

Gender 101

for

Nonbinary

People



By the Nonbinary Wiki community

The Gender Dragon



Gender is a complex topic, so it's normally broken down into smaller concepts which are easier to define such as gender identity and gender expression, both of which are different from what is called gender assigned at birth. This illustration should help you understand the basics of these concepts.



Gender identity. The internal sense of gender, regardless of physical characteristics, appearance and behaviour. If you identify with the gender assigned at birth, you are cisgender. Otherwise, you are transgender or nonbinary (not identifying as a man or a woman).



Gender expression. The way in which a person expresses their gender identity through clothing, behaviour, posture, mannerisms, speech patterns, activities, pronouns and more.



Assigned gender at birth (AGAB for short). The gender that the doctor assigns everyone after they are born, recorded in the birth certificate. This can be male (AMAB), female (AFAB) and, sometimes, intersex.



Orientation. Enduring personal quality that inclines people to feel sexual or romantic attraction to certain kinds of people, which is usually, but not always, based on their gender. This includes homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality, among others. Their romantic counterparts are homoromantic, heteroromantic, biromantic and aromantic.

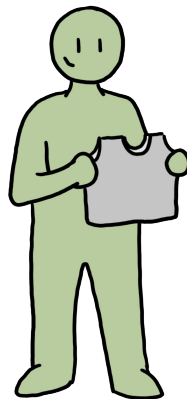
Physical transition

Important: Physical transition is a very complex topic that can't be covered in just two pages. Please, do not use this booklet as your only resource.

Binding

A binder is a piece of underwear used to keep your chest flat, and some nonbinary people use it to keep a masculine appearance. Since binders constrict the ribcage, they can cause serious harm if used improperly. Never use an "improvised" or "homemade" binder, and make sure to get a reliable one, not a cheaply-made one. The most popular ones are GC2B and Underworks, but make sure to do your own research.

If your personal circumstances don't let you buy one, a common alternative is a compression sports bra.



Packing

Packing refers to a practice, normally employed by AFAB trans people, to appear to have male genitalia while wearing clothes. Packing does not have any type of risk, so it can be done with either homemade objects or specialised objects. The advantage of buying specialised devices is that some of them, called STP (Stand To Pee), enable AFAB people to use urinals.

Surgeries

Some nonbinary people use surgeries to better express their identity. There are two main types: top surgery, which involves the chest, and bottom surgery, which involves the genitals. There are other surgeries that affect different parts of the body, but they are not as common among nonbinary people. The main advantage of surgeries over hormone therapy is that all changes are permanent.

Tucking

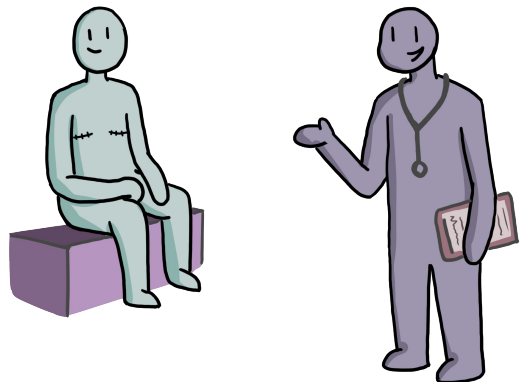
Tucking refers to the practice of hiding external genitals so that they are not apparent when wearing tight clothes. While the specifics of this practice will not be explained here, it is important to remember that it carries some risks of injury. In broad strokes, tucking is uncomfortable but shouldn't be painful. If you experience pain or high discomfort, you should stop tucking and look for a detailed guide. Otherwise, you might cause irreversible damage to your genitals.

Hormone therapy

Hormone therapy involves blocking the body's sex hormones or replacing these with a different set of sex hormones. Sex hormones include estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. Many nonbinary people opt not to undergo hormone therapy, or to follow a full hormone therapy regime equivalent to binary transition. However these are not the only options. Some people take a low dose of their desired sex hormone, possibly combined with a hormone blocker, so that changes come more gradually.

If you wish to start HRT, talk with your doctor first. It is very important to keep the correct amount of hormones, since an unbalanced dose could cause serious health problems.

Changes. The order and speed in which this changes appear is different from person to person. Remember that some of the changes are permanent, while some others are reversible.



Social transition

Names

Our name is a very important part of who we are. It's the way other people call and think about us. And, as with many other parts of our language, it often carries strong gender connotations. This is why many nonbinary people decide to change their name at some point during their life. The change is usually towards a gender-neutral name, although it's not necessarily so.



In order to choose a new name, we strongly advise against cultural appropriation. Some other things to keep in mind are its popularity, its possibilities to be nicknamed and its meaning. Before making it public, you can tell some close friends to test it for a while and see if you like it. If you don't, it's okay to change your mind and choose another name.

