

 **GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE**  
**for**

**TRANS & GENDER-DIVERSE PATIENTS**



# WHAT ARE SEX AND GENDER?

## SEX

An individual's sex is assigned at birth, as either male or female, based on external genitalia. If sex is unclear based on external genitalia, it is determined based on other characteristics, such as internal genitalia, chromosomes, and hormones.

## GENDER

Gender is a social construct that has different components, including gender identity and gender expression.

### GENDER EXPRESSION

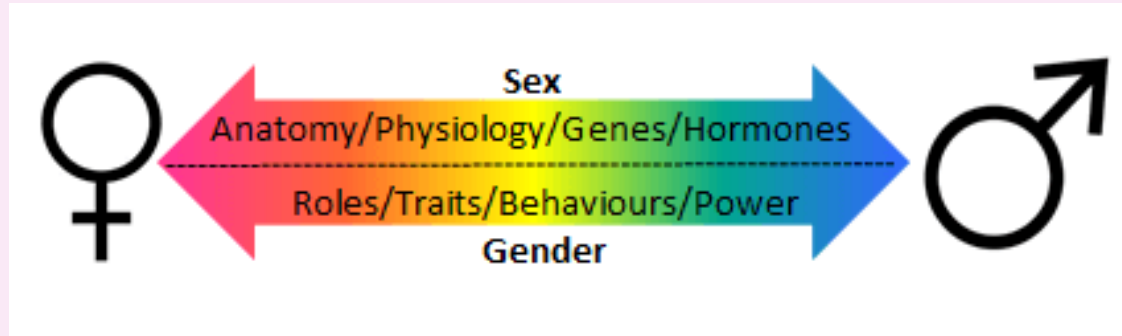
How an individual expresses their gender. For example, through their appearance, personality, and behaviour. Culture and historical period influence what is perceived to be masculine or feminine (i.e. pink for girls, blue for boys).

### GENDER IDENTITY

An individual's self-awareness of their gender, for example, being male (boy or man), female (girl or woman), or an alternative gender (genderqueer or transgender).

# Aren't sex and gender the same thing?

No! Sex and gender are different, though people are often taught that they are the same. Sex and Gender have historically been understood as consisting of a binary of male and female. However, sex and gender exist on a continuum.



# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS



## CISGENDER (CIS)

For individuals who are cisgender, their gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth, for example, someone who is assigned male at birth who identifies as a man.



## TRANSGENDER (TRANS)

Transgender refers to individuals who cross or transcend the culturally defined boundaries of gender. Individuals who identify as trans often feel that their gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. This occurs to differing degrees for each trans person.

# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS



## TRANSMASCULINE

Describes individuals who were assigned female at birth and transition to men/boys, or identify along the masculine spectrum.



## TRANSFEMININE

Describes individuals who were assigned male at birth and transition to women/girls, or who identify along the feminine spectrum.



## GENDERQUEER

Individuals whose gender does not fit the historical gender binary of male and female.



## NON-BINARY

Describes individuals who do not identify with the historical gender binary. This can include those who are agender, genderqueer, etc.



## INTERSEX

A term used to describe individuals who are not easily characterized as male or female based on their bodies, reproductive structures, chromosomes, and hormones.



## TWO-SPIRIT

A term used by some Indigenous people to describe diversity in both gender identity and sexual orientation.



# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS



## GENDER-DIVERSE

An umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender identities are beyond the gender binary of male/female.



## GENDER-FLUID

Individuals for whom gender identity and expression are not fixed---they may change and evolve over time.



## AGENDER

Individuals who do not identify as having a gender. Other terms include genderless, gender-free, or non-gendered.



## GENDER DYSPHORIA GENDER INCONGRUENCE GENDER EUPHORIA

The experience of distress or discomfort when one's sex assigned at birth is different from their gender identity. Not experienced by all people whose identity is outside the gender binary.



WHO term for gender dysphoria. This term aims to depathologize gender differences, and validate the gender spectrum.



Opposite of dysphoria. When someone's sex assigned at birth is congruent with their gender identity. Can bring about feelings of joy and comfort.



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “TRANSITION”?



For trans people, transitioning means to shift from the socialized gender identity associated with their sex assigned at birth, to a gender identity that more closely aligns with how they feel.

