.

6. Are there gender neutral restrooms on campus?

In the Fall of 2003 the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues partnered with the staff of Building Services to provide a list of all the single-stall, lockable restrooms on campus. Several accessible, single-occupancy restrooms are located throughout the UCSD campus. Specific locations of these men's, women's, unisex, and wheelchair-accessible restrooms are listed. The list is extensive, and is organized by College and major University area. The list can be reviewed at

<http://blink.ucsd.edu/Blink/External/Topics/Policy/0,1162,13561,00.html>

These facilities also help families with children--such as mothers bringing sons, or fathers bringing daughters, to a restroom--and people with disabilities who need the assistance of an attendant of a different gender.

7. Is on-campus housing transgender-friendly?

Transgender students are valued members of the on-campus living community at UCSD. In order to provide support for the needs of incoming and current transgender students, all Residence Life offices at the six colleges and Housing & Dining Services strongly encourage students to contact Leanne Besachio, the Residence Life Liaison, at (858) 822-1782, lbesachio@ucsd.edu.

On-campus housing at UCSD is gendered in all colleges, and co-ed housing is only available for selected continuing (not first year) students in the Muir College Apartments.

New, first year incoming students are encouraged to contact the Residence Life Liaison before arriving to UCSD. For the 2006-2007 year, the priority deadline would be before August 1, 2006. In meeting the needs of the incoming student, UCSD will recognize and respect the gender identity the student has established with Housing. Staff will not ask for any more information than is required to meet the student's housing needs, and all disclosed information will be kept strictly confidential.

The Residence Life Liaison will, through conversation and specific knowledge regarding the living environments of the colleges, and in coordination with the Resident Deans, provide students with the options available to them, given their college. There are significant responsibilities that all students have when applying for housing, including active engagement in finding roommates, selecting living environments, etc. However, at no time will Housing force a transgender student, who has followed Housing procedures and met the above responsibilities, to have to find a comfortable, welcoming housing assignment on their own.

All Residence Life professional staff, including the Resident Deans and Assistant Resident Deans, have received extensive training regarding transgender issues. Resident Advisors/Hall Advisors (RA/HA's) also receive training from both the LGBT Resource Center and through their own Residence Life Office.

8. What if my roommate(s) freak out?

If students have a conflict with a roommate because of their gender identity or expression, students should see their Resident Dean or Assistant Resident Dean first. The Resident Deans and Assistant Resident Deans have taken part in training specifically on gender identity/expression issues. If talking with the Resident Dean or Assistant Resident Dean brings no resolution, a student can discuss the matter with the Dean of the College, the Campus Ombudsperson, or the Director of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center.

9. Where can I find transgender-friendly roommates?

The LGBT Resource Center provides a bulletin board specifically designed to facilitate roommate matching amongst our community. There is no screening of the posts on the board, so anyone utilizing the information is encouraged to make safe, reasonable and cautious decisions in selecting and evaluating potential roommates.

10. Are athletic facilities transgender-friendly?

The LGBT Resource Center has been actively engaged with the staff at all athletic facilities to determine the best ways to meet the needs of transgender students given the gendered locker rooms at all of the on-campus facilities. The training and conversations are ongoing as of Spring 2006, and policies and procedures will hopefully be in place by Fall 2006.

Currently, no specific training has been done with the front-line staff at any of the athletic facilities regarding transgender issues. None of the athletic facility locker rooms are designated as gender neutral. Transgender students have been confronted by patrons in the gender restrooms in the past.

11. How can I change my name on campus records?

Names can be changed on campus records by completing the Name Changes & Corrections form available from the Academic Records Staff in the Registrars Office. The Registrar is located at the corner of Gilman Drive and Meyers Drive, across from the Financial Aid Office.

Having a name and gender change through the Registrar effectively changes the student's information when that information is accessed in the future (such as for course registration, the directory listing, and transcripts). No one outside of the Registrar's Office would know that any information in your record has been changed.

12. How can I change my gender on campus records?

There is no easy official way to change your gender on your campus records. However, changing your gender through the Social Security Administration and the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will make the process as simple as changing your name. See "How can I change my name on campus records" above.