Legal name change. If you want to legally change your name, make sure to know the law of your country or state. You can ask a local LGBT organization for guidance.

This Booklet Belongs to:

*

Titles

Titles are not used as often as pronouns. However, they might be very important in formal contexts. With the exception of titles such as Dr and Rev, traditional titles also carry gender connotations. This is why many nonbinary people choose not to use any title or use a gender-neutral title. The most widely used neutral title is, by far, Mx, followed by Ind (which comes from individual).

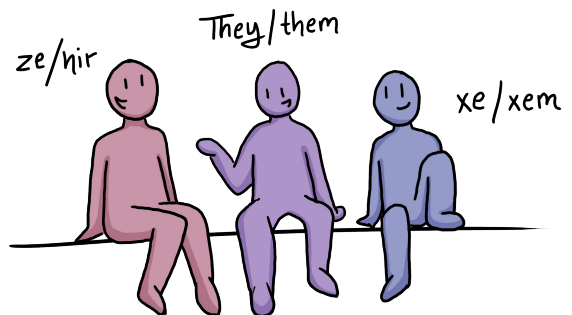
Official usage. Titles are often used in official and legal documents and, often, no gender-neutral titles are offered. If a gender-neutral title is offered, it is generally Mx.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word we use to refer to people without using their name. Some examples are he, she and they. Many nonbinary people use the they/them pronouns, as they are gender-neutral and can be used in singular. However, using a binary pronouns (he/him or she/her) as a nonbinary person is perfectly valid! Additionally, some enbies prefer to use neopronouns, i.e. pronouns that are relatively new and very few people use.

We recommend that you test your pronouns before telling people. To do so, you can ask a close friend to speak to you or they can write about you in third person using the new pronouns. Once you have chosen the new set of pronouns, you can start telling people. It will probably be a difficult change, and many people will make mistakes. But don't feel ashamed to correct them; you have all the right to decide your own pronouns!

Popular neutral pronouns
they/them - xe/xem - e/em -
ze/hir - fae/faer - ey/em



Coming out

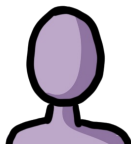
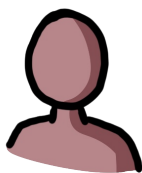
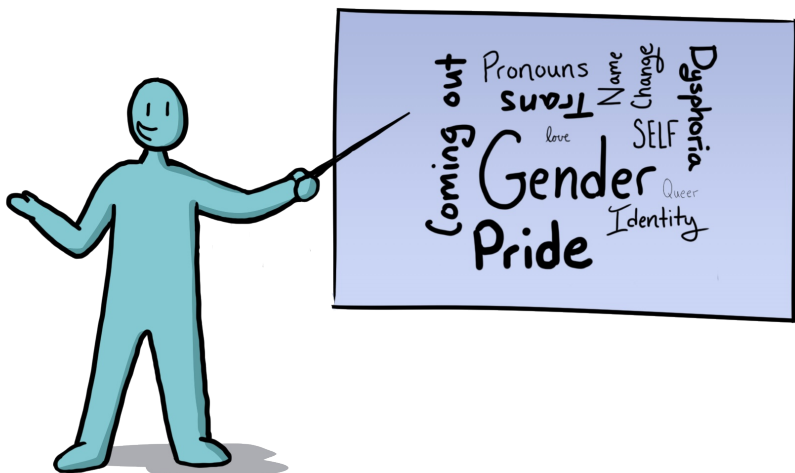
Coming out means making public your gender identity. But, unlike what many people think, it is a process that often starts with coming out to oneself and accepting one's own identity.

Be prepared to come out more than once to different people. But even when you have come out to somebody, they might have some difficulty accepting it. Here are some tips you can use to come out:

- Write it. Write a letter, send an email or a message. If you first write it, it will be easier for you and easier for them, as everyone will have more time to think. However, it's important to have a face-to-face conversation shortly after you send the letter.
- Feelings. Definitions are great to understand concepts. But if you want them to understand you, you will have to let them know how you feel about your gender. Tell them how do you feel when you are misgendered, and tell them how would you feel if they saw you as a nonbinary individual.
- Introduce yourself. If you have changed your name, your pronouns or your title, tell them to start using them when speaking about you.
- Give them resources. They will probably have questions. Answer them, but give them resources as well. The Nonbinary Wiki is a good resource, for example. Find some videos and look for blog posts that talk about similar experiences to yours.
- Do not rush. You do not have to come out if you don't feel ready yet or if it's unsafe to do so. Listen to yourself and decide if you want to do it. Coming out is a big change, and there is no going back.

