

# What does it mean to be Transgender?

Transgender people have a way of expressing themselves, describing their gender, or gender identity (Knowing that you are a boy or girl) that doesn't always fit society's rules- that boys are boys and girls are girls.

## What is Transgender?

**Transgender**, or **Trans**: means someone whose gender differs from the one they were given when they were born. Transgender people may identify as male or female, or they may feel that neither label fits them.

**Transition**: In order to express their chosen gender, transgender people may transition, or change, from the gender they were given at birth. They may change their names, pronouns or style of dress. Some transgender people also choose a medical transition, with the help of medical specialists, who will prescribe hormones and/or surgery.

**Transsexual**: a person who lives in a different gender to the one they were given when they were born. For example, someone who was called a 'boy' when they were born may feel very strongly that they are really a girl. They would be called a trans woman. If someone was labelled a 'girl' at birth, and they later realise that they are male, they would be called a trans man.

**Gender Identity**: a person's internal feelings, and the labels they use, such as male, female, or transgender.

## What does Gender mean to you?

Young people have lots of different experiences of gender:

For some, being male or female is something they don't think about, it's automatic.

Other young people feel pressure to measure up to what's expected of them as male or female.

- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people are often told that the only way to be a "real man" or a "real woman" is to be heterosexual/straight.
- Some young people feel that male or female are labels that don't work for them.
- Other young people can feel like they want to change the gender they've been living in during their childhood.

## Is Gender a Box?

In our society, there's lots of stereotypes of how boys and girls are supposed to be:

- Many people act like boys and girls are opposite to each other – completely separate and different.
- Some people say that boys are supposed to like sports.
- Girls can be expected to like pink and have long hair.
- Girls and boys can be encouraged to go into certain types of jobs and not others.

Lots of us find ways to step outside these gender boxes, by wearing different clothes, liking different music, or doing a job that's outside the norm. Transgender people are also dealing with these gender boxes. Some people feel like they don't fit at all into the male or the female box, they might call themselves transgender. Some other people want society to be open when they completely change to the 'opposite' gender (transsexual people).

Note: Gender identity and transgender are different from sexual identity and lesbian, gay and bisexual. Sexual identity is about who you are attracted to; gender identity is about how you identify as male or female.