Transitioning looks different for every trans person, and may include a combination of transitions in the following key areas:

- Social and/or Legal
- Medical
- Surgical



It is important to keep in mind that not all individuals who identify as trans choose to, or are able to transition. For some, it may not be safe for them to transition for many reasons, including lack of acceptance and support from family, friends, society, culture, religion, etc.

# TRANSITIONING

## SOCIAL AND/OR LEGAL



Non-medical ways of affirming one's gender identity:

- Name change
- Change in pronouns
- Change in appearance (i.e. clothing, posture, gait, etc.)
- Binding, packing, or tucking
- Legal changes can involve changing one's name and sex marker on official identification



## MEDICAL



Medical interventions such as:

- Hormone Therapy (anti-androgen, estrogen, testosterone)
- Transition-related surgeries





# TRANSITIONING

## SURGICAL

Transition-related surgeries may be undertaken by some trans people in order to affirm their gender identity.



### Transfeminine Surgeries

- Top Surgery:
  - Breast augmentation (if not achieved through hormone therapy, or to desired degree)
- Bottom Surgery:
  - Vaginoplasty

### Transmasculine Surgeries

- Top Surgery:
  - Double Mastectomy
- Bottom Surgery:
  - Metaoidioplasty
  - Phalloplasty



# TRANS PEOPLE AND DISCRIMINATION



## TRANSPHOBIA

Fear and hatred of trans people, manifested as discrimination, verbal and physical violence, sexual violence, and microaggressions.



## CISSEXISM

The belief that the identities of cisgender individuals are more valid than those of transgender individuals. Cissexism maintains the structures of oppression that work to pathologize and erase trans people.



# WHAT IS GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



## WHAT

Gender-affirming care constitutes a range of services that provide life-saving health care to trans people. This includes transition-related services and other medical care, mental health care, and social services.



## WHY

Trans people experience high rates of suicide, and face discrimination and other barriers that make accessing healthcare difficult.







# 77%


Percentage of trans Ontarians who have contemplated suicide in their lifetime. By comparison, only 11.25% of cisgender Canadians have experienced suicidal ideation in their lifetime.



# 46%



Percentage of trans Ontarians who have attempted suicide in their lifetime. By comparison, only 3.82% of cisgender Canadians have attempted suicide in their lifetime.



# WHY IS GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE IMPORTANT?



**20%**

Percentage of trans people who were denied prescriptions for hormones.



**50%**

Percentage of trans people who felt uncomfortable discussing trans-specific concerns with their doctor.

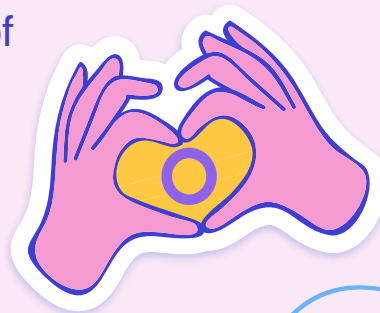


**21%**

Percentage of trans people who have avoided the ER due to the possibility of negative encounters related to their trans status.

# WHAT IS INTERSEX?

- A term use to describe individuals who are not easily characterized as male or female based on their bodies, reproductive structures, chromosomes, and hormones.
- There are more than 40 known intersex variations. These conditions are also known collectively as Differences of Sex Development
- Intersex variations can have different impacts, for example:
  - External genitalia may be typical of one sex, while internal anatomy may be typical of another sex
  - Variations of X and Y sex chromosomes
  - Variations in the appearances of genitals

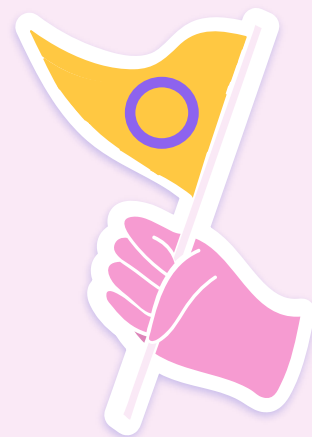




# WHAT IS INTERSEX?



- Approximately 1.7% of people are intersex
- Some intersex features may be present at birth, while others may not be apparent until other life stages (i.e. puberty, family planning)
- It is important to recognize that being intersex is not a health issue—intersex variations are normal, biological variations
- Unfortunately, intersex people have routinely been subject to medical and surgical interventions with the belief that these will help to ‘normalize’ their appearance or reduce stigma
  - They are often carried out before the intersex person can consent
  - They have impacted the health and wellbeing of intersex people
  - Have caused intersex people to avoid accessing healthcare due to trauma and stigma



