

# TRANS SCRIPTS

## PART I: THE WOMEN

## TOOLKIT



# Welcome!

***Trans Scripts, Part I: The Women*** is a documentary theater piece by Paul Lucas built from interviews with transgender women. This humanizing, humorous, and moving play highlights the plurality of experience among transgender women, and opens up dialogue about acceptance, support, and embracing our differences.

This Toolkit provides readings, multimedia data, and activities that work in conjunction with ***Trans Scripts*** to foster a deeper understanding of the themes of the play that affect all of us: empathy, compassion, and being your true self. While the Toolkit materials are specifically selected and designed for a classroom setting, our hope is that we can help audiences of all ages enjoy, learn, and dig a little deeper into the people, themes, and issues of the play.

See you at the theater!

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**Thank you for participating  
in the A.R.T. Education  
Experience!**

If you have questions about  
using this Toolkit in your  
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# From the Artists



The materials in this section of the Toolkit (pages 5-13) focus on the development and content of ***Trans Scripts, Part I: The Women***.

In “Changing the Lightbulb: Or, How to Get Beyond Trans Tropes” (pages 5-6), ***Trans Scripts*** actress Bianca Leigh reflects on her extensive involvement with developing the play, and her thoughts on how the play highlights the diversity of experience within the trans community.

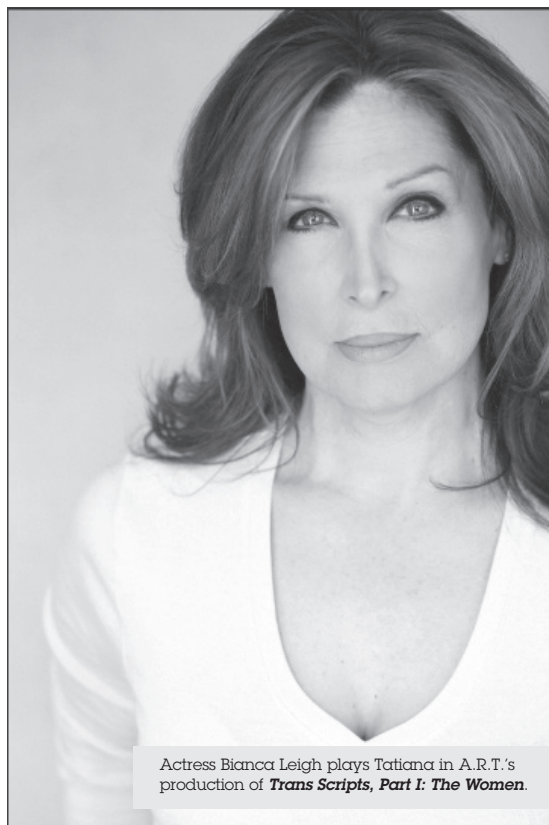
“No Single Story” (pages 7-10) is an interview between A.R.T. Artistic Director Diane Paulus and ***Trans Scripts*** writer Paul Lucas, discussing the process of developing ***Trans Scripts*** and providing insight into the playwright’s mission in composing the play.

“Meet the Women” (pages 11-13) includes descriptions of and quotes from each character in ***Trans Scripts***, providing a quick introduction to the women whose experiences are explored more deeply in the full play.



# Changing the Lightbulb: Or, How to Get Beyond Trans Tropes

by Bianca Leigh



Actress Bianca Leigh plays Tatiana in A.R.T.'s production of *Trans Scripts, Part I: The Women*.

*In this article, **Trans Scripts** actress Bianca Leigh reflects on her involvement with the play through its development and how it reflects some of the shared experiences found within the diversity of the trans community.*

Two years ago, Paul Lucas called me to check if a certain passage in **Trans Scripts** might cause offense. I said, “Darling, you are going to offend someone. I know my sisters. Buckle your seatbelt.” I’d never seen an author try so hard to get it right: conducting over 75 interviews with trans women on several continents, painstakingly trying to create as inclusive a picture of trans life as possible. But opinions within the trans community are varied and passionate. Someone was sure to get pissed off.

Yet, surprisingly, during our run at the Edinburgh Fringe, there wasn’t an angry placard in sight; not a single post-show debate in the pub. How could this be? We trans people are a cantankerous lot. And for good reason: the experience of being trans, and how trans people define ourselves to the world, has changed rapidly with each generation. Being “a woman trapped in the body of a man” seems quaint now, but it summed things up perfectly

for Christine Jorgensen in 1952. We have gone from afflicted patients seeking sympathy and treatment to proud activists demanding our place at society’s table, all within a span of only 60 or so years.

In addition, trans lives are deeply affected by race, class, and age, as well as the political climate of the times. There are lingering resentments between young transitioners (with beauty, endless admirers, and the ability to pass), and older transitioners (with successful careers, health insurance, and social connections). We are a diverse, opinionated, and, occasionally, contentious group. We are rarely happy with dramatic depictions of us (we won’t discuss comic representations). So why has this piece been so well-received?

Perhaps it’s because, despite our differences, trans women have a lot in common. Our individual stories resonate across class and racial divides, across oceans and generations. Ironically, the broader the picture, the louder and clearer that shared resonance becomes.

Virtually all trans women know discomfort during childhood, a nebulous feeling that something is wrong, a sense of being at odds with the world. As we grow, we experience the pain of rejection, of feeling unique and alone, of causing embarrassment, anger, and sometimes violence. And while we may react to our ‘dysphoria’ in different ways—fighting it

## Changing the Lightbulb (cont'd)

tooth-and-nail or transitioning as quickly as possible—most of us eventually find ourselves. For many of us, there is profound joy in our new lives. Different roads, same destination.

This shared experience within diversity is the strength and the beauty of ***Trans Scripts***. It is the reason for its positive reception. ***Trans Scripts*** is not a typical trans story shoehorned into a play. These stories are the play.

Characters cover the gamut: the successful British doctor who transitioned within the mainstream medical establishment at sixty-eight; the young, black beauty queen transitioning on her own terms, without apology; the ex-dominatrix who uses humor as both shield and weapon; the no-nonsense Aussie yearning for anonymity; the Afro-Latina runaway ready to remake the world; the elegant Staten Island mechanic with Bergdorf dreams; and the lonely survivor of childhood abuse longing for connection—all brilliant trans women who share, learn, disagree, and find precious commonality. Assumptions are challenged—sometimes sharply—and shaped by others. These characters grow. Their minds open. Hopefully yours will, too.

*Bianca Leigh plays Tatiana in ***Trans Scripts*** and has been with the piece since its inception. Leigh is an actress and writer based in New York City. She recently co-starred with Bianca Del Rio in the film *Hurricane Bianca*.*

***This article appeared in the [A.R.T. Guide](#), published by the American Repertory Theater.***

### DISCUSSION

- Why do you think Bianca advised Paul that he was “going to offend someone” as he worked on developing a play from interviews conducted with transgender women?
- Bianca discusses a progression within the trans community as new generations come of age. She states that, “the experience of being trans, and how trans people define ourselves to the world, has changed rapidly with each generation.” Do you see these types of developments within other communities as well? As young people, do you imagine you are different from your parents when they were younger? How so?
- What does “dysphoria” mean in the way that Bianca uses it, and how does this description might reflect the experience of a transgender person?
- Does the format of ***Trans Scripts*** as Bianca describes it remind you of any other plays or movies that you have seen? How might you describe the genre of this play?

# No Single Story

## Artistic Director Diane Paulus Interviews *Trans Scripts* Playwright Paul Lucas

*At an A.R.T. Season Preview event in July 2016, Artistic Director Diane Paulus shared a conversation with Paul Lucas, the writer of **Trans Scripts, Part I: The Women**. In this transcript of that conversation, the two discuss the origins of the play and its relevance today.*



Paul Lucas (L) and Diane Paulus (R) in conversation during A.R.T.'s 16/17 Season Preview

### **Diane Paulus: Could you tell us how this work started?**

**Paul Lucas:** Around five years ago, I was having a conversation with an acquaintance who was a liberal, progressive-minded HIV-positive gay man. And I mentioned a transgender gospel singer friend named Our Lady J, whom I represented as a booking agent at the time (and who has since become a writer on the TV show “Transparent”). And this guy effectively said to me, “You know, I don’t really believe in transgender people.”

Since that time, the visibility of trans people has increased tremendously, but even at that point, I just thought, “Wow. This is a really important issue that is not being addressed, even within my own community.” This “LGBT umbrella” is a concept that we talk about, but when it comes down to it, transgender people have really not been embraced by the gay community on a day-to-day basis.

## No Single Story (cont'd)

So I thought, “I want to educate myself. And I’m going to start by just talking to people.” I didn’t know at the time quite what it was going to become. But I began by interviewing two trans friends, and then I used my network of friends and colleagues to meet more trans people around the country and around the world. I’ve done over 75 interviews now in the US, the UK, Australia, India, Cuba, and Germany.

And then, about two years ago, I started turning the interviews into a play, which became ***Trans Scripts***. After a few workshop productions, I brought the show to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2015, where it did incredibly well, winning a Fringe First Award and a High Commendation from Amnesty International. And then, thanks to Eve Ensler, who has been a huge supporter of the project, it came to the attention of the A.R.T.

### **Did you find that people were eager to share their stories?**

Generally, I was really fortunate. There were a couple of people who showed up to the interview asking “Why should I talk to you? Tell me why I should tell this cisgender gay guy about my experience.” And so I told them why I began the project, why I felt it was so important, and what I hoped to achieve. So far, no one has ever said no to an interview after meeting me. I began each session by saying, “Tell me where your story begins, because only you know where it begins.” And then I kind of shut up and let them tell their stories—stories that proved to be very, very different from one another.

### **That difference between individual stories is a key theme of the show. You’ve spoken about the false notion of a singular “trans narrative.” How do you define that?**

As someone who is not an academic *per se*, when I’ve heard the term “narrative” in the past, I always thought that it was kind of a precious term for “story.” But when it comes to trans people, talking about “owning their personal narrative” is incredibly fitting. Because what existed for so long was a singular story that was repeated, and reinforced, by the medical and psychiatric communities, especially in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. For years, individuals within these medical communities, who are referred to as the “gatekeepers,” were charged with assessing patients who came to them and determining whether or not to grant them access to hormone treatment and any number of surgical treatments. And individuals who told stories that didn’t jive with the “accepted medical narrative” were denied access to treatment and care.

So, if you and I were both born male and both felt that we were in fact female, you might go to a doctor, usually a gender therapist or maybe a medical doctor, and tell your story. And then I would also go to a doctor, and tell my story. And if you were diagnosed with what was termed “gender dysphoria” and given access to hormones and surgery, and I was not, then I would ask you to tell me what you told the doctor. And then I would find a new doctor and tell that doctor your story in order to gain access to treatment.

So people—looking for treatment, for resources—would tell the same stories over and over and over again: “When I was a little boy, I used to think I was a princess, and I would tuck myself between my legs, and I would wear my mommy’s shoes, and I always wanted to marry a prince...” So, in the process of seeking treatment, many people were robbed of their genuine, individual stories.

### **What has the casting process been like for this production?**

Casting is a complicated issue. You’re talking about a community that has not been represented on stage or film very often, or very well. And then, even when they have been represented, they have not been allowed to portray themselves. When you look at *The Danish Girl*, or *Trans America*, or *Transparent*, the central character is not played by a trans actor. So there’s a disenfranchisement issue.



## No Single Story (cont'd)

So we would all like to have as many trans people in the show as possible, but it's also been extremely interesting having an audience walk into early readings knowing that the cast is mixed. If the audience knows ahead of time that the actors are all cisgender (someone whose gender identity is in line with the sex they were assigned at birth), they might think, "Well, I could tell. I could tell none of those people were trans." Or if we announced that the entire cast was trans, people might say, "I could tell."

And when I did the show in London and Edinburgh, I had some people who came to the show in both cities, and their reaction was, "Oh you had more trans people in London; that was more authentic." And I said, "No. No, I didn't. You just didn't know." And I think that can be powerful. I think there's value in reinforcing the idea that gender presentation can be a performance of sorts, and that our limited notions of what it means to be male or female should be challenged. But one of my goals with this project has always been to create more roles for trans actresses.

**When we did a one-night reading of this play at OBERON last year, we felt that there was a necessity to do this work. Tickets sold out within three hours of announcing the reading. As the writer, was there anything in particular that resonated with you at that performance?**

There were vastly different levels of familiarity with the topic in the room. Some people in the audience were living these experiences; some people had read about them, and for others, this was completely new. So I took it as a challenge to make sure that this production would really provide new information for some, but provide the basics for others.

When I began the show five years ago, I had characters stop the action to define terms like "cisgender" or "intersex." But I no longer have to do that. People are also more familiar now than they were five years ago with the challenges facing trans people. People are talking about trans identity at work, talking about the issues facing bathroom use, for instance. HR departments are addressing it. People are talking about it with their kids. So the show has to keep upping its game.

**What do you imagine a person who doesn't identify as transgender might be in a position to learn from this production?**

I think that there is—and I can look at myself for this—there is an idea of "otherness" when it comes to this experience. The idea that "This doesn't have anything to do with me really." As a gay man, I have to say that, while I had a couple of trans friends five years ago, I didn't feel as though this experience really related to me that deeply.

And thinking back to the conversation that sparked the project for me, I thought, "Well if I'm criticizing this guy, I've got to look right back at myself and say, "why don't you learn a bit more before you criticize somebody else." And what I discovered through that process was that the stories that I heard were incredibly universal, and human, and truthful. It is a very, very universal show—a very human show. And it's also an opportunity to get questions answered, an opportunity most people wouldn't normally have.

Right now, in this country, we are in the same pattern of representation with the trans community that we've seen with other disenfranchised groups: first they're the butt of a joke, then they're tragic, and so on. So, even now, there aren't that many stories about real people living their lives. And people need to understand the full breadth of this experience. As many of my interview subjects said, "I spend about 15 minutes a day being trans. I get up. I take a shower. I drink my coffee. I go to work. I go home. I pay my bills. And yet people still focus on this ridiculous idea that I'm some kind of sexual deviant, or that my goal is trying to trick straight men into bed, or that I'm a predator, or even a pedophile. And that's just not so."

