

## ***Trans Inclusion Q&A***

### ***1. Trans people – what is their sexuality?***

Gender refers to part of an individual's identity about who they are. Sexuality refers to part of an individual's identity about who they are attracted to. Trans people are individuals whose gender identity is different from the one which they were assigned at birth. As such, they may have as diverse a range of sexualities as cis individuals (people whose gender identity is the same as the one they were assigned at birth).

### ***2. Should I use the term 'the gender identity they were born with'?***

Newborn babies lack the communication skills to tell us what their gender identity is, therefore doctors assign a child a sex/gender on the basis of, usually, external genitalia. For intersex children (up to 1.7% of the population) this may have been assigned based on other sex differences such as chromosomes. As such, the most commonly used term is "Gender assigned at birth" or "Sex assigned at birth". The phrases "assigned female at birth" and "assigned male at birth" are also commonly used.

Some trans individuals feel they have always had a stable gender identity which is different to the gender they were assigned at birth, whereas others may feel their gender identity has been more fluid and changed over the course of their life.

### ***3. What is the difference between gender expression and gender identity?***

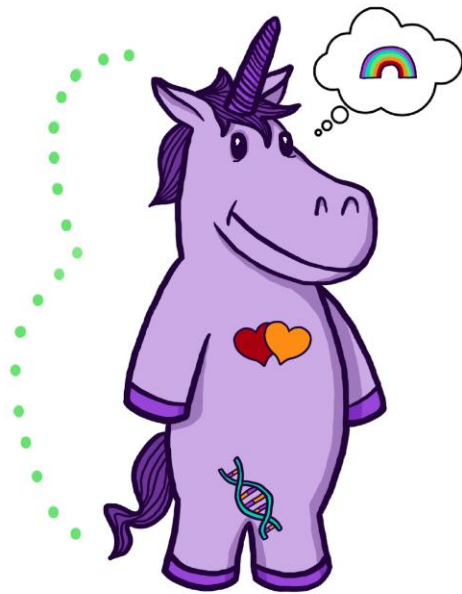
Gender is commonly used to refer to many different elements which can cause confusion. Gender identity is part of what makes up gender: it is what we understand our own identity to be. Gender expression is another part and refers to how some of the ways we dress, behave or decorate our bodies are seen as being aligned to a particular gender within a certain culture. For example in some cultures the wearing of a long and flowing single piece of clothing may variously be seen as feminine, masculine or not gendered at all. As such there is not necessarily an alignment between gender expression and gender identity.

Gender is also sometimes used as an equivalent to sex in legal terms. Sex/legal gender is the legal recognition given to this part of your identity, and currently in the UK this is recorded in one of two categories: male or female. Usually this is declared on a birth certificate based on the judgement of a doctor based on your external genitalia, or may be recognised through a Gender Recognition Certificate for those who have undertaken a legal process to recognise that their gender identity is not the one assigned at birth.

Sex refers to a combination of physical and biological characteristics such as external and internal genitalia, chromosomes and hormone levels. There are many variations in the combinations of these, though usually medical practitioners seek to divide individuals into one of three categories: female, intersex and male. Trans adults may choose to undergo a medical transition which might include surgery or hormones to change some of the elements which make up their biological sex. For trans children and young people in the UK currently, the only medical intervention available to them is puberty blockers - medicine which temporarily prevents the progression of puberty and the changes to genitalia and hormones which develop during this phase of development.

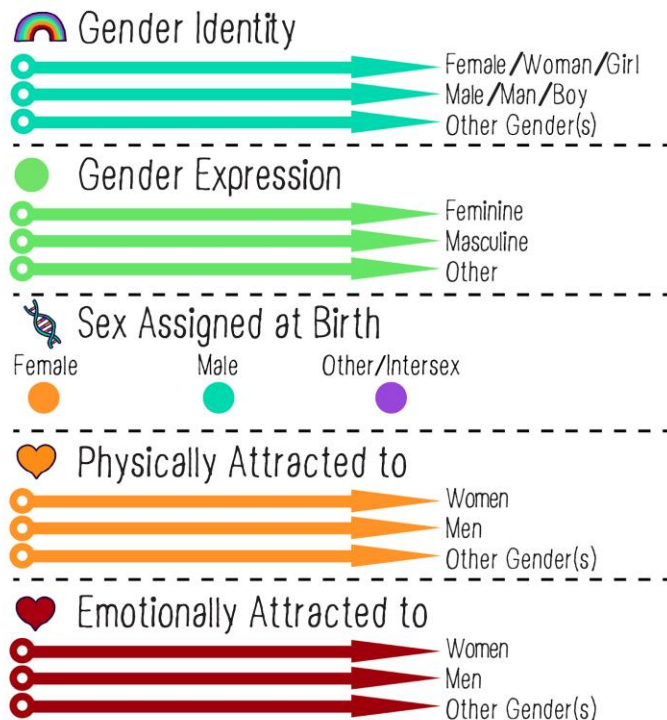
# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



*This diagram is one way of explaining the differences between gender identity, gender expression, sexual and romantic attraction - remember that this is a simplified way of explaining this concept and that not all trans people will view themselves in these terms.*

#### **4. How should I organise accommodation at camps and centres?**

Ask those in your group who they would like to share with and allocate on that basis as far as practically possible.

#### **5. What should I put as tick box options on a form?**

Wherever possible, allow people to self identify their own gender. Where tick boxes are used for gender (to be able to gather data for a larger data set) best practice is to always include a 'prefer to self describe' or 'in another way' option where the respondent can write in their identity if it is not one you have provided. Non-binary is the most commonly used umbrella term for gender identities other than male and female. Try to include option of: Female, Male, Non-binary, Prefer to Self Describe.