# WHAT'S IN A NAME?



- Names are an important part of our identity! Think about how you feel when someone gets your name wrong, or calls you by a nickname you dislike
- Now imagine changing your name in order to be more aligned with your identity, and having others continue to use the name that you no longer identify with
  - This is known as “deadnaming”
- Deadnaming may be done unintentionally, as when someone is adjusting to calling someone by a new name; other times, it may be done intentionally
- Using a person’s chosen name can help them to feel affirmed and respected
- As with pronouns, mistakes happen! If you unintentionally use someone’s deadname, apologize and correct yourself





# WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?



**He  
Him**

## What are they?

These are the linguistic tools that we use to refer to ourselves and others. It is important not to assume someone's pronouns based on their appearance—instead, ask!

**They  
Them**

## Context matters

People may use different pronouns in different circumstances. This could be for safety reasons, so it is important not to out people! Ask how to use someone's pronouns correctly if you aren't sure.



**She  
Her**

## Why use them?

Sharing your own pronouns demonstrates understanding of the importance of pronouns, and using others' correct pronouns affirms their identity

**Ze  
Zir**

## Not a suggestion

Pronouns are not “preferred.” This assumes that someone's pronouns are just suggestions, which can invalidate the person's identity



# WHAT IF I USE THE WRONG PRONOUNS?



It is important to do your best to use a person's correct pronouns, but sometimes, mistakes happen!

If you unintentionally use someone's incorrect pronouns, do the following:

- Apologize for the error (only once is needed)
- Quickly correct the error and state the pronouns you have intended to use (the person's correct pronouns)
- Do not dwell on the error—move on!

Continuing to apologize only brings more attention to the error, and puts the individual in the uncomfortable position of having to comfort the person who made the error, or tell them it's okay, when in fact it's not.



# HOW CAN I NORMALIZE THE USE OF PRONOUNS AND INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?



1. Instead of referring to a group of people as “you guys,” choose more gender-neutral options such as:

- “Hi, everyone!”
- “Hey, y’all!”
- “Theydies and Gentlethems!”
- “Guys, gals, and non-binary pals”



2. In group settings such as meetings, have everyone introduce themselves, including their pronouns if they feel comfortable doing so. On virtual platforms, include your pronouns, along with your name.

3. Include your pronouns in your email signature. See below for an example using the organization’s updated signature guidelines



# WHERE CAN I ACCESS GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE IN THUNDER BAY?



## FORIA AND NORWEST CHC

- Norwest Community Health Centres has partnered with Foria Clinic to provide gender-affirming healthcare for transgender and gender-diverse people
- Services are free, and offered both virtually and in-person. Services include:
  - Counselling and support groups
  - Sexual health and screening
  - Medical support for those who are transitioning
  - Reproductive care
  - ...and many other services!



## OAK MEDICAL

- Oak Medical offers an open-access sexual health clinic
- Care is provided by Nurse Practitioners, on a fee-for-service basis (\$40-\$180)
- Includes gender-affirming hormone therapy and contraception, among other services

# THANKS!



**DO YOU HAVE  
ANY QUESTIONS?**

Reach out to the Equity,  
Diversity, and Inclusion  
Steering Committee



**CREDITS:** This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, and includes icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**