So I think the show is an opportunity to learn something. And it's an opportunity to become



## No Single Story (cont'd)

an ambassador afterwards, because you will be more enlightened than your friends, and you will be able to talk intelligently on this subject. There's a lot of information packed into a very short amount of time. And it's funny. And it's interesting. And it's surprising. It's not the stereotypical "tragic tranny" narrative. The characters are fully rounded, interesting, compassionate, confrontational, unique, and most important, human. And if you don't see the show, I can guarantee you'll be sorry that you missed the chance to spend an evening in the company of these extraordinary women.

*Interview by Diane Paulus and Paul Lucas. Diane Paulus is the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director of the American Repertory Theater. Paul Lucas is the playwright of Trans Scripts.*

*This article appeared in the [A.R.T. Guide](#), published by the American Repertory Theater.*

### DISCUSSION

- In discussions you hear of LGBTQ+ issues, how often do transgender identities and issues come up? Do you think they are adequately represented in these discussions today? Do you have a good understanding of the issues important to transgender people, or do you think you need to learn more?
- If someone asked to interview you about your gender identity, how do you think you would react? Can you understand why some of the women interviewed for **Trans Scripts** might have hesitated? Why do you think this is?
- How would you feel if you had to get medical permission to be who you truly are? For example, if a doctor had to give you permission to wear your favorite outfit, to wear your hair a certain way, to use a favorite nickname, or to legally be recognized as a man or a woman?
- What does Paul mean when he explains that many trans women are "robbed of their genuine, individual stories" through the process of seeking medical help?
- What is the "disenfranchisement issue" Paul mentions in relation to casting transgender characters in plays, films, or television? Should a transgender character always be played by a transgender actor?
- What do you think Paul means by the show giving audiences an opportunity to "be an ambassador" after seeing the production? If you have seen the production, is this something that you are interested in doing?

# Meet the Women

## Excerpts from *Trans Scripts*

**Trans Scripts** is a documentary theater-style play where actors portray the stories of seven transgender women, drawn from interviews conducted by the playwright Paul Lucas. Included here are descriptions of each character represented in the play, accompanied by quotes pulled directly from the script of **Trans Scripts**. For more perspectives from the creative team working on the show, take a look at the interview with the author (pages 7-10) and the comments of Bianca Leigh from the cast (pages 5-6).



*Trans Scripts* actors (from left) Bianca Leigh, MJ Rodriguez, and Rebecca Root in conversation about the production.

### TATIANA

*White Trans Female, 45, transitioned in her 20s. She uses her wit to diffuse conflict, but it is always clear what she really thinks.*

Ever since I can remember, all of my natural instincts were towards the female. Almost like a different language. The things that interested my sister, my mother, my grandmother, I understood. And then, I'd look over here at my father and my brother watching baseball, or laughing at *The Three Stooges*, and I thought, "This is not for me." You know? I'm an *I Love Lucy* girl!

So I began to live a sort of parallel life in my head. And as I went about my business, I would imagine what my life would have been like if I was a girl. I used to lock myself in my room, and do the things little trans-girls do. Use a tee-shirt as my hair. Make a robe into a gown. Lip-sync to records, all that stuff.

## Meet the Women (cont'd)

### JOSEPHINE

*White Australian Trans Female, 50s, lived as a hyper-masculine man for 50 years.*

I saw Christine Jorgensen's story in the papers when I was about 8, and I remember I kept reading it over and over again. I was like, "Hang on a minute. I know about this. At a deep level." And it started to make sense. "Maybe I'm not the only person who feels like this." You know?

"There are ... transsexuals that, you know, just disappear. They blend in. And they live in, what did you call it, stealth? And that's where I'd like to be. There is a girl that's going to exist. And she's going to just disappear into the rest of society and be a girl. I'm just a country girl. I'm not a show pony. Some girls don't wear short skirts and high heels. Some girls don't wear make-up. But I'm going to be a real live person."

### EDEN

*White Intersex Female, 41, British. Assigned male at birth, her history was concealed from her by her parents.*

I tell people, "I'm a hermaphrodite.: And that just rocks their world half the time. 'Cause most of them don't even know what that word is. But I'm saying, "My people." It gives "MY people" visibility. It's not very PC nowadays, but I like that word. Why did somebody have to go and invent the word "Intersex?" For me, hermaphrodite is fine.

And one summer's day, we were wearing tutus, running around the garden, chasing each other with slugs and worms. And it was on that day, driving back home, when I dropped it on my mum in the car. I said, "I'm not a boy." She nearly swerved off the road.

It was the 1980s, so there was no Internet. No Internet, no research. So at 16, I go to the doctors, in my little, tiny, pokey village, and I say "There's something wrong with me. I don't feel like a guy." And she packs me off with some Prozac, tells me not to be stupid, and then, rings my mum and tells her everything."

### SANDRA

*White Trans Female, 65. A former garage mechanic with the soul of a poet, she underwent an expensive, well-supervised transition at 40.*

I remember being a guest speaker at an LGBT group for young people. And a young man in the audience said to me, "I'm sure you just wish that you could have been born a woman, so you wouldn't have had to go through all this."

And I stopped him mid-sentence, and I said, "No. No. Absolutely not. This is the experience I'm embracing. I am embracing going from A to B." Because it's not only a "gender- quest." It's a human experience that one has by walking through the door of gender. A quest to rebuild yourself in the way that you see that you should have been built, but you get to engineer it yourself this time.

Knowing what I know, through all the ups and the downs, would I do this all over again? The answer is a resounding "Yes." It has nothing to do with happy, or unhappy. It's just, this is an extremely rich experience. And I'm very, very grateful for it.

## Meet the Women (cont'd)

### ZAKIA

*African American Trans Female, 38, began transitioning at 21. Social worker by day and beauty pageant contestant/drag performer by night.*

I hate it when people ask—‘cause that’s like the first thing people will ask you when you say you’re trans—“Oh, did you get “the operation?” Reassignment surgery does not define who I am. You don’t see other women walking down the street with their hoo-has hanging out to prove they’re women. You think I’m gonna show it to you, ‘cause I got it? What difference does it make? My body does not determine who I am!

### LUNA

*African American/Latina Trans Female, 28. Orphaned at 9, she was raised in group homes. She was unsupervised as a teen and transitioned early.*

I was in First Grade, and they encouraged us to wear costumes to school for Halloween. And I wanted to be a witch because, as someone who felt like a girl, I related to this character. It wasn’t about being feminine. I just wanted to be a witch.

So my grandmother bought me one of those plastic costumes from Woolworth, and I was getting ready for school, and she’s like “Honey, as SOON as you get off the bus from school, you can put this on in the house, and you can have it on ALL day. But you can’t go to school in this.

And I was like, “Why?” And she said, “‘Cuz they’ll take you from Grandma.” And that’s one of the earliest, really distinct instances of me realizing, “Wow. This is not gonna be easy.”

If we follow the trajectory, you know, give it fifteen years, and there’ll be a trans woman running for President. But if I’m being realistic, I have to remember that for every step forward, most marginalized groups take two steps back.

And when the sunshine and butterflies are gone, and this whole wave of fascination with the trans experience is gone, we’ll be left with complex, legal issues that are yet to be determined.

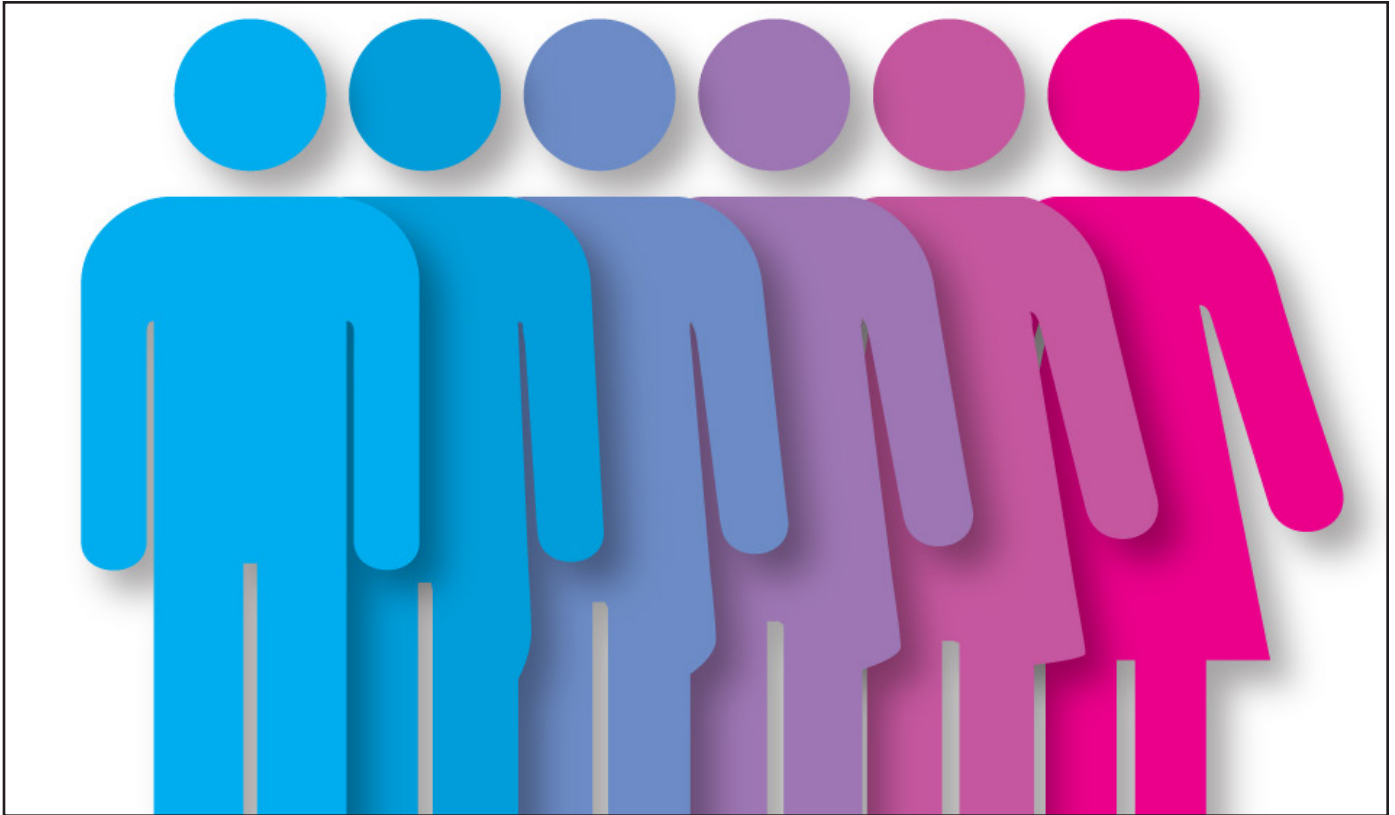
### DR. VIOLET

*White Trans Female, 70s, transitioned at age 68. A successful gynecologist working with cis and transgender patients, she was raised in the UK and has lived in Australia for 30 years.*

When I was four or five, I knew I was a girl. There was a sense of certainty, something inside of me which said, “I am a girl.” Not that it had much room for expression. I had no friends. I certainly couldn’t talk to my parents. I couldn’t talk to anybody. So I just nursed this little girl inside of me. I used to pray every night, like a lot of us that used to pray. I’d say, “Dear God, when I wake up in the morning, can I please be a little girl?”

I’m a gynecologist, specializing in hormones, and I belong to W-PATH, which is the World Professional Association of Transgender Health, and we’re all getting our acts together, doing what we can to bring people what they want and to get it right. Because the consequence of not bringing people what they really want can be very dangerous.

# Words and Spectrums



Most of us know that words have the power to hurt and to heal. The words we choose to describe a person can often have many layers of explicit and implicit meaning, and these words may not line up with how that person identifies or feels about themselves. Most of us understand words like man/woman, boy/girl, and he/she, but gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexuality all operate on a number of spectrums, and the vocabulary we use to describe these parts of our identity is continually changing and expanding.

In **Words and Spectrums** (pages 15-21), you will find a glossary gender-related terms (pages 15-16) which introduces common vocabulary used in describing gender and an overview of how to use which gender pronouns (pages 17-18).

You will also see three tools used to introduce and describe gender spectrums and the differences between gender identity, gender expression, gender presentation, sexual orientation, and biological sex. The Trevor Project's "The Spectrum" (page 19), Trans Student Educational Resource's "The Gender Unicorn" (page 20), and It's Pronounced Metrosexual's "Genderbread Person" (page 21) are all great introductions to these concepts and can be used together or interchangeably in the classroom.

For some guidelines to help students explore their own place on the gender spectrum, see the lesson plan on page 58.



# Gender Glossary

Compiled by James Montaña

*This is a non-exhaustive list of English terms and definitions commonly used to name and describe gender. Read through the definitions, and consider how they align with your own understanding and usage of each term.*

## **CISGENDER**

Describes a person whose gender identity matches the biological sex assigned at their birth. Where the Latin prefix *trans-* is defined as “movement” across a boundary, *cis-* refers to the “same as” or “same side as.”

## **CROSS-DRESSER**

The current accepted term to describe a person who dresses as the opposite gender of their biological sex for emotional or sexual fulfillment. Replaces the term “transvestite,” which is considered offensive by some.

## **DRAG QUEEN, DRAG KING**

A person who dresses and performs in a style associated with another gender. Drag Queens are generally men performing as females; Drag Kings are usually women performing as males.

## **GENDER**

The social and cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. These are different from the biological markers of sex. The roles of gender are culturally defined and can differ drastically from society to society.

## **GENDER DYSPHORIA**

The current medically accepted term describing the distress experienced by a person whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. The term is defined in the 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th Edition from the American Psychiatric Association, revised from the previous classification of “Gender Identity Disorder.”

## **GENDER EXPRESSION**

The physical characteristics and traits associated with the social constructs of masculinity, femininity, or androgyny.

## **GENDER IDENTITY**

The personal, psychological identification of a person’s gender. This identification does not always align with the person’s physical sex characteristics.

## **GENDER QUEER, GENDER NEUTRAL**

A person whose gender identity falls outside the binary and who may identify as a combination of both male and female, or as having no gender at all (“agender”).

