

# Know your language!

## Tips for the public regarding transgendered persons

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### Who's Who?

**Transsexuals** are individuals who have a gender identity (the sense of being a man or a woman) different from their anatomical sex. They often seek medical treatment to change their physical attributes to correspond with their gender identity. This treatment may include hormone therapy, electrolysis, and surgery. Psychotherapy and real life experience in the new gender role is required for most medical treatment.

**Crossdressers** wear clothing usually associated with the gender "opposite" to their anatomical sex. Crossdressing may be part-time in the privacy of the person's own home, public, and even full-time. The difference is that crossdressers' gender identity remains the same as their anatomical sex. They usually do not seek medical treatment. Erotic pleasure is sometimes the motivation for crossdressing, especially in younger people. Crossdressers can be attracted to either same-sex or opposite-sex partners, or both.

**Intersexed** (hermaphroditic) individuals are born with genitals which show characteristics of both sexes or are opposite to their genetic sex. Many are surgically "corrected" in infancy, some grow up to feel like they have had an essential part of themselves taken away without their consent.

**Transgenderists** live as members of the other sex, but without the extreme need or desire to alter their bodies that transsexuals experience. Some live permanently as members of the other sex, while others assume gender identities outside of the male-female two-gender model (**Third Gender**). Transgenderists often take hormones, some have other treatments (electrolysis), but few undergo surgical transformation.

**Androgynes, Gender Benders, and Gender Blenders** merge the characteristics of men and women in various ways which are sometimes subtle and sometimes shocking.

**Drag Kings and Drag Queens** present larger than life images of men and women, exaggerating gender stereotypes for entertainment, attention, or self-gratification.

**Transpeople/Transgendered People** are group nouns which are often used to describe all transgendered and transsexual people (all the above).

**The Transgender Community** is the term used for the organized community of transgendered people.

### Names and Pronoun Usage

In general, the appropriate pronoun is the one which best describes the way the individual is living his or her life. A cross-living male to female transsexual or transgenderist, for instance, should be referred to with feminine pronouns (she, her, hers) regardless of surgical status; masculine pronouns should likewise be used for female to male transsexuals or transgenderists.

Crossdressers and drag queens/kings should be referred to with pronouns appropriate to the way they are dressed.

When writing about transgendered people quotation marks should never be used around names or pronouns.

**Sexual Orientation** is different than gender identity. It is the difference between who I am (gender identity) and who I am attracted to (sexual orientation). Transgendered people can be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual.