

Fact Sheet and Glossary

Family members may enter conversations about gender with different ideas of what “transgender” means, or more or less familiarity with language commonly used to discuss gender. This fact sheet and glossary can help family members create a shared foundation for talking about gender. These resources can be consulted before starting conversations about gender, as a reference during conversations as questions arise, and revisited between conversations.

*Below are **four important facts** that might be helpful to know as you start having conversations about gender with your family.*

1

Gender identity development is often a lifelong process (for all people, not just transgender and nonbinary people) and can begin at any point in a person’s life.

2

It is not “unnatural” to identify with a gender different from the one someone was assigned at birth. People who have this experience may identify as transgender and/or nonbinary.

3

Gender and sexual orientation are different concepts: a person can be any gender in combination with any sexual orientation. Even though gender and sexual orientation are interrelated, a person’s romantic and sexual attractions do not determine their gender identity.

For example, a person can be a transgender man and be attracted to men, women, nonbinary people, any other gender(s), or to any combination of genders.

4

Gender *identity* and *expression* are separate concepts: a person can be any gender, regardless of the way they portray their gender. Gender may be expressed through behavior and outward appearance such as clothing, hair style, language use, and voice.

For example, a person who identifies as a woman and wears clothes that are often associated with masculinity is still a woman.

Below are **several definitions** of key terms and concepts that are used to describe and discuss gender throughout the toolkit.

<p>Gender Identity</p>	<p>The gender that someone understands themselves to be. Additionally, the descriptor(s) or adjective(s) a person uses to communicate their gender.</p> <p><i>Examples include (but are not limited to): man/male, woman/female, nonbinary, transgender, bigender, and agender. Pronouns used to describe gender include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and other variations.</i></p>
<p>Gender Expression</p>	<p>A collection of cultural and social markers that are often used to communicate various identities (including gender, ethnicity, class, religion, etc.) to others.</p> <p><i>Examples include (and are not limited to) clothes, makeup, manner of speaking, hobbies, and attitude.</i></p>
<p>Gender Role</p>	<p>A socially and culturally determined set of expectations for behavior, responsibilities, and personality traits that are associated with a particular gender. These may shape how an individual is expected to be in relationships, at home, at work, and in society at large.</p> <p><i>For example, a gender role for individuals identifying as men may include being physically strong and expressing few emotions.</i></p>
<p>Sex Assigned at Birth</p>	<p>The designation of female or male that was issued to an individual when they were born, typically on their birth certificate. This designation is typically based on biological characteristics, such as chromosomes and the appearance of genitals.</p>
<p>Transgender</p>	<p>Someone that identifies with a gender identity other than the one that was assigned to them at birth.</p> <p><i>For example, someone who was designated female at birth and identifies as any gender other than “woman” may consider themselves transgender. This person could be a trans man, trans masculine, nonbinary, and/or another gender.</i></p>
<p>Cisgender</p>	<p>Someone who identifies with the gender identity that was assigned to them at birth.</p> <p><i>For example, someone who was designated male at birth and identifies as a man, or someone who was designated female at birth and identifies as a woman.</i></p>
<p>Gender Binary</p>	<p>The gender binary represents the two genders that are typically recognized at each end of the gender spectrum (male and female, man and woman).</p>
<p>Nonbinary</p>	<p>Someone who does not identify as a man or as a woman. Nonbinary people identify outside of the gender binary.</p>

<p>Gender Nonconforming</p>	<p>The gender expression or gender identity of a person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to cultural and social norms about what is appropriate for their gender.</p>
<p>Intersex</p>	<p>Any chromosomal, hormonal, and/or anatomical structure that is not designated as strictly “male” or “female”. Typically, the word “intersex” describes <i>biological sex</i> and <u>not</u> <i>gender identity or expression</i>. Intersex people are often assigned a binary gender (male/female) at birth (despite their status as intersex) and may still identify that way.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Who a person is romantically or sexual attracted to, how they identify and label those attractions, and with whom they engage in sexual activities.</p> <p><i>Examples include gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and more.</i></p>
<p>Coming Out</p>	<p>The process of telling a person, institution, or community about a stigmatized identity or medical status that a person holds. In this toolkit, “coming out” usually refers to someone sharing their transgender or nonbinary identity.</p> <p><i>Broadly, this term may also refer to someone communicating about their status as a sexual minority (i.e., non-heterosexual), survivor of sexual violence, person living with HIV, person with a mental illness, person in recovery from substance use, or other identities or experiences that are stigmatized.</i></p>
<p>Gender Transition</p>	<p>Changing one’s gender in a social, medical, legal, or another way. This can include changing a person’s name or pronouns (social transition), changing their body through gender affirming treatments such as hormones or surgery (medical transition), or changing their gender marker or name on identity documents (legal transition).</p>
<p>Privilege</p>	<p>An advantage of any sort, usually based on a social identity (e.g., heterosexual or straight), life circumstance (e.g., wealthy), or some other characteristic that gives a person access to opportunities, resources, and advantages in life. Privilege can also come from exposure to certain experiences (e.g., traveling), meeting certain people, or even reading certain books.</p> <p><i>For example, cisgender people are often privileged to not have to consider which public gendered bathroom they will be safest in. Transgender people often do not have this privilege due to the transphobia that is common in public gendered bathrooms. Able-bodied individuals are often privileged to be able to easily access places and activities. Individuals living with disabilities may be unable to be in places or participate in activities that do not have accommodations for these disabilities.</i></p>