## **INTERSEX**

A term describing a person born with chromosomes, reproductive organs, or genitals that do not develop as expected along a binary of male or female. Also referred to as differences (or disorders) of sex development. “Intersex” may also be used as a term of identity by some. This term replaces the term “hermaphrodite,” which is no longer widely used.

## Gender Glossary (cont'd)

### **MTF, FTM**

Abbreviated terms that describe a trans person's journey from male to female (MTF) or female to male (FTM). Sometimes this abbreviation is used instead of the terms trans woman (MTF) or trans man (FTM).

### **SEX**

The biological classification of male or female. This classification is based on specific biological criteria, generally related to reproduction. "Sex" may or may not correspond with gender.

### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

One's emotional, physical, and romantic attraction. Exists separately from one's gender identity.

### **SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY (SRS), GENDER CONFIRMATION SURGERY**

The transition of sex through surgical/ medical means. These processes have in the past been referred to as "sex-change operations," but that term is no longer widely used. May also be called "genital reconstructive surgery" (GRS).

### **TRANSGENDER, TRANS, TRANS\***

The current umbrella terms used to describe a person who identifies as a gender that differs from that which they were assigned at birth.

### **TRANSITION, AFFIRMATION**

Describes a process of socially, medically, and/or surgically affirming one's gender identity. As a process, transition does not necessarily require medical or legal alteration.

### **TRANSSEXUAL**

A person in the process of medically changing their sex. An older medical diagnostic term still used by some trans people as a term of identity.

### **TRANVESTITE**

A person who dresses as the gender opposite their biological sex. However, this term is no longer in common usage and has been replaced by "cross-dresser." Initially, "transvestite" was one of the terms used to describe transgender persons as well.

# Gender Pronouns

When introducing or talking about gender identity, you may have heard people talk about “preferred gender pronouns,” “gender pronouns,” or simply “pronouns.” In English, as in many languages, the personal pronouns we use to refer to people follow a male-female gender binary: “he/him/his” is male while “she/her/hers” is female. While we often assume use of particular gender pronouns based on someone’s name or appearance, they may identify with a different pronoun. Below are a couple examples of non-binary gender pronouns and how they are used, as compared to male and female pronouns. These are not the only pronouns that people might use—there are more on the next page and even more beyond that—so make sure to ask someone which pronouns they use.

More graphics and information can be found on the Trans Student Educational Resources website at [www.transstudent.org](http://www.transstudent.org) and the University of Wisconsin LGBT Resource Center at [uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns](http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns).

# Gender Pronouns

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Always ask someone for their pronouns.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/ Zirself	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.

Design by Landyn Pan

[transstudent.tumblr.com](https://transstudent.tumblr.com)  
[facebook.com/transstudent](https://facebook.com/transstudent)  
[twitter.com/transstudent](https://twitter.com/transstudent)

For more information,  
go to [transstudent.org/graphics](http://transstudent.org/graphics)

**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources

# Pronouns-- A How To Guide

**Subject:** <sup>1</sup> laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

**Object:** They tried to convince <sup>2</sup> that asexuality does not exist.

**Possessive:** <sup>3</sup> favorite color is unknown.

**Possessive Pronoun:** The pronoun card is <sup>4</sup>.

**Reflexive:** <sup>1</sup> think(s) highly of <sup>5</sup>.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list.  
It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

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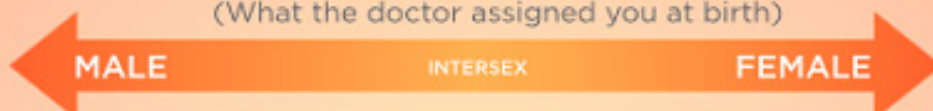
1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

# THE SPECTRUM

Our sexuality and gender identity aren't set in stone. In fact, people's identities can be fluid. THE SPECTRUM can help you visualize how you feel at any given time. Mark how you identify today on each line, but don't feel limited – it's ok to mark something different tomorrow!

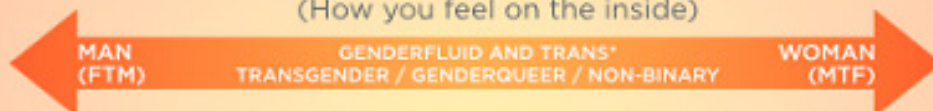
## BIOLOGICAL SEX

(What the doctor assigned you at birth)



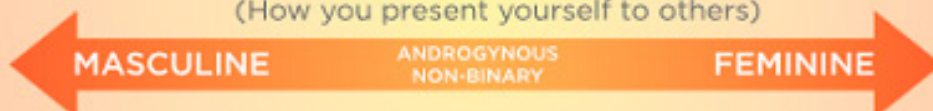
## GENDER IDENTITY

(How you feel on the inside)



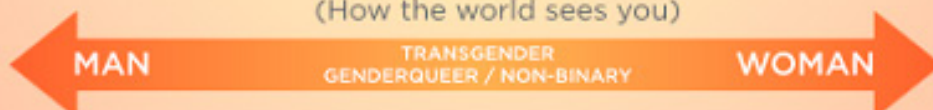
## GENDER EXPRESSION

(How you present yourself to others)



## GENDER PRESENTATION

(How the world sees you)



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

(Who you like)



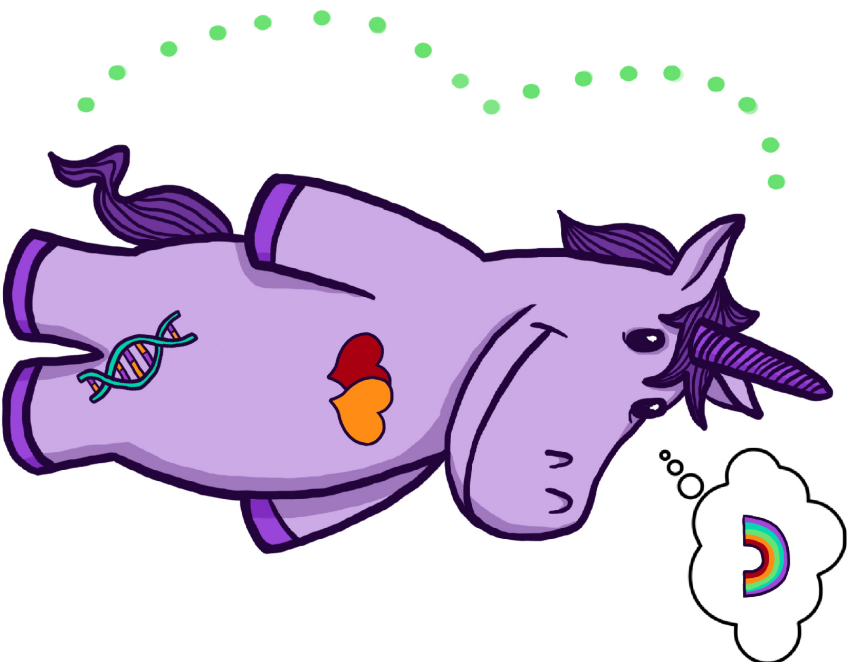
The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

[TheTrevorProject.org](http://TheTrevorProject.org)



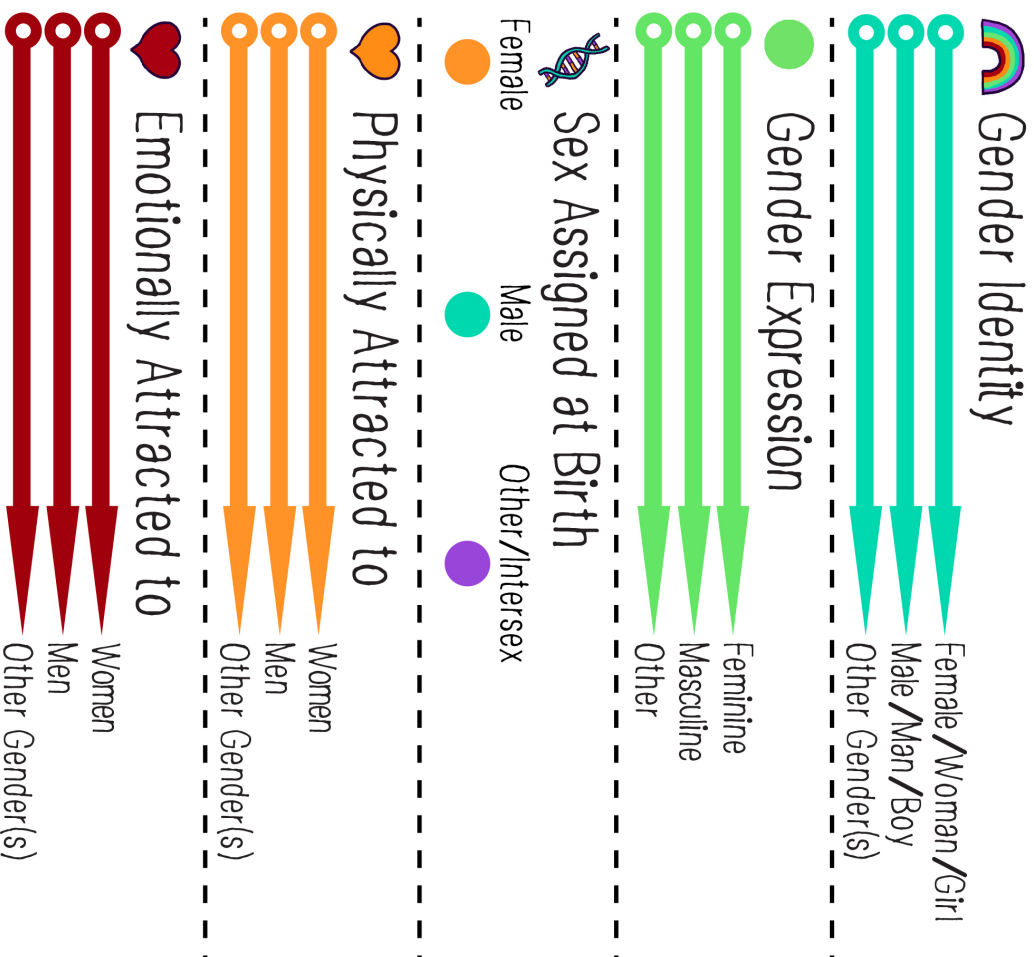
# The Gender Unicorn

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



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

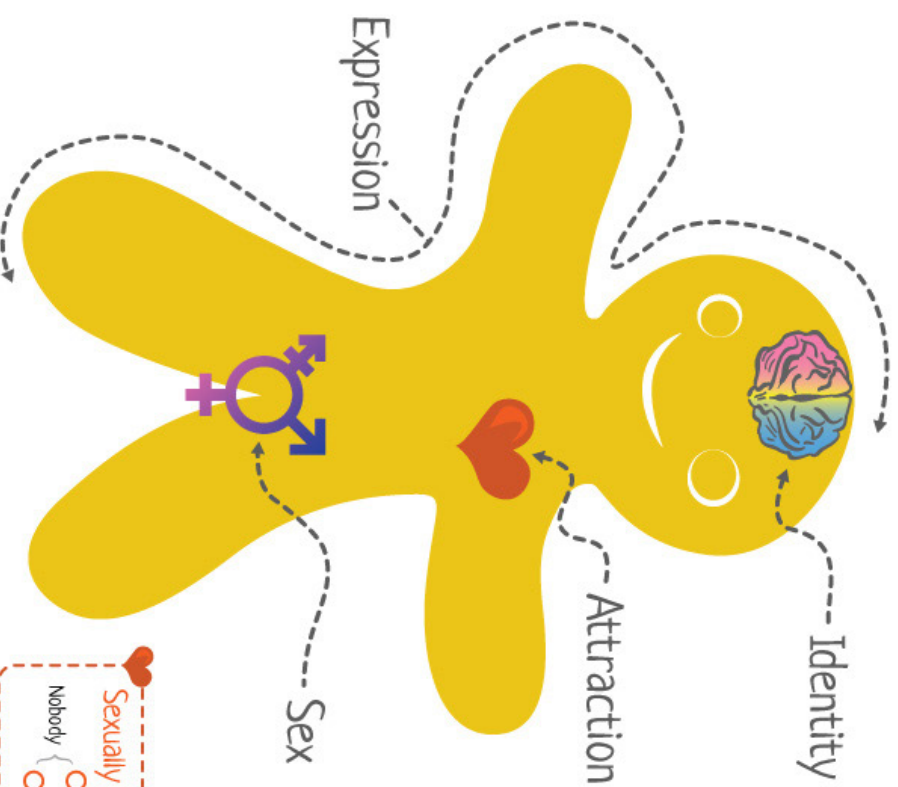
Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



## The Genderbread Person v3.3

by its pronounced **MEIRQ** sexual .com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*, Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.



⊘ Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

4 (or infinite) possible plot and label combos

**Gender Identity**

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

⊘	Woman-ness	Woman	Woman-ness
⊘	Man-ness	Man	Man-ness

**Gender Expression**

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

⊘	Feminine	Feminine	Feminine
⊘	Masculine	Masculine	Masculine

**Biological Sex**

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

⊘	Female-ness	Female	Female-ness
⊘	Male-ness	Male	Male-ness

**Sexually Attracted to**

Nobody

⊘

(Women/Females/Femininity)

⊘

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

**Romantically Attracted to**

Nobody

⊘

(Women/Females/Femininity)

⊘

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

For a bigger bite, read more at <http://bit.ly/genderbread>

# Identity. Policy. Health. Inclusion.



The previous two sections of this Toolkit have introduced you to the production of **Trans Scripts** at the A.R.T. (pages 5-13) and some of the fundamental concepts around defining and referring to gender (pages 15-22). This section (pages 24-55) focuses on some of the fundamental concepts, issues, and questions often affecting transgender individuals not only in the play, but also in the transgender community at large. This section is divided into four subsections: **Identity**, **Policy**, **Health**, and **Inclusion**.

The **Identity** section (pages 24-26) builds on the concepts introduced in **Words and Spectrums** (pages 15-21) by introducing some of the foundational concepts and issues currently shaping gender discourse in the US and beyond.

