

That's Gender Dysphoria, FYI

Trans·gen·der - adjective

Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth.

For as long as human civilization has existed, [there have been people](#) whose experience of their internal gender does not align with the physical features of their body. The Gala, a middle gender priest class of the Sumerian empire, existed over 4,500 years ago. The Indigenous cultures of North America recognized [a third gender](#) far before European colonialism, and still do to this day. Roman emperor Elagabalus (218 AD) insisted on being referred to as Lady rather than Lord, and even put forward a ransom for anyone who could conduct genital reconstruction surgery.

In spite of this, however, the modern understanding of the transgender experience has only existed for approximately 130 years. Even the word “transgender” only dates back to 1965, when John Oliven proposed it as a more accurate alternative to David Cauldwell’s term “transsexual” (coined in 1949), which itself replaced Magnus Hirschfield’s term “transvestite” (1910).

To be transgender is to have a gender identity which does not match the gender you were presumed to have based on the genitalia you were born with. This can mean a person born with a penis is actually a girl, that a person born with a vulva is actually a boy, or that a person with either genital configuration may not wholly fit either side of that spectrum and is non-binary.

A trans person can come to recognize this at any point in their life. Some children identify it at as soon as they are able to grasp the concept of the differences between the sexes, others don’t start to feel anything until the onset of puberty, and still others do not realize that anything is wrong at all until they are fully adults. Many people are simply never exposed to the idea that their gender could mismatch their birth sex, or what that feels like, and thus simply accepted their fate.

Even more common is a perception that even though they have feelings about being unhappy with the gender they were assigned at birth, they believe that this is not the same as what transgender people experience. Some may feel that a wish to be transgender and have transition available is some kind of disrespect towards “real” trans people who knew they were actually boys or girls “born in the wrong body.” These narratives of the transgender experience that have been spread by popular media create a very false impression of just what it means to be transgender and what growing up transgender feels like.

This experience of discontinuity between the societal presumed gender and the internal sense of self is what we describe as Gender Dysphoria, and is common among nearly all trans individuals, regardless of their position within or outside of the gender binary. This has at times been something of a political topic within trans communities, as different groups have their own ideas of what Gender Dysphoria is, how it manifests itself, and what qualifies a person as being trans. By and large, however, this debate is feckless and fruitless, as the definition at the top of this page encompasses the beginning and the ending of how these terms intermingle. If you identify with a gender that does not match what was assigned to you at birth, your claim to the transgender identity is valid, no matter how you experience that incongruence.

The purpose of this site is to document the many ways that Gender Dysphoria can manifest, as well as the numerous forms of gender transition, in order to provide a guide for those who are questioning, those who are starting their transgender journey, those already on their path, and those who simply wish to be better allies.

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