Please keep this slide for attribution



# REFERENCES



- A. Scheim, C. Lopez, G. Bauer, J. Brasseur, J. Baptiste, J. Navarro, M. Smith, N. Blodgett, S. Churchill, T. Coleman. (15 Apr 2024). "Health and Well-Being Among Rural and Small Town Trans and Non-Binary People." Retrieved from: <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/report-health-and-well-being-among-rural-and-small-town-trans-and-non-binary-people/>
- Bourns, A. (2020). "Guidelines for gender-affirming primary care with trans and non-binary patients." *Rainbow Health Ontario & Sherbourne Health*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Guidelines-FINAL-4TH-EDITION-With-2023-Updates.pdf>
- Carpenter, M. "What do intersex people need from doctors?" *O&G Magazine Vol. 20 No.4 (Summer 2018)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ogmagazine.org.au/20/4-20/what-do-intersex-people-need-from-doctors/>
- Clemens, K.C. (02 June 2021). "What does it mean to be cissexist?" *Healthline*. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/transgender/cissexist>
- Cleveland Clinic. (17 Nov 2021). "Why deadnaming is harmful." Retrieved from: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/deadnaming>
- Deutsch, M.B. (17 Jun 2016). "Creating a safe and welcoming clinic environment." *UCSF Transgender Care*. Retrieved from: <https://transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines/clinic-environment>
- GenderGP. (16 May 2024). "What is agender? Finding out I'm agender." Retrieved from: <https://www.gendergp.com/what-is-agender/>





# REFERENCES



- Health Direct. (n.d.). “Intersex variation.” Retrieved from: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/intersex-variation#:~:text=For%20many%20people%20with%20intersex,typical%20anatomy%20on%20the%20inside>
- Hodshire, S. (23 Mar 2023). “Your guide to understanding gender euphoria.” *Healthline*. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/transgender/gender-euphoria>
- Holmes, M., Hunt, R. (Aug 2011). “Intersex health.” *Rainbow Health Ontario*. Retrieved from: [https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/RHO\\_FactSheet\\_INTERSEXHEALTH\\_E.pdf](https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/RHO_FactSheet_INTERSEXHEALTH_E.pdf)
- HRC Foundation. (25 Jul 2023). “Get the facts on gender-affirming care.” *Human Rights Campaign*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care>
- Interserx Human Rights Australia. (17 Mar 2021). “Intersex for allies.” Retrieved from: <https://ihra.org.au/allies/>
- J. Navarro, J. Hallarn, B. Liang, N. Adams, J. Zaitzow, K. Brooks, E. Legare-Tremblay, T. Johnson, J. Pyne, M. Mahendran, M. Smith, S. Churchill, C. Lopez, A. Scheim, G. Bauer. (2024-1-5). “Health and Well-Being Among Disabled Trans and Non-Binary People.” Retrieved from: <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/report-health-and-well-being-among-disabled-trans-and-non-binary-people/>





# REFERENCES



- Katz-Wise, S.L. (03 Dec 2020). "Gender fluidity: What it means and why support matters." *Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School*. Retrieved from: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/gender-fluidity-what-it-means-and-why-support-matters-2020120321544>
- Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. (n.d.). "Gender identity infographic." Retrieved from: <https://staffsocial.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Gender-Identity-info-graphic-003.pdf>
- Speck, K. (2016). "Language and terms." *Trans Primary Care*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/TransHealthGuide/intro-terms.html>
- Speck, K. (2016). "Meeting the healthcare needs of trans clients." *Trans Primary Care*. Retrieved from: <https://bmc1.utm.utoronto.ca/~kelly/transprimarycare/intro-transition.html>
- Speck, K. (2016). "Trans care issues." *Trans Primary Care*. Retrieved from: <https://bmc1.utm.utoronto.ca/~kelly/transprimarycare/intro-needforcare.html>
- Spiteri, S. (28 Mar 2024). "Transgender visibility in Canadian LMI." *Labour Market Information Council*. Retrieved from: <https://lmi-cimt.ca/transgender-visibility-in-canadian-lmi/#:~:text=income%20support%20programs,-.Transgender%20individuals%20face%20significant%20barriers%20to%20employment,for%202SLGBTQ%2B%20individuals%20in%20Canada>







# REFERENCES



- The Trans PULSE Canada Team. (10 Mar 2020). “Health and health care access to trans and non-binary people in Canada. “ Retrieved from <https://transpulsecanada.ca/research-type/reports>
  - Trans PULSE Canada. “Housing barriers among trans and non-binary adults in Canada.” (26 Apr 2023). Retrieved from: <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/responsive-report-housing-barriers-among-trans-and-non-binary-adults-in-canada>
  - UBC Equity and Inclusion Office. (n.d.). “Pride flags.” *University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus*. Retrieved from: <https://equity.ok.ubc.ca/pride-flags/>
  - UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Centre. (n.d.). “Pronouns and inclusive language.” *UC Davis*. Retrieved from: <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/pronouns-inclusive-language>
- 