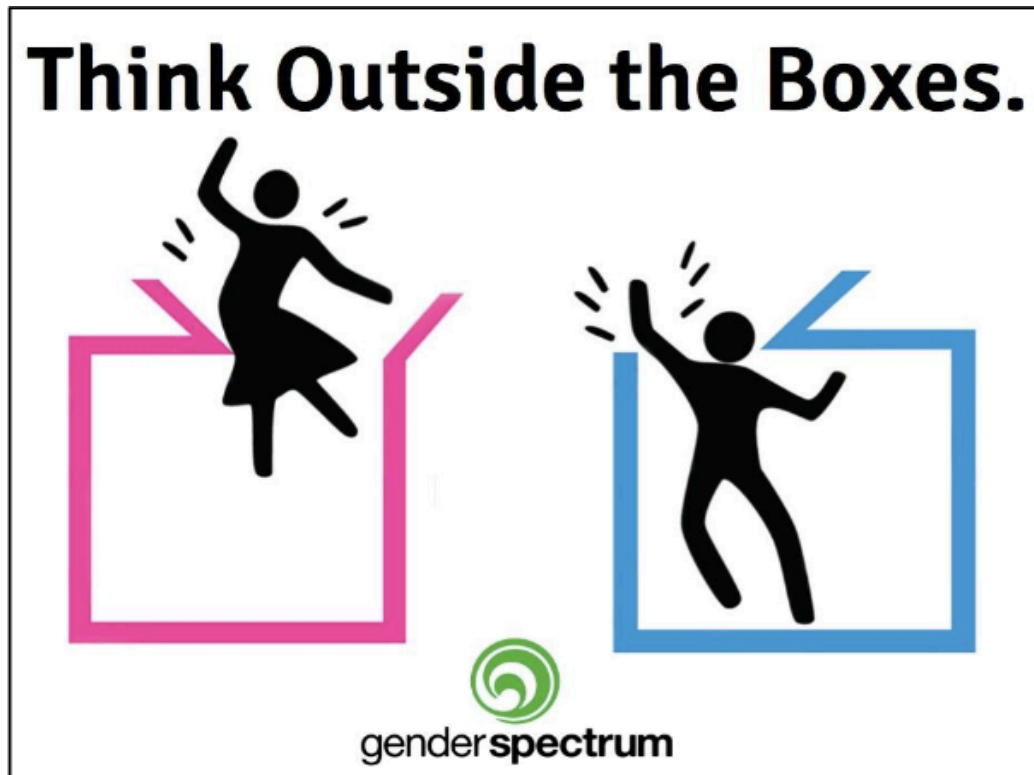
The **Policy** section (pages 35-41) provides an overview of issues that affect transgender individuals which are based in institutional policies and/or social pressures. This includes a discussion of the public accommodations bill currently being debated in Massachusetts.

The **Health** section (pages 43-47) takes a more in-depth look at some mental and physical health concepts affecting transgender individuals.

The **Inclusion** section (pages 49-55) provides tools and tips for discussing gender, supporting transgender individuals (particularly young people), and creating more gender-inclusive environments.

Each of these sections will include overarching questions meant to stimulate thought and conversations around each topic. You will also find links to more information in the **Resources** section of this Toolkit (pages 69-70).

# Identity



The following four articles provide an introduction to some of the foundations upon which gender discussions currently stand, especially discussions around transgender identity. You may already be thinking about or discussing these topics if you've perused the materials related to exploring the gender and sexuality spectrums in this Toolkit (pages 19-21).

"Society in Transition: A History of the Trans Movement" (pages 24-26) outlines many of the historical developments that laid the foundation for gender non-conforming people to be formally recognized by Western society, medicine, and politics.

"Trans Mapping: Geographic Tools for Understanding Gender" (page 27) provides three digital mapping tools that can be used to explore data related to transgender individuals in America, gender inclusive cultures that exist around the world, and trans rights in Europe.

"Counting Transgender Lives" (pages 28-30) is a part of the "Unerased" project established by Mic, a digital news outlet designed specifically for young people. Through photography, narratives, and data, "Unerased" takes a comprehensive look at transgender homicides since 2010, putting a face to issues that still persist and worsen despite ongoing progress in the push for transgender equality.

"30+ Examples of Cisgender Privilege" (pages 31-33) provides an accessible jumping-off point for exploring and discussing cisgender privilege through personal reflection. "Privilege" is currently a term used often in conversations around social justice, and can often be fraught and difficult to productively understand without establishing a direct, personal connection with the concept.



# Society in Transition

By James Montaña



Christine Jorgensen, a former US soldier, became one of the first publicly recognized trans individuals following her gender reassignment surgery in Denmark in 1952.

There have always been individuals who challenged gendered social norms. But Western social, medical, and political recognition of people who cross the boundaries of gender only truly began in the 20th century. The stories of ***Trans Scripts*** are interwoven into this history—a history that is still being written and re-defined today.

One of the earliest attempts to medically define the trans experience came in the early 20th century with the research of Berlin-based physician/sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. In 1919, Hirschfeld published *The Transvestites*, outlining his research and treatments for transgender people—then referred to as transvestites. Hirschfeld's study and advocacy for trans people was rooted in the belief that sex characteristics and erotic desire were among a variety of biological traits, and that society needed to adapt, not the individual. In 1931, he arranged the first male-to-female genital transformation for Dora Richter.

The connection of “sex-hormones”—estrogen and testosterone—to physical sexual identifiers was discovered by his Austrian colleague Eugen Steinach. After Adolf Hitler called Hirschfeld “the most dangerous Jew in Germany,” Nazi vigilantes destroyed his Institute in May 1933, burning his entire library.

In the 1940s and 50s, medical and political discourse around transgender lives collided in the US, thanks to the sexuality studies of Karl Bowman of the Langley Porter Psychiatric Clinic at the University of California San Francisco, sexologist Alfred Kinsey, and German-born American sexologist/endocrinologist Harry Benjamin, a friend of Hirschfeld. These researchers together fought for medical access for transgender people in a court case in California. The state ruled against offering access, essentially making sex-change operations illegal for doctors to perform. Despite this ruling, the UCSF Clinic helped connect trans people and planted the seeds of a movement.

Largely ignored by the general public, trans representation in the US abruptly came to the fore in 1952 with the very public sexual reassignment of Christine Jorgensen in Copenhagen. A Bronx-raised former soldier in the US Army, Jorgensen's dramatic transformation made the December 1, 1952 cover of the New York Daily News with the headline “Ex-GI Becomes Blond Bombshell,” which raised immediate awareness of the lives of transgender people. Jorgensen became a celebrity of sorts, and, though she was rarely political, she became an example



## Society in Transition (cont'd)

for many who had no reference point or way of defining their identity, including some of the women portrayed in *Trans Scripts*. This identity also began to evolve as the media struggled to define Jorgensen; some still referred to her as a “hermaphrodite.” It was Harry Benjamin who began to use the term “transsexual” to differentiate between the act of cross-dressing and the medical transformation of gender.

The lack of legal protections for transgender and gay people led to a climate of continued police harassment in public spaces in the US. In several instances, this harassment exploded into acts of resistance. Three specific riots are noted for propelling the modern trans rights movement, as well as the gay rights movement. The first riot was in Los Angeles, at Cooper’s Donuts in May 1959, where gay, trans, and cross-dressing people (mostly Latina/Latino and African American) began to push back at unfair arrests by police. In 1966, a second riot broke out in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco at Compton’s Cafeteria following police harassment. The third riot became the most famous. In June 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, trans people, gay men and women, and drag queens tussled with police into the early morning hours. Trans activist Sylvia Rivera tells of throwing a beer bottle at police, setting off the melee. )

Activism flourished following the Stonewall riots, establishing an early political voice for sexual minorities. The activist organization STAR, the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, formed under Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, an African American trans activist, focusing on the plight of gay and trans youth in New York. The Queer Liberation Front (QLF) was also founded around this time to focus on the visibility of drag queens and trans people in gay events.

Socially, the second-wave feminism of the 1960s and 70s, as well as the pop aesthetic of glam rock and the avant-garde theatricality of artists including the Cockettes and John Waters, challenged traditional social norms. However, it was the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s which united the gay, lesbian, and trans communities into a politically-driven movement. The scourge of HIV/AIDS pushed many in these communities to speak out, with numerous rallies and new organizations rising to confront the challenges of the disease. ACT UP and Transgender Nation made waves in the fight for improved medical access for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and, eventually, social acceptance.

Medically, 1980 also brought the addition of “Gender Identity Disorder” to the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III). This addition has since proved highly controversial, as it described cross-dressing and transgender experiences as “disordered.” However, the classification as a medical condition also allowed governments and the medical community to view gender-reassignment therapy as a needed medical practice, rather than solely cosmetic. The 2013 update to the DSM (DSM-V) renamed “gender identity disorder” as “gender dysphoria,” removing some of the stigma attached to “disorder” and essentially altering the classification from a pathology to an identity.

The 90s and beyond have been a struggle for social awareness and legal identity. The assaults and murders of trans people in cities across the US, including Rita Hester, murdered in Allston, MA in 1998, caused an outcry for political attention. The first Transgender Day of Remembrance was declared in 1999 following Hester’s murder, and in 2002 the Transgender Law Center began its work pushing for legal protections of trans people. Films, including *The Crying Game* (1992) and *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999) helped further the social narrative of the victimization of trans bodies.

Much of the legal recognition and protections for trans individuals have come in the last two decades. The Gender Recognition Act of 2004 in the UK provided legal recognition of change of gender. In 2007, Spain allowed for the documented change of sex with only

two years of medical treatment and a doctor's diagnosis of gender dysphoria. This law is considered one of the most progressive of its kind. In the US that same year, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, an anti-hate-crimes bill, was blocked in the Senate, though it was eventually passed in 2009. In 2010, the US federal government extended employment protections to transgender people, and in 2012 the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission found discrimination against trans people to be in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The US military has announced that, starting in 2017, it will open its doors to trans individuals.

More than ever, contemporary media is highlighting a variety of trans stories, from Fox's "Glee," to Amazon's "Transparent," and Netflix's "Orange Is the New Black." But those stories reflect only a small sliver of the myriad experiences of transgender people. Like the women in Trans Scripts, every story is unique and challenges any preconceived notion of a singular "trans experience." Through its continuing evolutions, the trans movement has fought for the individual dignity of trans lives within a society itself in a state of transition.

*James Montañó is a second-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.*

*This article appeared in the [A.R.T. Guide](#), published by the American Repertory Theater.*

## DISCUSSION

- What role does descriptive language play in how we define ourselves? Are there specific words you would use to describe yourself? In reading about some of the terminology that has developed over the years in describing transgender experience—"hermaphrodite," "transsexual," "cross-dresser," etc.—can you identify any reasons why these terms would have been so important? Are there milestones outlined in this essay that relied on or created new language to describe transgender experience?
- Have you heard of the Stonewall riots before? If so, what do you know about what happened during the riots, and what caused the events? Have you ever read or learned about the role transgender people played during the riots?
- This essay outlines many intersections between the development of transgender rights and other developments, such as medical science. What are some of the other intersections outlined in this essay? Had you learned about, discussed, or considered these intersections before?

# Trans Mapping

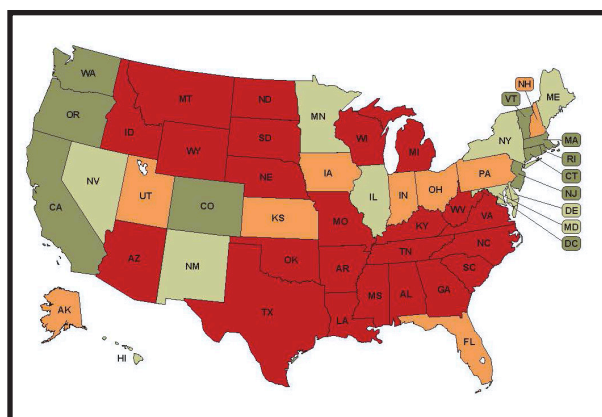
## Geographic Tools for Understanding Gender

*Different cultures around the world, ancient and contemporary, recognize, name, and interact with genders outside of the male/female binary in different ways. While the questions, choices, and reactions surrounding gender identity can often seem highly personal and current, recognizing non-binary genders is neither a strictly private nor contemporary phenomenon. We often encounter both real-life and fictional narratives and portrayals of transgender identity, and geography, history, and data also have much to teach us about gender. Using the interactive digital maps in this collection, you can explore gender inclusive cultures across the world as well as snapshots of geographically-tied data collected in the United States and Europe.*

### Transgender America

The LGBT Movement Advancement Project has created multiple infographic maps illustrating gender identity policies, adoption and parenting laws, non-discrimination laws, safe school laws, health and safety policies, and identity document policies in each state.

To view the maps, visit [lgbtmap.org/transgender-snapshot-graphic](http://lgbtmap.org/transgender-snapshot-graphic)



### Gender Inclusive Cultures

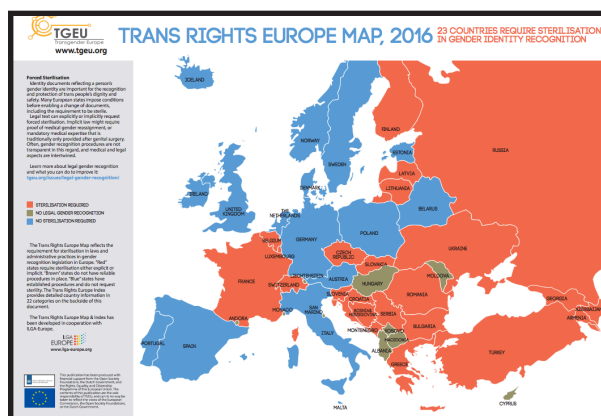
The PBS television program *Independent Lens* developed a film focusing on Native American gender diversity called *Two Spirits*. As a part of their supporting educational material, they also put together an interactive map describing cultures around the world which currently or in the past have recognized non-binary gender identities.

To explore the map, visit [pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits\\_map.html](http://pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits_map.html)

### Trans Rights in Europe

Transgender Europe (TGEU) is an organization working specifically for the equality of trans people within Europe. In 2016, TGEU compiled a map outlining the national policies in place in countries across Europe that effect individuals seeking to legally change genders. These policies often require specific medical steps, including reassignment and sterilization.