#### **6. Should I tell parents if their child is sharing a room with a trans child?**

If you disclose an individual's trans identity without their consent you could be breaking the law. You should be open with parents/guardians about the sleeping arrangements at camp e.g. whether it is in small or large tents, large dorms, small rooms or a shared hall, and explain how you have involved the children in making these decisions. You should make it

clear to parents/guardians that children will be sharing based on who they feel comfortable to share a room or tent with.

### **7. *Should I tell parents that their child is in a mixed gender dorm?***

You should be open with parents/guardians about the sleeping arrangements at camp e.g. whether it is in small or large tents, large dorms, small rooms or a shared hall, and explain how you have involved the children in making these decisions. You should make it clear to parents/guardians that children will be sharing based on who they feel comfortable to share a room or tent with.

### **8. *What does transphobia look like?***

Transphobia is the range of negative attitudes, feelings or actions toward trans people. Transphobia can be emotional disgust, fear, violence, anger, or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to society's expectations of gender. Transphobia might be experienced as bullying, ridicule, harassment including misgendering, taunts, threats of violence, robbery, and false arrest; many feel unsafe in public. Trans people might be refused services or suffer discrimination at school or in the workplace. Many trans people of all ages may feel overwhelmed by an increase in fear-mongering articles and messages being spread about them in the media and online. The stress created by transphobia can cause negative emotional consequences which may lead to substance abuse, homelessness, and a higher rate of suicide.

Transphobia might be experienced through deliberate actions such as:

- Name calling
- Repeatedly using an individual's pronouns incorrectly
- Refusal to use the name an individual wants to be known by
- Exclusion of a trans person

However, it is also commonly experienced through actions and systems which have been normalised by a society which gives privilege to cis individuals (known as cis sexism or cis normativity). This may be experienced through:

- Having to give information on gender identity, or being required to show ID which includes a gender marker, when it is not necessary for the service being provided
- A lack of gender neutral toilets or male gendered toilets with sanitary waste disposal facilities
- Under resourcing of healthcare for trans people
- Activities being offered or divided on the basis of a binary gender system e.g. school PE options being divided on the basis of being for boys or for girls
- School or work uniform options restricted to one particular gender
- Anxiety around interactions with institutions such as the police or government departments due to personal or peer's experiences of discrimination in the past

Transphobia is related to homophobic and sexist attitudes, though transphobia is also apparent in discrimination from others within the wider LGBTQ+ and feminist communities.

### **9. *What support should I offer someone who is binding?***

Binding is the process by which a person manipulates their chest tissue to achieve a flatter chest and/or provide relief from feelings of gender dysphoria, through the use of clothing. The safest method of binding is using a binder specifically designed for this purpose - binders resemble tight sports bras or vests. They are often used by trans men and trans-masculine non-binary people, though may be used by some cis people. For young people in particular, who might not have had access to information or support services, it is important to support them to do this as safely as possible. You can find advice for yourself and for a person you are supporting online: <https://www.wikihow.com/Bind-Safely> is a good place to start.

Binding of any sort restricts your chest and so it is important to support someone who is binding to take breaks, to not bind for more than 8 hours a day and to never sleep in a binder. A binder should be taken off to do activities which require a person to breathe more should such as:

- Exercise (including short periods of running or jogging)
- Lifting heavy objects
- Mowing the lawn on a warm day
- Singing in choir, or playing an instrument that requires breath
- Riding roller coasters

A sports bra can offer a safer level of compression in these circumstances and could be combined with very baggy clothing to disguise body shape. Some people choose to bind using compression bandages. These should NEVER be used as they can cause breathing difficulties and in extreme cases, cracked ribs.

If someone has told you they are binding, have a conversation about how best you can support them to participate fully in group activities safely. They might know what they need in terms of support, or the following questions can be a starting point:

- What sleeping arrangements would make them feel the most comfortable to not bind at night?
- If going away for more than 8 hours, can they put on and take off their binder by themselves? If not, is there somebody else within the group that they would be comfortable in supporting them?
- Can you identify a private place (such as an individual toilet or wash room) where they could go to take short breaks from binding?
- Share the programme for the term/camp. In advance, identify times when it would be safe or unsafe to bind based on the nature of the activity. Discuss whether alterations to the programme could be made e.g. providing sedate activity options between or instead of high exertion activities, or being flexible with what outer clothing needs (e.g. not folk costume) to be worn if this makes an individual more comfortable to not bind while taking part.

Remember that the decision to bind or not to bind is a personal and private choice - if you find out that someone is binding, do not share that information. Not all trans-masculine people choose to, or are able to bind, and this does not undermine or invalidate their identity.

**10. *If I think that someone under my care is binding unsafely what should I do?***

If you think someone is binding, but there are no signs that this is being done unsafely, and they have not told you they are binding, then there is no need to take any immediate action. It is worth informing yourself more about binding in order to provide support should they need it. You can find advice online: <https://www.wikihow.com/Bind-Safely> is a good place to start.

You might wish to run some activities which explore gender and trans identity with the group as a whole, and direct everyone to sites or organisations where they could find further information. IFM's Rainbow Resources is a good place to start to find relevant activities: <http://ifm-sei.org/en/publications-2/educational-resources/rainbow-resources/>

If you think anyone in the group is binding, this is important to consider in risk assessments to ensure everyone's health and wellbeing. Binding can cause pain in the chest, arms or back, and can cause respiratory problems. These symptoms can be exacerbated by high-exertion activities. Try to provide sedate activity options which would allow an individual who is binding to opt out of activities which may be unsafe if they wished.

