

Gender

This guide is intended to explain the differences in gender, biological sex, gender expression and other bodily differences. It provides a brief explanation of many characteristics of the LGBTI communities which can be helpful in understanding the communities and individuals.

Gender – body and behaviour

Gender is made up of two parts – the gender you know you are (gender identity) and the gender you show to the world (gender expression). In many people these are the same but for some people there is a mismatch, meaning they aren't able to be their true selves. For others their gender is on a spectrum somewhere between male and female, which may or may not be expressed.

Biological sex

Sex (sometimes called biological sex, anatomical sex, or physical sex) is comprised of things like genitals, chromosomes, hormones, body hair, and more. But one thing it's not: gender.

Gender identity

A person's sense of identity in relation to the categories of male and female. This is different from sexuality and should not be confused. Sexual diversity exists within the gender diverse community. Trans*people can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual. For some people, this internal identity may not match their external physical body.

Gender expression

Refers to how we express ourselves in terms of our gender. It includes things like our hair styles, the clothes we wear, the 'look' we have and the activities and hobbies we do. Terms like 'masculine' and 'feminine' are often used to define these expressions. Sometimes people do not match what Australian society has defined as what men and women should look like or do. This challenges our

perception of gender roles and the traditional ideas of how men and women should represent their gender and can lead to assumptions being made about people and how they live. For example women who look more masculine are often mistaken as lesbians, whether they are or not. Men who are perceived as being more effeminate are often mistaken for being gay. Similarly, male nurses or hairdressers are assumed to be gay and women who serve in the Armed Forces are assumed to be lesbians.

Cisgender

Cisgender is a term used in the context of gender issues to refer to people whose gender identity and behaviour or role is considered appropriate for one's sex. For example someone who is female, and who dresses and behaves in a way that is traditionally associated with being female.

Intersex

Intersex status

A person who is born with bodily differences that can include a variance in reproductive organs (anatomy), hormones and/or sex chromosomes (DNA) that are not exclusively male or female. Many forms of intersex exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category. At least 30 or 40 different variations are known to science.

Traditionally the term hermaphrodite was used, but this is now regarded as derogatory. Why might that be? In biology, hermaphrodites such as snails, some fish and plants, possess fully functioning fertile sets of both "male" and "female" sex organs. This is impossible in mammals, so the term is incorrect and considered offensive.



How do people find out they are intersex?

Some common intersex variations are diagnosed prenatally. Some intersex differences may be apparent at birth. Some intersex traits become apparent at puberty, or when trying to conceive, or through random chance. Some intersex people may not be aware of their intersex status until medical complications or non-stereotypical gender features appear. In some cases changes in hormones can lead to an increase in physical appearance that is different to their birth sex. In other cases blood testing can pick up increased levels of hormones or chromosomal differences.

How many intersex people are there?

The lowest popular statistic is around 1 in 2,000 people (0.05% of births). A great range in physical impacts and low rates of diagnosis for some variations mean that a more likely figure may be closer to 1.7%. This makes intersex differences about as common as red hair.

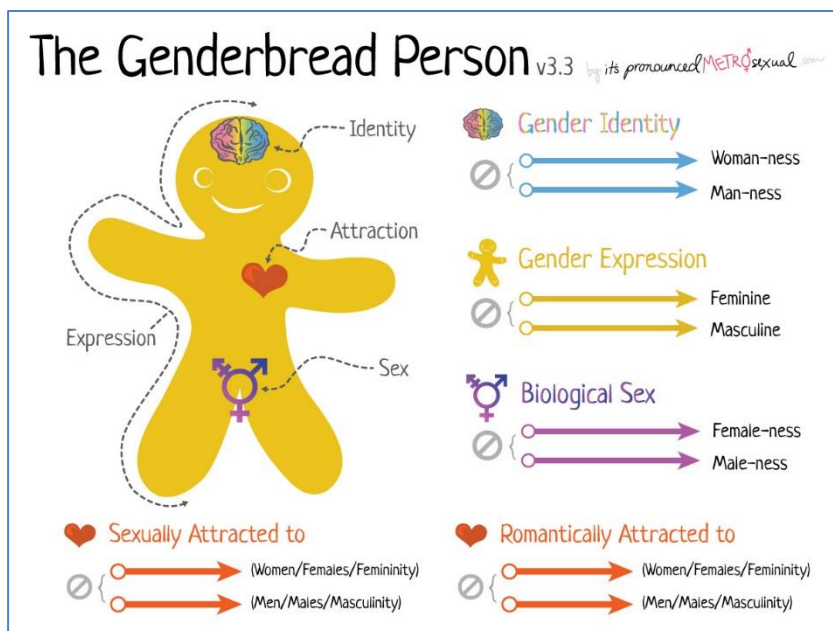
Sometimes surgery is done to assign sex, and if this has been wrongly assigned at infancy further corrective surgery may be required or it can lead to gender dysmorphia later in life. Many intersex people consider their surgeries have been