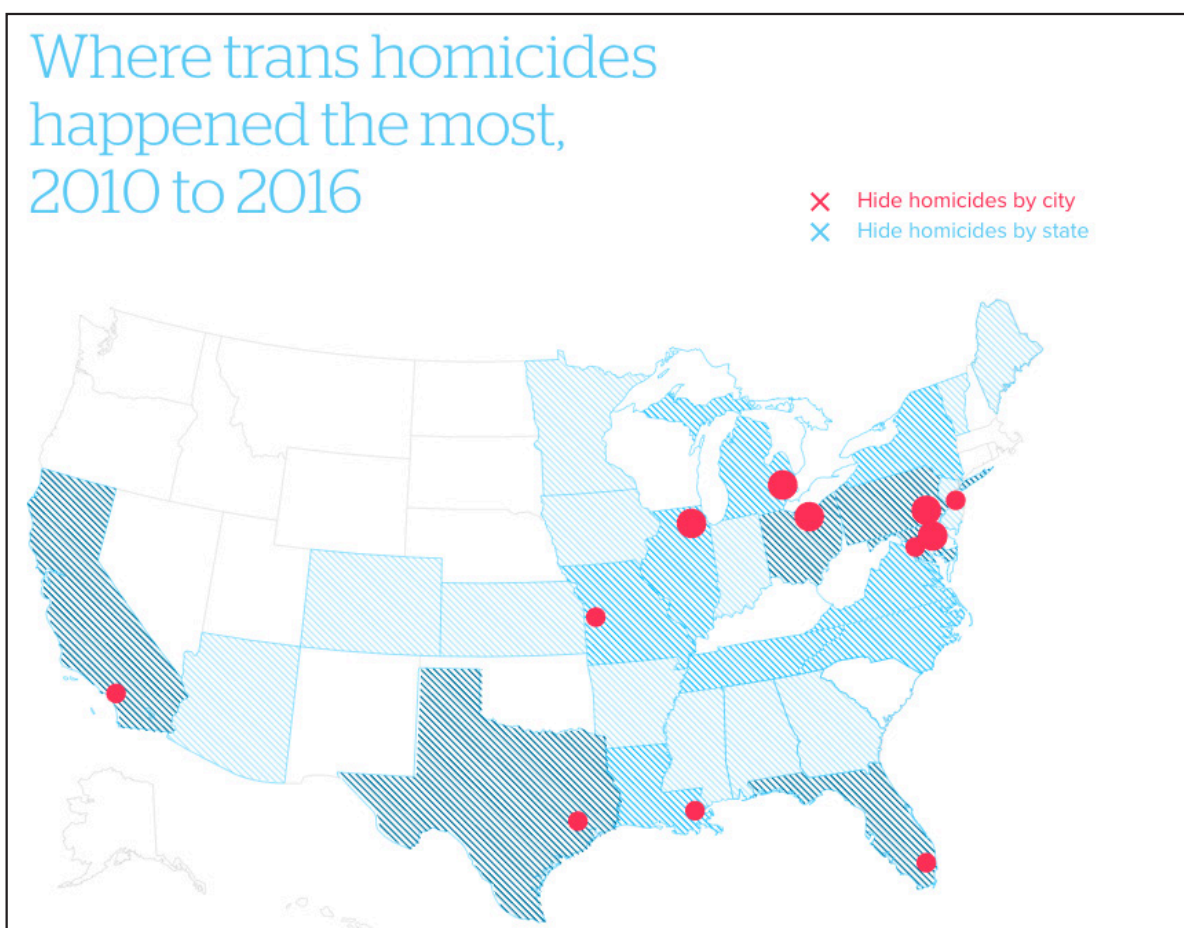
To view the map, visit [tgeu.org/trans-rights-europe\\_map\\_2016](http://tgeu.org/trans-rights-europe_map_2016).



# Counting Transgender Lives: A Multifaceted Problem

By Meredith Talusan, et al.

This article is excerpted from mic.com's project [Unerased](#), an extensive, interactive collection of data and analysis accompanied by the site's [comprehensive database of homicides of transgender persons in America](#). We strongly recommend exploring the content at [mic.com/unerased](#) as a starting-point for conversation and analytical thinking.



For the general population in the U.S., 1 in 19,000 people is murdered every year. For young adults the chance is 1 in 12,000. But for young black trans women, the chance is 1 in 2,600.

Aryah Lester, a black trans woman from Miami, describes living with the constant risk of violence. "I tell people that I already have three strikes," she said. "As I'm walking down the street from far, far away, you may only see my color, and that's one strike. And then as I come a little closer, you see my femininity, and that's another strike ... And then when I get closer you may just see that I'm trans."



## Counting Transgendered Lives (cont'd)

Our analysis of transgender homicide cases from 2010 onward provides ample evidence that violence against trans people is an intersectional problem, exacerbated not just by race and gender but also by poverty stemming from discrimination.

While the number of transgender homicides each year may seem small, it represents a rate of violence that far exceeds that of the general population. And the trend seems to be rising. In the past seven years, the number of documented trans-related homicides has steadily risen, from nine in 2010 to 23 so far this year, with 2014 representing the only year in which the number declined markedly. At the same time, there has been much greater visibility around transgender issues in the past several years, with the Obama administration issuing federal guidelines that support transgender rights in a range of sectors like employment, bathrooms and legal documents. Transgender activists, too, have also become increasingly vocal.

Yacka and Emily Waters, senior manager of national research and policy at NCAVP, see the recent uptick in documented cases of transgender homicide as one result of improved tracking.

“We can say for sure that we are seeing better reporting on the homicides specifically of trans people,” Waters said. “People are quicker to call out the media, and that then lets us know about these homicides. This whole system is getting better.”

What’s less clear is if the number of violent incidents is actually increasing along with the rate of reports about them. Without a log of historical data, it’s hard to know how today’s anti-trans violence compares to even a decade ago.

Mic’s analysis shows large numbers of documented trans homicides in urban areas like Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland and Philadelphia. But the relative lack of reports in places where large numbers of trans people live — Washington and Oregon, for instance — is likely the result of underreporting rather than an absence of violence. There have been no reported cases in Hawaii, which contains the largest number of trans people per capita in the U.S., or Southern states like West Virginia and South Carolina.

“It’s virtually impossible that no actual murders of trans people took place in those states over that time period,” Waters said. Instead, she notes a rough correlation between states that have high incidences of documented homicides and organizations or activists in those regions that vigilantly report instances of trans-related violence.

For many trans people, nearly every space brings with it the potential for danger — at home or on the street, with strangers or acquaintances, around their romantic partners or their families. In Mic’s analysis of transgender homicides, intimate partner violence was by far the most common scenario, accounting for 35% of deaths overall and 30% of black trans women’s deaths. Many men killed partners after discovering they were trans, or out of fear of being outed as being in a relationship with a trans woman. The data also show that black trans women are at greater risk than other trans people of being attacked by strangers. Such attacks account for 27% of black trans women’s deaths, but only 10% for all other groups.

The lack of information regarding transgender violence has bothered Dinno for some time. Using sources like a Massachusetts study in the *American Journal of Public Health* and a study by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, and cross-referencing this data with general population statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dinno has calculated more informed statistics for the rate of homicide within the transgender community. Mic tracked the homicides that could be counted using published news reports, while Dinno used statistical analysis to calculate what the true rate of these crimes might be.

Many men killed partners after discovering they were trans, or out of fear of being outed as being in a relationship with a trans woman.



While Dinno's estimates for the murder rate of transgender people vary widely, one pattern rings true. "Brown transgender bodies are most vulnerable," she said.

Between 2010 and 2014, the last year for which full CDC data is available, Americans were murdered at a yearly rate of 25.8 per 100,000 people.

According to Dinno's calculations, young black trans women ages 15 to 34 were murdered between 4.5 and 22.6 times that rate, and between 7.9 and 39.1 times compared to young cisgender women. 2015 and 2016, which were not included in her analysis, saw documented murders spike, from an average of 13 trans murders from 2010 through 2014 to 23.5 for 2015 and 2016.

"It's really worrying, because these are large increases," Dinno said.

*This article is excerpted from a larger data and reporting project from [mic.com/unerased](https://mic.com/unerased).*

## DISCUSSION

- Do any of the statistics or stories in this study surprise you? How did it feel reading through these materials?
- What do these statistics tell you about the intersections between race and trans experience?
- Why is it difficult to collect data on transgender people? Furthermore, why is it difficult to collect data on violence against transgender people?
- Are there people you know or places you have been that make you feel afraid? Have you ever feared for your life? How would it feel to experience that type of fear everywhere you went?

# 30+ Examples of Cisgender Privilege

By Sam Killerman

*Discussions around societal inequities frequently involve using the term “privilege,” a term that can often catalyze discussions around the given circumstances of an individual or group of people based on their racial background, socio-economic status, gender identity, and other traits that make us who we are. A “privilege” is defined as an advantage that an individual or a group of people might enjoy which is not available to others. Some of these advantages are very apparent, while others often go unnoticed by those who have them. While privileges are not shameful or bad, it is important to recognize that not everyone enjoys the same advantages. The following is a list of cisgender identity privileges resulting from the alignment of a cisgender person’s identity with how their identity is perceived by others. You could use this list as way to think about and discuss gender privilege; what exactly gives a cisgender person an advantage in each of these situations? We also encourage you to think about these examples and reflect on the disadvantages someone who does not identify as cisgender might have to deal with.*

*For a further exploration of privilege, see the Privilege Beads lesson plan on pages 61-62.*



If you're not familiar with the term, "cisgender" means having a biological sex that matches your gender identity and expression, resulting in other people accurately perceiving your gender. If you are cisgender, there's a good chance you've never thought about these things (or even your cisgender identity). Try and be more cognizant and you'll start to realize how much work we have to do in order to make things better for the transgender folks who don't have access to these privileges.

## 30+ Examples of Cisgender Privilege (cont'd)

1. Use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest
2. Use public facilities such as gym locker rooms and store changing rooms without stares, fear, or anxiety.
3. Strangers don't assume they can ask you what your genitals look like and how you have sex.
4. Your validity as a man/woman/human is not based on how much surgery you've had or how well you "pass" as non-transgender.
5. You have the ability to walk through the world and generally blend-in, not being constantly stared or gawked at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of your gender expression.
6. You can access gender exclusive spaces such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Greek Life, or Take Back the Night and not be excluded due to your trans status.
7. Strangers call you by the name you provide, and don't ask what your "real name" [birth name] is and then assume that they have a right to call you by that name.
8. You can reasonably assume that your ability to acquire a job, rent an apartment, or secure a loan will not be denied on the basis of your gender identity/expression.
9. You have the ability to flirt, engage in courtship, or form a relationship and not fear that your biological status may be cause for rejection or attack, nor will it cause your partner to question their sexual orientation.
10. If you end up in the emergency room, you do not have to worry that your gender will keep you from receiving appropriate treatment, or that all of your medical issues will be seen as a result of your gender.
11. Your identity is not considered a mental pathology ("gender identity disorder" in the DSM IV) by the psychological and medical establishments.
12. You have the ability to not worry about being placed in a sex-segregated detention center, holding facility, jail or prison that is incongruent with your identity.
13. You have the ability to not be profiled on the street as a sex worker because of your gender expression.
14. You are not required to undergo an extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.
15. You do not have to defend you right to be a part of "Queer," and gays and lesbians will not try to exclude you from "their" equal rights movement because of your gender identity (or any equality movement, including feminist rights).
16. If you are murdered (or have any crime committed against you), your gender expression will not be used as a justification for your murder ("gay panic") nor as a reason to coddle the perpetrators.
17. You can easily find role models and mentors to emulate who share your identity.
18. Hollywood accurately depicts people of your gender in films and television, and does not solely make your identity the focus of a dramatic storyline, or the punchline for a joke.
19. Be able to assume that everyone you encounter will understand your identity, and not think you're confused, misled, or hell-bound when you reveal it to them.

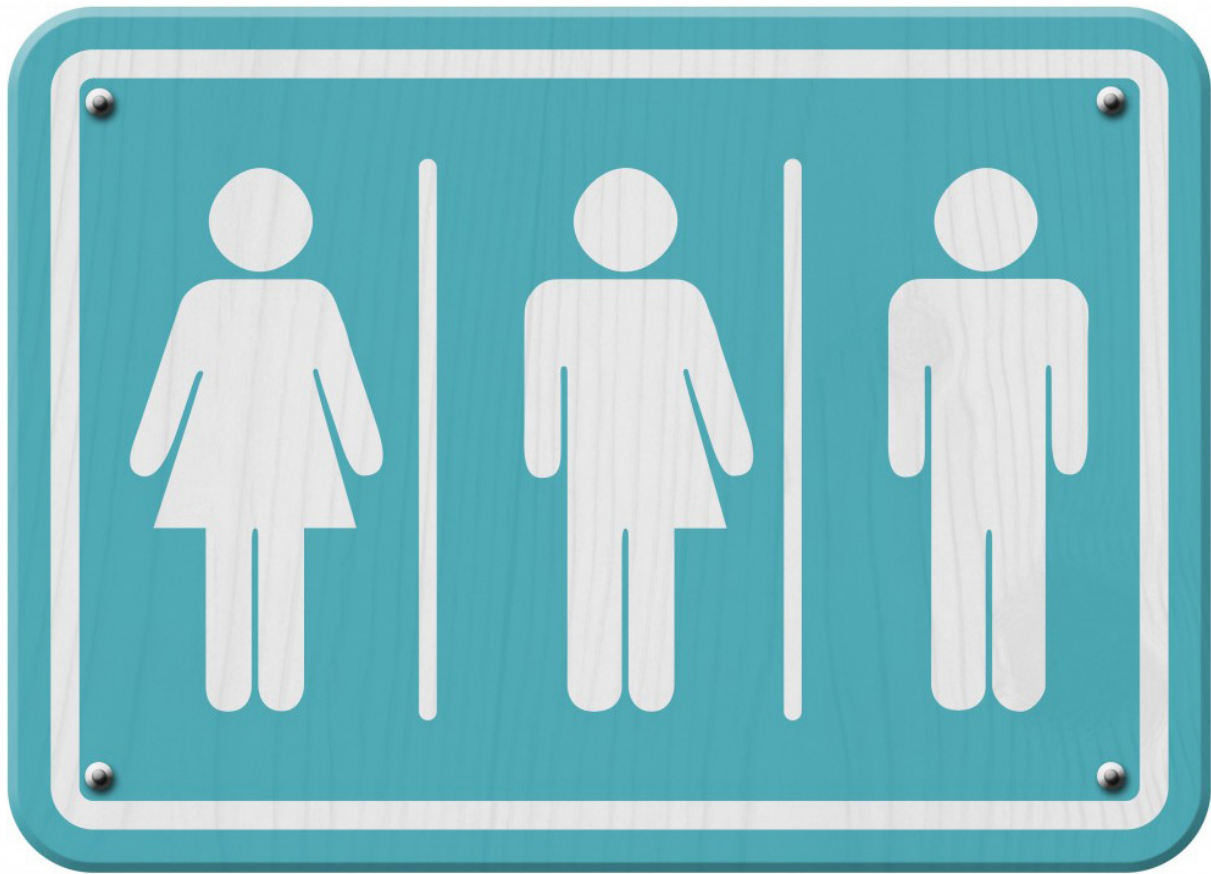
## 30+ Examples of Cisgender Privilege (cont'd)

