



How to Respect a Transgender Person

Basic Information

Please use language that corresponds to my gender identity, even if my body does not seem to match, and even when talking about my past.

If you are still adjusting to my transition, it is normal to make mistakes with pronouns. Don't draw attention to it. Just correct yourself and carry on.

A transgender woman is male-to-female. A transgender man is female-to-male. It is never the other way around.

Don't assume my gender identity defines my sexual orientation. Who I am attracted to is totally separate from my gender. If I am a transsexual woman who likes women, treat me no differently than any other lesbian.

Don't expect me to conform to the stereotypes of my gender. I wear clothes I like and I have a variety of interests, just like everyone else.

Please don't use my old name or ask what it was. Instead of saying "back when you were Fred", say "before you came out as a woman".

Don't use my name in the 3rd person as if I was someone else, e.g. "Are you dressing as Lisa now?"

If you use the word transgender (or trans), it's better to use it as an adjective to describe a person, not as a noun, e.g. trans people, trans folks, trans guy.

The term "transgender" is an umbrella term that includes any and all gender variant people: transsexual people, cross-dressers, drag kings and queens, intersexuals, genderqueers, bigendered people, and many other types. Drag performers and cross-dressers are typically not transsexual people. Please don't call it cross-dressing if I am wearing clothes that match my gender.

Don't assume that I have chosen to be a transgender person. The only choice I have made is whether or not to accept my situation and fix it to live a healthier life.

Transitioning

Use the word "transition" to describe what I am going through or went through.

The changes I make to my body are not cosmetic, but rather reconstructive. Having a body I am comfortable with is vital to my health.

Please don't openly talk about my genitals any more than you would for a non-trans person.

If I am a transgender guy getting top surgery, then I am not "getting my breasts removed." I am getting a chest reconstruction.

Don't immediately assume that genital sexual reassignment/realignment surgery (SRS) is my priority. Every transgender person is unique and chooses different steps during their transition, based on many factors. Not everyone wants SRS.

Social Situations

I am not here to shock anyone or get attention. I'm just a person like anyone else, and I have a right to be healthy and live in my honest gender.

If I have trusted you enough to share with you that I am a transsexual person, please keep it private. I will "out" myself to others when I am ready.

If I am visibly gender variant, or I don't "pass" well, and I am out as a transsexual person, it's ok to educate your friends about pronouns, before meeting me in person.

Please don't introduce me as your transsexual friend.

Don't ask me to explain my life story or my gender situation to people I've just met.

Ask permission before taking a photo of me or before displaying old, pre-transition pictures of me.

Don't call me whenever a documentary about transsexuals is on the television. I already know what being transgender is about.

If you are unsure what to do or say in a specific situation, please ask and I'll help you out.