

Supporting Transgender Employees: Moving Beyond Compliance to Culture Change

Terms Relating to Gender Identity:

- **Cis(gender):** People that identify as their sex assigned at birth. A cisgender/cis person is not transgender.
- **Trans(gender):** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end.
- **Non-Binary:** Preferred umbrella term for a person that doesn’t identify as male or female.
 - N.B. – see also Gender Queer, Gender Non-Conforming, Gender Fluid
 - N.B. - Not all non-binary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as non-binary.
- **Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. These traits may be noticeable at birth, detected later in life, or not discovered at all.
- **Gender Expression:** The physical manifestation of one’s gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine or feminine).
 - **Cross-Dressing:** The act of dressing and presenting as a different gender. One who considers this an integral part of their identity may identify as a cross-dresser.
 - **Drag:** Exaggerated, theatrical, and/or performative gender presentation.

Terms Relating to Sexuality:

- **Sexual Orientation:** A person’s physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. This is not the same as someone’s gender identity.
- **Heterosexual/Straight:** Attraction to the opposite gender in a binary categorization.
- **Homosexual (Gay/Lesbian):** Attraction to the same gender in a binary categorization.
- **Bisexual:** Attraction to men and women.
- **Pansexual:** Attraction to many/any gender(s).
- **Asexual:** The lack of a sexual attraction, and one identifying with this orientation.



Terms Relating to a Transgender Person's Experience:

- **Transition:** A person's process of developing and assuming a gender expression to match their gender identity.
- **Presenting:** Appearing in public as the gender identity one feels most comfortable.
- **Passing:** Being perceived by others as the gender the person identifies.
- **Coming Out:** Self-disclosure of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

HOW TO BE A GOOD ALLY

Please Don't's:

- **Misgender:** Using the wrong pronoun or gender identification.
 - Often an accident, but sometimes it is meant maliciously.
- **Deadnaming:** Using someone's birth name during or after their transition.
- **Outing:** Revealing someone's gender identity or sexuality without their permission.
- **Use the term "transsexual," "tranny," or "transvestite":** These are considered outdated and inappropriate
- **Talk about someone as "passing":** Whether or not someone is "passing" as their identified gender is a sensitive issue and better left undiscussed.
- **Ask after the state of someone's genitalia:** Surgeries vary from person to person, and not every trans person wants, needs, or has access to any surgical intervention as part of their transition.
- **Sex-Change:** The appropriate term is "gender affirming surgery."

But If You Do's:

- Apologize
- Ask for the correct name/term/pronouns
- Don't repeat the mistake

An Inclusive Introduction:

"Hello! My name is _____. I use the pronouns She/Her/Hers, He/Him/His, They/Them/Theirs."

Additional Resources:

Katie Couric Documentary: <http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/gender-revolution-a-journey-with-katie-couric/>. The full documentary is available on Netflix and has been posted on Facebook.

The information on these pages was shared with audience members who attended the Cincinnati Opera's production "As One" this past summer. The insights were informed by clinicians and staff at Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, which operates a clinic for transgender children and their families.

HRC's broad resources related to Transgender people can be found at www.hrc.org/transgender and its Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace: A Toolkit for Employers at www.hrc.org/transtoolkit.