20. Being able to purchase clothes that match your gender identity without being refused service/mockered by staff or questioned on your genitals.
21. Being able to purchase shoes that fit your gender expression without having to order them in special sizes or asking someone to custom-make them.
22. No stranger checking your identification or drivers license will ever insult or glare at you because your name or sex does not match the sex they believed you to be based on your gender expression.
23. You can reasonably assume that you will not be denied services at a hospital, bank, or other institution because the staff does not believe the gender marker on your ID card to match your gender identity.
24. Unlocking the Magic of Facilitation Having your gender as an option on a form.
25. Being able to tick a box on a form without someone disagreeing, and telling you not to lie. Yes, this happens.
26. Not fearing interactions with police officers due to your gender identity.
27. Being able to go to places with friends on a whim knowing there will be bathrooms there you can use.
28. You don't have to convince your parents of your true gender and/or have to earn your parents' and siblings' love and respect all over again.
29. You don't have to remind your extended family over and over to use proper gender pronouns (e.g., after transitioning).
30. You don't have to deal with old photographs that did not reflect who you truly are.
31. Knowing that if you're dating someone they aren't just looking to satisfy a curiosity or kink pertaining to your gender identity (e.g., the "novelty" of having sex with a trans- person).
32. Being able to pretend that anatomy and gender are irrevocably entwined when having the "boy parts and girl parts" talk with children, instead of explaining the actual complexity of the issue.

*This article was originally published on the website [It's Pronounced Metrosexual](#), and can be found [here](#).*

### DISCUSSION

- How many of these 32 statements can you identify with? Are there any of these statements that you have never considered as advantages before? Why do you think that is?
- Were any of these statements difficult for you to understand or relate to? Why do you think that is?
- How might you be able to use your own privileges to help achieve equality for everyone?



The previous four articles in the **Identity** section (pages 24-33) introduced some of the frameworks behind current discourses around gender. The following two resources outline some of the institutional, legal, and social policies that affect transgender lives.

“Where We Are Now: An Introduction of Current Trans Social and Policy Issues” (pages 35-40) is a compilation of information collected from the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, summarizing and contextualizing the major issues important to transgender individuals in the United States, with a particular focus on resources and legal processes in Massachusetts. The compilation focuses on discrimination, education, employment, health care, homelessness, housing, legislation, state & local laws, suicide prevention, trans prisoners, voting & identity documents.

“Talking About Public Accommodations” (page 41) is an infographic summary outlining the background, stipulations, and consequences of the Public Accommodations Bill currently being debated in Massachusetts.



# Where Are We Now?

An Introduction of Current Trans Social and Policy Issues from the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition.

*The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) is an advocacy, education, and community-building organization that works to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression. As a part of their initiatives to improve the lives of Massachusetts transgender youth, adults, and their families, MTPC works toward official policy changes and also raises awareness and educates on issues of particular interest to the trans community. Read below for a summary of how the issues of discrimination, education, employment, health care, homelessness, housing, legislation, state & local laws, suicide prevention, trans prisoners, and voting & identity documents affect the trans communities in Massachusetts and beyond. You can learn more about MTPC and find additional resources at [www.masstpc.org](http://www.masstpc.org).*



## Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unfair treatment because of an individual's membership in a particular group.

A 2006 Greater Boston area survey found that fewer than 25% of transgender women were employed full-time, only 20% held part-time employment, and 55% had been homeless at some point. Transgender people in Massachusetts have reported losing their jobs, being harassed by landlords, feeling unsafe in their own schools, and even being turned away from local emergency rooms.

In November of 2011, Massachusetts became the 16th state to add non-discrimination laws for gender identity in the areas of employment, housing, K-12 public education, and credit. Additionally, Massachusetts Hate Crimes laws were also updated to include gender identity.

This law is known as [An Act Relative to Gender Identity](#).

This new legislation did not extend protections in public accommodations. MTPC is part of the Freedom Massachusetts campaign, which is lobbying to close the gap in transgender non-discrimination laws during the spring 2016 legislative session.

## Where Are We Now? (cont'd)

### Education

Transgender and gender non-conforming youth continue to experience overwhelming amounts of harassment and discrimination in schools across the Commonwealth and throughout the nation. The 2007 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that 87% of transgender students had been verbally harassed in the previous year because of their gender expression, and more than a quarter had been physically assaulted. More than half of those who were victimized did not report the events to school authorities.

Negative educational effects of these traumatic experiences included almost half of students skipping school at least once in the previous month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, GPAs dropping to an average of 2.5, and, as also noted in other studies, many becoming at risk for developing depression and suicidal tendencies.

The evidence is overwhelming that transgender and gender non-conforming youth need active school support and protection for their physical, mental, and educational well-being. [The 2011 passage and enactment of An Act Relative to Gender Identity](#) requires non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity in the areas of education, employment, housing, and credit/lending.

In addition, Massachusetts Superior and Appeals Courts ruled in October 2000 and February 2001, respectively, that Massachusetts schools may not prohibit transgender students from expressing their gender identities and are afforded the same protections and rights under the law as other students.

Under the law, schools must address allegations of bullying and harassment promptly. Forms of harassment include: asking inappropriate personal questions about the student's body, including whether the child has had surgical procedures; disclosing to other students, faculty, staff or administrators that the student is transgender; posting offensive pictures or sending offensive electronic or other communications related to the student, including telephone, internet, and text-messaging harassment; and making derogatory remarks, jokes, insults, or epithets.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions, or programs; at a school bus stop and on a school bus; and through technology such as the Internet and text messaging.

### Employment

An employer who discriminates against an employee or applicant on the basis of the person's gender identity is violating the prohibition on sex discrimination contained in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, according to an opinion issued on April 20, 2012 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

It is illegal in the state of Massachusetts to discriminate against an individual on the basis of their gender identity in the area of employment. Discrimination is defined as unfair treatment because of an individual's membership in a particular group, including transgender and gender non-conforming people.

In the employment context, discrimination begins with an "adverse employment action": something an employer does that hurts an employee, such as terminating the employee, not

## Where We are Now? (cont'd)

selecting the employee for a promotion, giving the employee a poor evaluation, harassing the employee with derogatory remarks or behaviors, or denying the employee's request for an accommodation of a disability. If you believe the adverse employment action happened to you because of your race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetics, or past involvement in a discrimination complaint, it could be discrimination. If the adverse action happened to various people from all different backgrounds, it may not be discrimination, and other agencies may be able to assist you.

How do I know if my employer is covered by state discrimination laws?

If you are a part- or full-time employee at a workplace that employs at least six part- or full-time employees, then your employer is covered. If you have questions about this, you can raise them when you come to file a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD).

To enact more gender inclusive policies at work, it is recommended that employers...

- Include "Gender Identity and Expression" as a category in diversity, hiring, and EEO statements
- Establish Gender Transition Guidelines: Institute protocols for gender transitions that clearly delineate responsibilities and expectations of transitioning employees, their supervisors, colleagues, and other staff.
- Ensure Privacy — Keep the transgender employee's status private and confidential, limited to the fewest people necessary.
- Update Personnel and/or other Records
- Dress Codes: Transgender employees may dress consistently in accordance with their gender identity.
- Benefits: Remove Discriminatory Health Insurance Exclusions

Please see the [MCAD FAQ](#) more information.

## Health Care

According to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Affordable Care Act protects against discrimination based on gender identity. HHS has clarified that sex-based discrimination, which is prohibited by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), includes discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex stereotypes. Furthermore, HHS has made clear this includes discrimination against trans people and discrimination based on a provider's perception of how "masculine" or "feminine" a client's presentation is.

Trans people in Massachusetts cite two main problems with accessing health care: 1. Locating providers who are knowledgeable about trans people and health issues, and 2. Securing and paying for needed services.

Trans people who do not live in urban areas have greater difficulty accessing health care because they often have to drive to Boston, which can be prohibitively inconvenient.

Referrals within the health care system can be problematic for trans patients because often isn't possible to determine how safe or trans-friendly a new provider is.

## Where Are We Now? (cont'd)

Trans people say that they are afraid to disclose their trans identity to insurers, for fear of facing exclusion in or loss of their health care coverage.

Even at the level of paperwork, standard forms can be barriers to health care for trans individuals because they often only say “male” or “female”, which is intimidating for any gender non-conforming person and explicitly excludes non-binary-identified trans people.

See the [National Center for Transgender Equality’s resource on Health Care Rights and Transgender People](#), which lists which laws protect trans access to health care, how to report rights violations, and additional services.

*Also see the **Health** section of this Toolkit (pages 43-47) for more information and resources.*

## Homelessness

A 2009 study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force reports about 1 in 5 transgender people have been refused housing, and 19% have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives due to transgender-related discrimination. Of transgender people who have tried to access shelters, 55% have experienced harassment by shelter staff or residents, 29% were turned away altogether, and a staggering 22% experienced sexual assault by residents or staff. Furthermore, those trans people in the study who have experienced homelessness were highly vulnerable to mistreatment in public settings, police abuse, and negative health outcomes.

Additionally, the 2011 Institute of Medicine report on the health of LGBT people affirms the significant risk of homelessness among young transgender people. The overwhelming evidence indicates the necessity for safety and accessibility to homeless shelters and programs for transgender and gender non-conforming people. The experiences of homeless transgender people here in Massachusetts reflect the findings from national research.

*To learn more, see MTPC’s compilation of best practices, “[Shelter for All Genders](#),” as well as their [shelter discrimination story share project](#).*

## Housing

It is illegal in the state of Massachusetts to discriminate against an individual on the basis of their gender identity in the area of housing.

Home sellers and landlords have a responsibility and a requirement under the law not to discriminate in the sale, rental, or financing of property. Under the law, a home seller or landlord cannot establish discriminatory terms or conditions in the purchase or rental, deny that housing is available only to persons in a protected class, or instruct an agent or broker to convey such limitations to potential applicants. Even if discriminatory actions are not intentional, they are still illegal.

Real estate agents are required to offer equal professional service, the opportunity to consider a broad range of housing choices, and no discriminatory limitations on communities or locations of housing. Additionally, an agent must not discriminate in the financing, appraising or insuring of housing. Real estate agents must provide reasonable accommodations in rules, practices, and procedures for persons with disabilities. Finally, real estate agents are required to present non-discriminatory terms and conditions for the sale, rental, financing, or insuring

## Where Are We Now? (cont'd)

of a dwelling. An individual has the right to be free from harassment or intimidation for exercising their fair housing rights.

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, and The Department of Housing and Urban Development are all agencies in which one can utilize to file a housing discrimination complaint, regardless of location in Massachusetts.

*For a quick reference on fair housing practices in Greater Boston, see [The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston](#).*

## Legislation

MTPC's legislative focus is on legislation that would add "gender identity" to existing Massachusetts civil rights law for public accommodations, which currently prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, and marital status.

Legislation to this end was introduced into the 2015-16 legislative session: House Bill #4343, Senate Bill #735. To date this bill has 56 co-sponsors in the house, 17 in the senate.

*For more information on current public accommodation legislation as well as other resources on recent legislation, visit [masstpc.org/take-action/legislation](http://masstpc.org/take-action/legislation).*

## State & Local Laws

Two State Executive orders were issued in 2011 related to non-discrimination:

[Executive Order 526 Regarding Non-discrimination, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action](#)

[Executive Order 527 Establishing the Office of Access and Opportunity within the Executive Office of Administration and Finance](#)

The following cities and towns in Massachusetts have local ordinances for non-discrimination on the basis of Gender Identity or Expression: Cambridge (1997), Boston (2002), Northampton (2005), Amherst (2009), Brookline (2014), Medford (2014), Melrose (2014), Worcester (2014), Newton (2014), Swampscott (2015)

## Suicide Prevention

According to "[Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey](#)" in 2011, 41 percent of the 6,400+ respondents reported a suicide attempt, compared to a rate of 1.6 percent for the general population. Here are a few resources you can share with at-risk people in the trans community. It's up to all of us to keep our community safe.



## Where Are We Now? (cont'd)

### Trans Prisoners

MTPC works to ensure that local, state, and federal legislation, policies, and practices that affect prisoners are allowing appropriate dress codes and are not denying trans prisoners access to medically necessary trans-related health care, canteen items, trans-related educational materials and books, and/or visitors.

In the past five years, MTPC has worked against “An Act Relative to Appropriate Use of Public Funds,” which seeks to legislatively prohibit the Massachusetts Department of Corrections from administering specified medical care and treatment to transgender inmates. Denying medical care and medically necessary treatment to transgender inmates is inhumane and against the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which reads:

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

[The Prison Rape Elimination Act \(PREA\) 2012](#) is a comprehensive set of federal rules that address all aspects of a facility’s operations as they relate to preventing, detecting, and responding to abuse. The regulations include provisions relating to “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and gender non-conforming inmates.” Among the most important protections are the following:

Facilities must screen all individuals at admission and upon transfer to assess their risk of experiencing or perpetrating abuse, including identifying those who may be at risk because of their transgender status, gender non-conformity, sexual orientation, or intersex condition. The individual’s own perception of their vulnerability must also be considered.

