

**Public Health Alerts:** [Two new travel-related measles cases confirmed in the Lower M...](#)



HealthLinkBC



Call 8-1-1

Search

# Gender Identity Issues: Getting Support

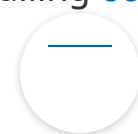
[Home](#) / [Health library](#) / [Health topics](#) / Gender Identity Issues: Getting Support

## British Columbia Specific Information

Gender identity is your internal and psychological sense of yourself. Only you can determine your gender identity.

Sexual orientation is a term used to describe your pattern of emotional, romantic or sexual attraction.

For more information about gender identity and sexual orientation, including how to find support services in your area, visit [Qmunity: BC's Queer Resource Centre](#) or contact [Trans Care BC](#) by calling **604-675-3647** or toll free **1-866-999-1514**.



## On this page:

- [Overview](#)
- [Related Information](#)

## Overview

You may express gender in a way that differs from how you feel on the inside. This expression includes the name and pronoun you use, your style of dress, voice or hairstyle. Gender expression may be referred to as masculine, feminine or androgynous. You may change how you express yourself depending on the situation you are in, such as at school or work, home alone, out with friends.

When you are transgender, also known as trans, your gender identity doesn't match the sex that you were assigned at birth (usually male or female).

The realization that you are trans can happen in an instant or unfold over many years. Some people know from a young age that the gender they have been assigned doesn't fit with who they really are. Other people come to this realization as adults.

Sometimes a person experiences so much discomfort or distress because their gender identity and the sex they were assigned at birth are different; they decide to explore medical options like hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgeries. These medical options often provide significant comfort.

Sexual orientation and gender identity aren't the same thing. Everyone has both

a gender identity and a sexual orientation. Like anybody, trans people may identify as straight, pansexual, queer, asexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay or something else.

## How stress can affect your health

For many reasons, [LGBTQ2S+](#) people may have extra stress and feel alone. If your trans identity is not known to others you may feel shame, guilt or other negative emotions when you consider the possibility that you might be trans.

If you move through life with added stress, it can affect your health and how you feel day to day. For example, you may:

- Feel anxious, moody, or depressed. Your symptoms may be mild or severe. In its most severe form, depression can lead to suicide.
- Be more likely to have headaches, an upset stomach, back pain, or trouble sleeping.
- Get sick more often.

For more information about depression, see [Depression](#) or [Depression in Children and Teens](#).

One key to managing extra stress is to get better at recognizing when and how you feel it. In your back? In your sleep? It's even more important to find out what helps you feel better. A hot shower? Stretching? Calling a friend?

If you're in tune with how you feel and why, and if you have some tools to feel better, you'll be more likely to make healthy choices. And you'll be less likely to turn to things like alcohol, drugs, or food.

Having a strong support network can also be a great way to lower stress. Connecting with others can help people feel better and live longer.

## How to get support

Whatever your orientation or gender identity, it's important to realize that there are lots of people like you. Many of them may have the same emotions and questions that you have.

It can be comforting and helpful to talk to people who know what you're going through. You can find these people through local or online groups. If you don't know where to find support, check with:

- Your doctor.
  - Your school counsellor or trusted teacher.
  - A therapist or other counsellor.
  - Your parent or caregiver, if you feel comfortable.
  - LGBTQ2S+ clubs and organizations in your community.
  - Websites and online organizations.
- 

## Related Information

- [Depression](#)
- [Depression in Children and Teens](#)
- [Family Life Cycle](#)
- [Growth and Development, Ages 11 to 14 Years](#)
- [Growth and Development, Ages 15 to 18 Years](#)
- [Stress Management](#)
- [Your Teen's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

**Adaptation Date:** 9/12/2023

**Adapted By:** HealthLink BC

**Adaptation Reviewed By: HealthLink BC**

This information does not replace the advice of a doctor. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information. Your use of this information means that you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Learn [How this information was developed](#).

## Need health advice?

Call toll-free in B.C., 8-1-1, or 7-1-1 for the deaf and hard of hearing to get personalized assistance. Speak to a navigator who can guide you to reliable health information or connect you with a health professional.



**Registered nurse**



**Registered dietitian**



**Pharmacist**



**Physician**



**Qualified exercise professionals**

## HealthLink BC

[About us](#)[Contact us](#)[Careers](#)[8-1-1 Services](#)

## Helpful links

[Symptom Checker](#)[Find health services](#)[HealthLinkBC Files](#)[Resource order form](#)

## Accessibility

[Deaf and hard of hearing](#)

## Is it an emergency?

Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately.

## Poison control

Call 1-800-567-8911 if you were exposed to a toxic substance or poison.



[About gov.bc.ca](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy](#)

Copyright © 2025 Province of British Columbia. All rights reserved.