"I see transition as a type of rebirth, a reincarnation within our lives. It can be painful, and we need to let go of the past which weighs us down. But we can still carry the positive with us, value everything we can, regardless of gender."
-Cora, 37 (Nonbinary)

"I'm always careful at first when raising the topic with new people, if I mention trans* people and they respond badly I stay quiet about my own gender. Safety comes before comfort."
-Ced, 21 (Agender)

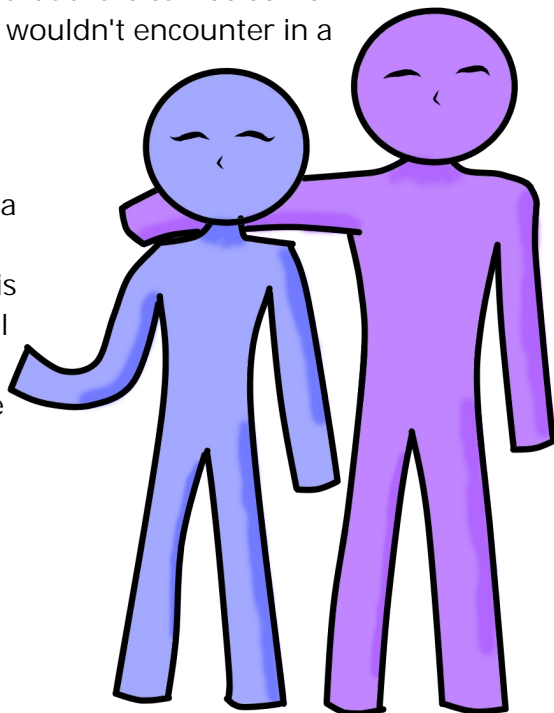


Finding support

Not everyone has the chance to live in a supportive environment. Even if you do, finding support groups, both online and in real life, is a good idea. Not only will they help you with your struggles, but you will get to know people whose experiences are similar to yours. We recommend going to support groups in person, as communication is always easier and better this way. If you have a group near you, make sure they are nonbinary-friendly to avoid uncomfortable situations.

If you prefer online support groups, there are some of them on different platforms. "r/nonbinary" and "r/genderqueer" are the most popular subreddits, and there are several Discord servers too. Keep in mind that, even though they are safe spaces, they are still on the internet, which means that there can be some uncomfortable situations you wouldn't encounter in a real-life support group.

Finally, encourage and help your parents or family to find a support group for families of transgender people too. This is especially important if you still depend on your parents economically. Again, there are some support groups in real life and online for them too - although not as many. Giving them resources is a good way to help them too!



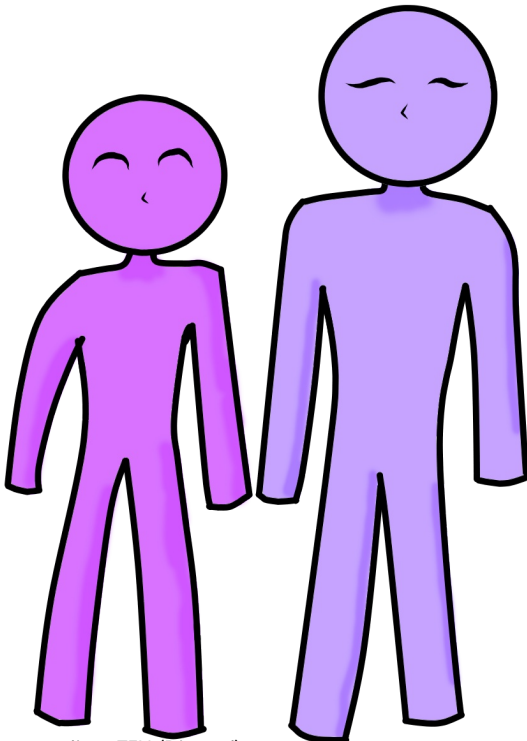
credit: @TFH (Discord)

"Sometimes I prefer talking to other trans people, so I use the internet as there are no support groups near me."

-Jay, 19 (Agender)

"I feel different around cis people than around the nonbinary person I know in real life. When they look at me, I know that they see the real me, while I'm pretty sure that the same does not happen with my other friends."

-Anonymous, 19 (Nonbinary)



credit: @TFH (Discord)

Nonbinary Wiki

The Nonbinary Wiki is an online resource devoted to the visibility, education and advocacy of nonbinary gender identities. Our mission is both to educate people and provide support for nonbinary people. If you wish to learn more about the topics of this booklet, you can visit us on <https://nonbinary.wiki>.

You can also support us at <https://www.patreon.com/nonbinarywiki>

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