Individuals may not be disciplined for any refusal or non-disclosure during screening regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex condition, disability status, or prior sexual victimization.

Facilities must use this information to make appropriate, individualized decisions about an individual’s security classification and housing placement.

### Voting & Identity Documents

There are currently 10 states with very strict Photo ID Laws. These laws disproportionately affect the trans community and this year more than 24,000 trans people in those 10 states could be disenfranchised and unable to vote this Election Day.

Even here in Massachusetts, where there are not strict Photo ID laws, trans people face significant barriers and obstacles to exercising their right to vote. This can come in the form of uninformed poll workers wrongly rejecting ID documents on Election Day or even just in the barriers to acquiring or updating these ID documents in the first place.

These are a few of the reasons it’s so important to make sure everyone gets out and votes so that our voices can be heard and we can change these policies and laws.

For help navigating the process of updating your identity documents, see the resources at [www.masstpc.org/get-help/identity-documents/](http://www.masstpc.org/get-help/identity-documents/)

*This compilation was collected from resources provided by the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition. To find more resources, data, and research, visit [masstpc.org/issues](http://masstpc.org/issues) and see the **Resources** section of this Toolkit (pages 69-70).*

# Talking About Public Accommodations

## Background

In 2011, we passed a historic bill that protects transgender people in the areas of credit/lending, housing, public education, and employment. “Gender identity” was also added to the hate crimes statute. **However, protections in public spaces were excluded from the bill!** A transgender person cannot be denied employment at a local restaurant because of his/her/their gender identity, but could be denied service as a customer!

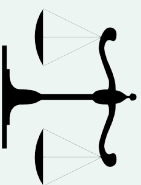
## Why Do We Need This Law?

- To End Confusion**
  - ✓ Businesses will not have to deal with the inconsistency between protections in employment, but not in public spaces
  - ✓ **Example:** A transgender person working at a doctor’s office will not have to worry about being denied care as a patient because of their identity



## 2 To Ensure We Are All Treated Equally

- ✓ Keeping the law as is sends the message to the general public that it is okay to deny services to transgender people



- ✓ **Example:** A gay couple checking into a hotel cannot be denied service, but a transgender person can be asked to leave based on their gender identity and/or expression

## 3 To Improve Our Shared Quality of Life

- ✓ Transgender people will have the peace of mind in knowing that they have legal protections in public spaces and are supported by the same laws that protect so many others

## peace of mind

- ✓ **Example:** Transgender people will not have to censor themselves or avoid public places for fear of being kicked out or harassed by business owners or employees

## How We Know the Law Will Work

- ✓ Since 2012, Massachusetts’ schools have been required to provide transgender students with access to restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity. There have been no reported incidents of indecent behavior by transgender students since this policy has been implemented.



Planet Fitness, a national gym franchise with more than 900 locations across the country, has successfully implemented trans-friendly locker room policies for its facilities with no substantiated reports of misbehavior on the part of transgender clients.



## And if the Law Stays the Same?

- ✓ A 2014 study states that transgender people who reported being discriminated against in public are **84 percent more likely** to experience adverse physical effects (headaches, muscle tension and upset stomach) and **99 percent more likely** to experience emotional effects (frustration, anger, sadness)



- ✓ The same study reports that discrimination in public spaces increases the likelihood of a transgender person forgoing medical care and seeking treatment for health problems

# Health



The previous two sections of this Toolkit introduced major concepts around **Identity** (pages 24-33) and **Policy** (35-41) that effect the lives of transgender people in our community and across the country. The two resources in the **Health** section (pages 43-47) take a deeper and more pointed dive into mental and physical health issues effecting young people (pages 43-46), and a timeline outlining a typical gender transition process (page 47). These materials are designed to complement and expand on some of the personal narratives around health expressed in *Trans Scripts*.

Please note that the transitioning process is different for every individual, and there are many different philosophies and practices that exist to aid individuals through their transition.

# The Health and Rights of Transgender Youth

By Nicholas Peterson

*While **Trans Scripts** focuses on the stories of adult transgender women, and the experiences of transgender young people are related, they can also differ widely. Read this article from *Advocates for Youth* for introductory data and analysis of factors that directly effect transgender youth. You may choose to start a discussion with by comparing the characters and stories in the play with the data and analysis in this article as well as students' own ideas and experiences.*



Transgender individuals identify in many ways, but most share the experience that their assigned sex falsely or incompletely describes them. Sex refers to a person's physical body and genetic composition. A person's gender is their understanding of their self-expression, self-image, and self-reflection and how this relates to the traditional gender binary of male and female. Transgender is an umbrella term that often is used to describe people who identify as the opposite gender from their assigned sex, a combination of both genders, or neither gender.

Gender identity is the gender a person feels explains their lived experience – who they are. When one's gender identity does not match their assigned sex they may experience dysphoria, which is a feeling of disconnectedness from their body. While many people wish to communicate their gender identity to others, some do not feel it is necessary to reveal or are not in a safe space to do so.

Gender assignment is the gender ascribed to an individual based upon how the world perceives them. This is often based on physical and personality characteristics that society associates with being male or female. Gender expression is how a person signals their gender identity to the world. From clothes to mannerisms to the role one assumes in society, gender

## The Health and Rights of Transgender Youth (cont'd)

expression can be conveyed in many ways. Depending on the individual, gender expression may or may not match a person's gender identity. However, many transgender people aim to have their gender expression be consistent with their gender identity to feel comfortable and avoid social stigma.

Sexual orientation is a term to describe to whom one is romantically and sexually attracted. Sexual orientation is separate from gender identity. A person may be transgender and identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or other.

Transgender young people have the right to express who they are without risk of violence and harassment. They have the right to equal treatment under the law. Because of the extreme disparities transgender youth experience, they also need programs which address their health, housing, safety, and legal needs.

### How Large is the Transgender Population?

Some estimates find that .25-1 percent of the US population is transsexual, meaning they have physically transitioned to the opposite gender. However, it is estimated that between 2-5 percent of the population fits under the broader transgender identity in which they experience some gender dysphoria.

An analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered to San Francisco students found that 1.3 percent of middle school students identified as transgender.

In general, little data exists on the lives of transgender people. The reports that do exist typically focus on the transgender population as a whole and do not distinguish between the experiences of young and older individuals.

An individual can experience gender dysphoria, and come to the realization that they are transgender, at any point in their life. Very young children, adolescents, and adults can all experience gender dysphoria. Signs are not always evident throughout a person's life, and others may be surprised when a young person discloses that they are transgender.

In a survey of over 6,000 transgender people, 59 percent reported being "generally out" as transgender.

### Harassment and Violence at School Create a Hostile Learning Environment

While in grades K-12, transgender individuals reported high rates of harassment (78 percent), physical assault (35 percent), and sexual violence (12 percent).

Ninety percent of transgender students have heard negative remarks about their gender expression in school. Thirty-nine percent reported hearing school staff make similar comments in the past year. Very infrequently will students report these incidences, and school staff rarely intervenes. Only a third of students felt that school staff would address the situation properly if they did report the incident.

Forty-four percent of transgender students felt unsafe at school as a result of their gender expression and identity. Due to this fear, 30 percent had skipped at least one day of school in the past month.

Despite a hostile school environment, one study found that the transgender community is highly educated. Compared to the general population, transgender people reported higher rates of having some college, a college degree, or a graduate degree as their highest



## The Health and Rights of Transgender Youth (cont'd)

education attainment.

### **Discrimination Against Transgender People is Ubiquitous and Institutionalized**

Over half of transgender individuals who “come out” or discuss their gender identity with their families face significant rejection from their families; one-fifth have experienced violence at the hands of a family member because of their gender identity.

Only 16 US states, the District of Columbia, and 150 cities and counties have explicit non-discrimination laws that include gender identity and expression. Without such laws, transgender people may be denied employment, housing, and access to appropriate restrooms on the grounds of their gender identity.

Government-issued identification, legal forms, and intake forms at health care providers often do not accommodate transgender identity, forcing transgender individuals to inaccurately identify themselves and their needs.

Almost half of transgender people have experienced adverse employment outcomes (being fired, not hired, or not promoted) because of their identity, while 90 percent have experienced discrimination on the job. Transgender people are barred from serving openly in the military.

Seventy-three percent of transgender patients believe they will be treated differently by medical personnel due to their gender identity and expression. This fear can make patients hesitant to seek out health care, even when necessary.

Transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals face the risk of harassment by staff, law enforcement, and the public when they use public restrooms, locker rooms, or changing rooms.

Transgender individuals rarely see positive representations of themselves in popular culture. In an analysis of movie releases from 6 major studios, none contained a transgender character in 2013. Depictions that mock transgender identity are frequent.

### **Transgender Youth of Color Face Institutionalized Discrimination at Alarming Rates**

Transgender youth of color experience some of the highest levels of adversity in their daily lives due to the intersectionality of transphobia and racism.

Transgender youth of color are harassed for their gender identity and expression as often as the general transgender population, however, hearing racist language from school staff (54 percent) and fellow students (23 percent) puts additional stress on these students. As a result, transgender communities of color have lower levels of educational attainment in comparison to their white counterparts.

In one study it was found that transgender youth of color faced many stressors such as not having a stable home (18 percent), being involved in sex work (59 percent), non-consensual relationships (52 percent), unemployment (63 percent), and challenges securing healthcare (41 percent).

Among homeless transgender youth, 62 percent are black and 22 percent are Latina/o.

Transgender women of color face the highest rates of violence and abuse. In 2012, there were 25 LGBTQ-related homicides. Half of these homicides were against transgender women, many of whom were women of color.

## The Health and Rights of Transgender Youth (cont'd)

### Despite Many Challenges, There Are Some Signs of Progress

Many transgender individuals do have accepting families. Transgender youth whose families accept them are less likely to attempt suicide, less likely to experience homelessness, and less likely to be involved in sex work.

New technology has brought new opportunities for support for transgender youth. In one survey, 100 percent of transgender youth of color found spaces on social media websites where their gender identity was affirmed.

On March 7, 2013, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was reauthorized and for the first time included protections against discrimination based upon gender identity.

While at time of publication there is no federal non-discrimination law on the basis of gender identity and expression, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stated that under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination against those who are transgender and gender non-conforming constitutes as sex discrimination.

In 2013, California passed a law ensuring that transgender young people may use bathrooms and locker rooms appropriate for them and play on sports teams which correspond to their gender identity.

Over half of Fortune 500 companies offer non-discrimination policies that explicitly cover gender identity.

### The Process of Gender Transition

Some transgender individuals “transition,” or move toward living as a gender different than the one they were assigned at birth. Typically, transgender youth first address their dysphoria via forms of self-expression such as clothing and hairstyle. Transgender youth may wish to choose a different name that more appropriately reflects who they are and use the pronouns of the gender with which they identify.

Transgender youth who are certain of their gender identity may wish to begin hormone replacement therapy or undergo surgery. At this point in transition, it is crucial that transgender youth consult with a health professional that is familiar with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care. These standards provide flexible, appropriate guidelines for physically transitioning.

There is no set path for transitioning. While hormone replacement therapy and gender affirmation surgery may be desired by some transgender people, it is not deemed necessary for all.

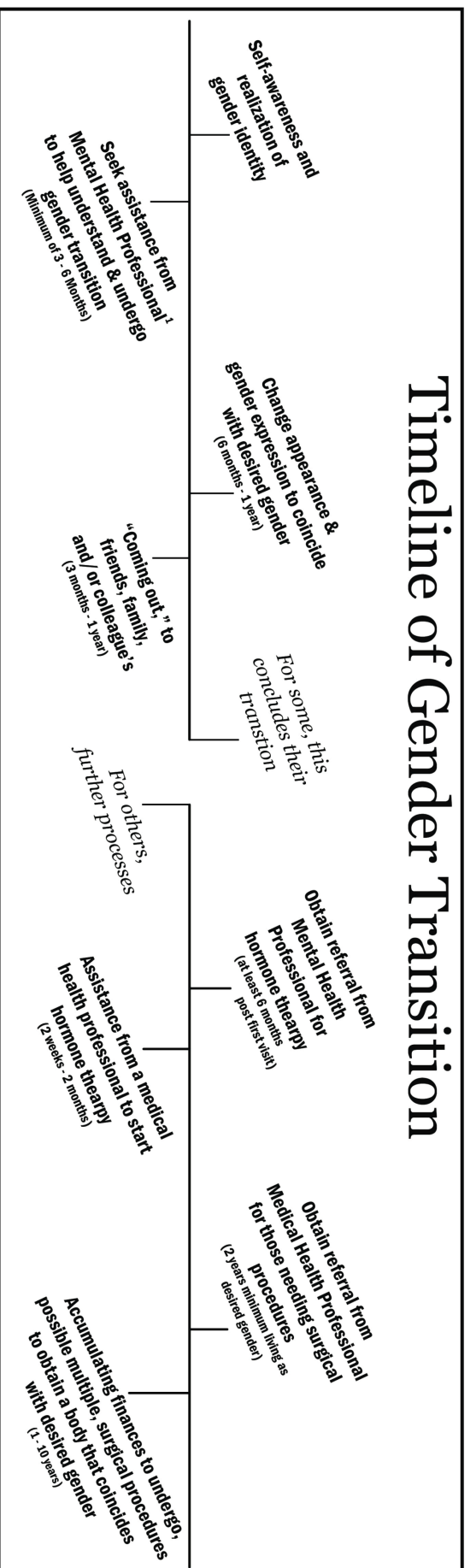
### Transgender Young People Need Support and Compassion

Our culture holds a strong bias against transgender individuals. These young people experience discrimination in employment, health care, education, and in public. Many are unsafe at school and even at home. Youth-serving professionals must strive for cultural competency around transgender issues – including respecting young people’s rights and decisions and advocating for legal equality and cultural acceptance for transgender individuals.

*This article was originally published by Advocates for Youth in 2013. For a list of references and a PDF of the full article, visit [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org).*

**Transgender** is a term that refers to people who live as a gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Many transgender people feel as if they were born in the “wrong body”. When someone decides to undergo the process to change their body to match the gender they have always felt themselves to be, they start the process commonly referred to as gender transition. Many people, in all different communities seek the advice of mental health professionals<sup>1</sup> when experiencing a life altering change.