performed non-consensually, leaving intersex adults traumatised. The vast majority of people who are intersex continue to identify as male or female, regarding their intersex status as a medical condition. However, a significant portion of intersex people identify their sex as intersex or other terms."

Transgender:

This is an umbrella term for people whose sense of gender is outside of the traditional idea of male or female. It can also be used to define someone who has gender dysphoria, a condition where their biological body does not match with their internal own sense of gender (that is their biological sex doesn't match their gender identity). Some people transition so that they can live as their innate gender identity. Gender dysphoria is not a choice and to imply otherwise is highly offensive and shows a lack of understanding of gender identity issues. Trans people are subject to high levels of discrimination, verbal and physical abuse from others and a lack of understanding from the general community. Not all Transgender people have had reaffirmation surgery. Many transgender people do not refer to themselves as being transgender but as having a transgender history and now they are a man/woman.

GenderBread Person - (<https://www.genderbread.org/resource/genderbread-person-minimal-3-3>)



The Gender Bread person shows that a person's identity, their expression and their biology are separate sliding scales. And all are different to who someone is attracted to. They are all mutually exclusive and can be in any combination.



Where do you fit on the GenderBread person?



David Bowie

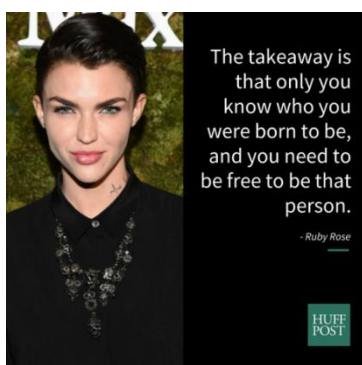
Biological Sex – Male

Sexually and romantically attracted to – Both males and females

Gender Expression – androgynous through to male

Gender Identity - unknown

(photo from: www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/75955946/david-bowies-sexuality-is-still-hotly-debated-but-does-it-matter)



Ruby Rose

Biological Sex – Female

Sexually and romantically attracted to – females

Gender expressions – masculine through androgynous to feminine

Gender Identity – Gender fluid

(Photo from https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/ruby-rose-gender-fluid-video-interview_n_7603186)



Harnaam Kaur

Biological Sex – Female (although she has Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, a hormonal condition that can cause excess hair growth putting her closer to intersex)

Sexually and romantically attracted to: unknown

Gender expression- feminine- with a beard

Gender Identity – female

(photo from: <https://www.bustle.com/articles/170567-11-times-fashion-icons-challenged-gender-norms>)

Other terms:

CROSS-DRESSER

Cross-dressing is the wearing of clothing and other effects commonly associated with a gender identity that is seen as different from the one that is usually presented by the same person. This excludes female impersonators who look upon cross-dressing as solely connected to their livelihood, actors undertaking roles, individual males and females enjoying a masquerade, and so on. These individuals are cross-dressing but are not necessarily cross-dressers." Cross-dressers may not identify with, or want to be the opposite

sex and generally do not want to change their bodies medically or surgically. The majority of cross-dressers identify as heterosexual.

DRAG KINGS AND QUEENS

Drag is a term applied to clothing and make-up worn on special occasions for performing or entertaining. This is in contrast to those who cross-dress for other reasons or who are transgender. (Adapted from <https://gendercentre.org.au/resources/kits-fact-sheets/family-friends?download=51:exploring-gende>)

For more information on Gender Diversity see leaflet #14 – Gender Diversity.

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