Social Security

To change your name with the Social Security Administration, you will need your old Social Security card, proof of your old identity, your temporary or newly issued driver's license,

and proof of your new identity. Take these materials to a Social Security office, fill out an SS-5 form (available online at www.ssa.gov), and request that they change your name.

While Social Security officially requires that you have already completed, or at least started, surgery in order to get your gender marker changed, this policy is not universally enforced. Often, people who have not started surgery, but who have a letter from their health care provider stating that they are undergoing treatment get the marker changed.

Driver's License

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has created a form (DL 328) for requesting a change to your name and/or gender. You can pick up a copy of the form at any DMV location - usually at the information desk. (Changing your name and/or gender on your Driver's License, does not create a legal name or gender change. It simply creates identification that matches your name usage and gender presentation.)

You do not need a court order to change your name. However, to change your gender marker, a licensed California physician will need to document the fact that you are transgender by signing the DL 328 form. Once you have completed the form, take it back to the DMV and pay the fee (currently \$12). You will receive a temporary license with your new information.

Your permanent license will not be issued until the DMV runs a check against your Social Security records. Therefore, in order to get your permanent license, you'll need to also update your Social Security records (see above). If you have any on-going problems with this procedure, call the main DMV office in Sacramento (916-657-4484). An analyst can assist you in dealing with local officers who may be confused or uncooperative.

Special note: If you are under 18 years of age, you will need a signature from a parent or guardian to request a name and/or gender change on your license. Use form DL 44 for this signature.

13. Is Student Health Services knowledgeable about transgender health issues?

Although no physician, nurse, or health care provider has come forward as knowledgeable on transgender experiences from the Student Health Services staff, the LGBT Resource Center did provide basic training regarding LGBT issues in December of 2004, which provided some basic knowledge of LGBT issues. Cultural competency was not possible in the 15 minutes allowed for the presentation.

Dr. Brian Murray, Director of Student Health Services, has assured the staff that transgender students are treated with respect, and will receive appropriate medical care for any illness or health issue not related to transgender identity. Healthcare regarding transgender issues is specifically excluded from coverage. See below. Transgender students on campus have reported avoiding Student Health Services.

14. Does the Undergraduate Student Health Insurance Program (USHIP) or Graduate Student Health Insurance Program (GSHIP) cover services for transgender students?

No. There is a specific exclusion in both the Undergraduate Student Health Insurance Program (USHIP) and Graduate Student Health Insurance Program (GSHIP) stating:

The Policy does not cover expenses caused by or resulting from treatment and/or surgery to change the characteristics of the body to those of the opposite sex.

A group of transgender and gender queer identified students met with the USHIP/GSHIP committee in February 2005 to ask the committee to remove the exclusion. Specific statistical documentation regarding potential costs were shared, as well as personal stories of transitioning students. The committee did not recommend to remove the exclusion from the policy. Unless significant activism causes concern, the current policy will not be revisited until 2007 by the USHIP/GSHIP committee.

15. Are the police on campus transgender-friendly?

The University of California Police Department at San Diego is in the process of coordinating training with the LGBT Resource Center. The Chief of Police, Orville King, and members of his senior staff have been to the LGBT Resource Center and we have excellent relationships with them.

If there are any problems or concerns with the UCPD, please contact the LGBT Resource Center. The Community Service Officer's (CSO) are a program of the UCPD. CSO's are not trained in transgender issues at this time. The Residential Security Officers (RSOs) are also a program of the UCPD. RSO's are not trained in transgender issues at this time.

16. Are their academic programs that focus on transgender issues?

Critical Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary program at UCSD offering students the opportunity to study gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationalism as intersecting categories of analysis and experience. The program's curriculum is designed to move students beyond popularized accounts of gender to consider its complex constructions over time and in a variety of cultural, scholarly, and global arenas. Students can expect to encounter a rich spectrum of theoretical and methodological approaches in studying these complex constructions—approaches which all share, despite their differences, a critical orientation in their analyses of gender relations.