## Timeline of Gender Transition



Transgender people are no exception, although it is important to note that the process is different for each person. For many, the path of gender transition can be a lifelong journey. Many may continue to seek professional care (medical & mental) throughout their life to help ease Gender Dysphoria.<sup>2</sup>

It is a common misconception that transgender people are, by definition, diagnosed with a mental illness; this is not true. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health explains that transgender people represent a “culturally-diverse human phenomenon, which should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative.” WPATH goes on to conclude that claiming a transgender person has a mental illness can prompt stigma, rendering them more vulnerable to social and legal exclusion, which can subsequently increase risks to mental and physical well-being.<sup>3</sup> Overwhelmingly, gender transitions successfully allow people to live a well-adjusted life with a gender expression consistent with their gender identity.

*For more information about transgender people visit [www.transpeoplespeak.org](http://www.transpeoplespeak.org) and [www.massstpc.org](http://www.massstpc.org)*

<sup>1</sup> Psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, mental health counselor, marriage and family therapist, nurse, or family medicine doctor with specific training in behavioral health and counseling. - As stated in WPATH Standards of Care V.7 – <http://www.wpath.org/documents/Standards%20of%20Care%20V7%20-%202011%20WPATH.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Gender Dysphoria refers to discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth.

<sup>3</sup> WPATH released statement on de-psychopathologisation: May 2010 – <http://www.wpath.org/documents/de-psychopathologisation%20-%202010%20letterhead.pdf>

# Inclusion



Compiled from tools published by various organizations, these tools are meant as introductory steps for parents and teachers who wish to discuss gender with young children and establish a more inclusive environment in school or at home. Many of the main concepts and ideas included here may also be applied to starting conversations with older children and teens at home and in a classroom setting.

“Talking with Young Kids About Gender” (pages 49-52) provides overarching concepts, scenarios, and tips for speaking with young people about gender.

“Six Easy Steps Toward Gender Inclusive Practice” (page 53) outlines specific, practical actions that can lead to a more inclusive learning environment. The majority of these concepts can also apply to social and family life outside of school.

“Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children” (pages 54-55) is an excerpt from a larger set of findings and recommendations for supporting and caring for transgender children. The excerpt focuses on information for parents, caregivers, and community members.

The **Resources** section of this Toolkit (pages 69-70) also provides further and more in-depth resources for starting conversations with young people, family members, and friends.

# Talking with Young Kids About Gender

*This is a practical list compiled by Gender Spectrum, meant as a tool for parents and teachers who wish to discuss gender with young children. Many of the main concepts and ideas included here may also be applied to starting conversations with older children and teens at home and in a classroom setting.*



Many adults feel nervous talking about gender with kids. They worry that they won't say the right thing or maybe they don't know what to say at all. Here are a few key concepts about gender, some language you might use, and some conversation starters/tips you may want to try with the kids in your life. These are just some ideas and are certainly not the only ways to talk about gender with kids. Be proactive in your conversations by bringing up topics about gender; don't wait for your child to bring it up or for an experience or incident to talk about. Practice (by yourself or with other adults) talking about gender without bias, embarrassment, or judgment. When ready, invite your child into the discussion. We hope this will inspire you to find words and activities that feel right for you and that will spark conversation!

## **CONCEPT: Gender is personal and there is not just one way to be.**

### **Possible language:**

- Is there only one way to be a boy or girl? Does everyone think of themselves as either a boy, or a girl? Can boys and girls like the same things? Do all boys like the same things? Do all girls like the same things?
- Kids can do or be or like or want anything because they are individuals with hopes and likes and dreams. This is not because of their gender. It is because they are people.
- If you do know a person's gender, don't assume you know the things they like to do or wear, or play with.

### **Conversation starters/Tips:**

- Provide "counter narratives" to stereotypical stories or examples that reinforce the gender binary. Give examples of kids they know, such as boys who like sparkly things, girls who like



## Talking with Young Kids About Gender (cont'd)

to play with trucks. Try to use yourself and other well-loved family members as examples (e.g. When I was a little girl, people told me I shouldn't wear red and black because they weren't "girl" colors, even though they were my favorite colors).

- Read a book that addresses gender with your child and discuss it. You can find a book that you think your child might like in our Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books about Gender Diversity.
- If you hear a child say something related to gender, ask them more about it and help them figure out where the messages are coming from; use it as a teachable moment.
- Watch TV shows and advertisements and discuss: 1) How gender roles are portrayed; and 2) what messages are being sent. Is the mom always making cookies or dinner with the daughter and serving the boys? Are only boys playing with trucks or cars? Who is being portrayed as strong? How is the meaning of strength being conveyed?
- When someone says something gender-biased (e.g. He is all boy! Look at all the energy he has!), take the opportunity to mention counter examples (e.g. One of the girls he plays with has even more energy than he does!).

### CONCEPT: Things don't have genders; people have genders.

#### Possible language:

- There aren't boy things and girl things. Instead, toys are toys, hair is hair, colors are colors, and clothes are clothes.
- There are lots of different types of clothes. Kids get to wear what feels right to them and makes them feel good.
- Who gets to decide that some things are only for boys and some things are only for girls? How do you feel when you like something, or want to play with something, and someone says you can't because it's only for boys/girls?
- These ideas can be confusing. We get messages that some things are for boys and some things are for girls. But people who say these things just don't understand that people have genders, things do not. Each of us gets to decide what we like and don't like. We just can't be unkind to others about the things they like.

#### Conversation starters/Tips:

- Ask what your child thinks of as "boy" things or "girl" things, and then ask why. See if there are things they like which are assigned to the opposite gender and talk about how it would feel to be told they can't wear those things or do those things.
- Question and explore your own biases. For example, how do you feel about boys with long hair? Girls who want to shop in the boy's department for clothes? Girls playing football or boys wearing makeup or fingernail polish? What messages about gender expression are you giving your child?

## **CONCEPT: Only you know your gender. You can't tell a person's gender by looking at them.**

### **Possible language:**

- No one gets to tell another person who they are. You know yourself better than anyone else does and only you get to decide your gender- and what it means to you.
- Who you are is not about what others tell you, but something you determine for yourself (even when you get messages that say otherwise).
- Some people think they can tell a person's gender by looking at them, but that is not always true. Think of all the wonderful things about yourself that no one else knows about by just looking at you!
- Gender expression is about showing the world who you are. There may be some patterns we notice, but these are not rules. More girls might wear dresses than boys, but does that mean all girls wear dresses? Or that boys can't wear dresses?

### **Conversation starters/Tips:**

- When you or your child refers to someone else as male or female (i.e. "see that man over there," or "I like that girl's necklace"), ask whether you can be really sure that you know the person's gender. Introduce the idea that when we notice someone's gender, we are often making assumptions based on patterns of gender expression. Sometimes, these patterns don't hold.
- Mix up gender language when reading stories to your kids. For example, if the story is about a "boy" animal, mix it up and make the lion a girl. Consider adopting this strategy for the people in a story too. Mixing up gender language and behavior expectations is creative and then you don't have to read a story the same way every time!
- When introducing yourself, consider sharing your gender pronouns: "My name is Jessica and I use the pronouns 'she/her/hers.'" Try asking the adults around you what, if any, pronoun they would like you to use.

## **CONCEPT: Your body doesn't determine your gender.**

### **Possible language:**

- Gender is a lot more than our bodies. It is also about how we show other people who we are (maybe our clothes, or our hair, etc.) and who we know we are inside.
- Some people think gender is only about your body, but really gender is about who you know yourself to be.
- When a baby is born the grown-ups look at its body and say "It's a girl" or "It's a boy" but they may not be right. We only know what a person's gender is when they are old enough to tell us.

### **Conversation starters/Tips:**

- Talk about what it would feel like if one day you woke up in a different body. Would you be the same person? Would it change what you want to wear and like to do?
- Don't rely on or expect transgender, non-binary or other gender-expansive people to take

the lead on discussing gender identity. Be an ally by bringing up issues that celebrate gender diversity.

## **CONCEPT: There are more than two genders.**

### **Possible language:**

- Each one of us has a gender. Kids can be boys, girls, both, neither, or something else isn't that great? Everyone gets to describe their gender in their own words.
- There have been examples of more than two genders in many cultures, and many religions, all over the world and throughout time.
- History is full of examples of gender diversity!

### **Conversation starters/Tips:**

- Speak (in private, of course) of specific people in your child's environment who express gender differently, or who may have a gender other than male or female. Explore what your child thinks about it and share your thoughts and feelings about it.
- Introduce the notion of "boy, girl, both, neither, or something else" as a regular way to talk about people.

## **CONCEPT: We need to be respectful of everyone, no matter what their gender is.**

### **Possible language:**

- No one likes to be pointed out by other kids. Does it feel good when you think someone is talking about you? How do you think it would feel if people were talking about your gender?
- How do you think you would feel if people were always asking you about your own gender?

### **Conversation starters/Tips:**

- Ask your child to think of a time they were teased for being different. How did it feel?
- Share a story about when you were teased about something and how it made you feel.
- Explore the names we use to describe other people (i.e. Tomboy, Girlie, etc.). For some, those names are very hurtful. Respectfully talk with people about other ways they might want to be described.

*For the full text of this article as well as other resources, see [Gender Spectrum's Gender Inclusive Schools Toolkit](#)*

*Also check out the **Resources** section of this Toolkit (pages 69-70) for more helpful resources, and the discussion questions on page 57 for more ways to start conversations with young people.*

# Six Easy Steps Toward Gender Inclusive Practice

*This list is adapted from suggestions compiled by Gender Spectrum and aims toward creating a more gender-inclusive environment when working with groups of young people. For the original text, click [here](#).*



1. Avoid asking kids to line up as boys or girls or separating them by gender. Instead, use prompts like “odd and even birth date,” “first letter of last name,” or “which would you choose: talking or listening.” Invite students to come up with choices themselves.
2. Don’t use phrases such as “you guys,” “ladies and gentlemen,” and similarly gendered expressions to get students’ attention. Instead, use words that are not gendered, such as “good morning folks,” “hey everybody,” or “y’all.”
3. Provide opportunities for individuals to identify a preferred name or pronoun. As groups form or new people join, use this to reinforce your commitment to being gender inclusive.
4. Have visual images reinforcing gender inclusion: “All Genders Welcome” door hangers or pictures of people who don’t fit gender norms. Encourage students to come up with similar messages or to create their own versions.
5. Be intolerant of openly hostile attitudes or references towards others EVERY TIME you hear or observe them, but also use these as teachable moments. Take the opportunity to push the individual on their statements about gender. Being punitive may stop the behavior at the moment, but being instructive may stop it entirely.
6. Share personal anecdotes from your own life that reflect a growing understanding of gender inclusiveness. This could be a time when you were not gender inclusive in your thinking, words or behaviors, what you learned as a result, and what you will do differently next time.

*Also check out the **Resources** section of this Toolkit (pages 69-70 for more helpful resources, and the discussion questions on page 57 for more ways to start conversations with young people.*

# Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children

By Gabe Murchison, et al.

*This article is excerpted from a comprehensive guide designed for anyone who knows a transgender or gender-expansive child. The full document, [Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children](#), published by the Human Rights Campaign, provides helpful terminology, definitions, an address of common questions and misgivings, and support strategies related to working with transgender or gender-expansive children. It is a very helpful introduction and guide for understanding the role of parents and community members involved in supporting these youth or who wishes to learn more about these topics. We recommend taking a look at the full report [here](#).*

## Raising a Gender-Expansive Kid?

In the past, when parents and other caregivers noticed that a child's gender expression was "different," they often wondered if the child would grow up to be gay, lesbian or bisexual. With growing awareness of transgender children, adults are more likely than ever to question the child's gender identity, too.

At first, many parents and caregivers find it hard to understand and accept a child's gender-expansive traits, or they worry that the child will be bullied if they express these traits in public. Be patient with yourself: It's okay to struggle with this experience. It's important to give yourself space to explore your feelings rather than sweeping them under the rug. That said, it's equally important to protect your child from any negative feelings that surface.

A family therapist can help you balance your concerns with the affirmation your child needs. You may also seek out one of the numerous online and in-person groups for parents raising gender-expansive kids. Just like their kids, these parents are of every race, gender, religion and political background. Many aren't yet sure whether their child is transgender. Don't assume you won't fit in!

In looking for support online, be aware that you may run into misinformation and even hateful comments about transgender people. This content can be upsetting. Thankfully, support for transgender children and adults is growing rapidly. Between 2015 and 2016, the proportion of American likely voters who know a transgender person jumped from 22 to 35 percent — and nearly 90 percent of those who know someone

transgender have a neutral or favorable view of transgender people in general.

Many parents and caregivers find it difficult to live with uncertainty about a child's gender identity. Nonetheless, it's crucial that we neither jump to concluding a child is transgender nor limit their ability to express who they are. Gender-expansive children are healthiest when they are in control of their gender expression, whether that means the toys they play with or the name they ask to be called.

Most gender-expansive kids don't turn out to be transgender, but some do. If a child in your life shows signs of gender dysphoria — significant distress about being treated as a boy or girl, or over

their genitals — you should consult a therapist or healthcare provider with gender



## Supporting and Caring for Trans Gender Children (cont'd)

development expertise. If your gender-expansive child isn't distressed, your role is to affirm their gender expression: reassuring them that they don't need to worry about "boy clothes" or "girl things," and you'll love them however they express themselves and whoever they grow up to be.

Gender-expansive children too often experience harassment, and sometimes other kinds of aggression, especially as they grow older. These are frightening topics for any parent or caregiver — but family support is often the most important factor in a gender-expansive young person's safety, both psychological and physical. Affirming, supporting and loving your child unconditionally makes all the difference in the world.

### Know a Gender-Expansive Kid?

**More and more of us have gender-expansive children in our lives, whether as relatives,** our own children's playmates or members of our broader communities. Whether or not a gender-expansive child is transgender, they and their family may experience social disapproval and other challenges. Your support can mean a great deal.

If you interact with a gender-expansive child, do your best to accept fluidity or uncertainty in the child's gender identity and expression. Try not to worry about the child's "real gender" or whether they are transgender. Instead, simply ask the child what they prefer! Make the question of what to call them ("he," "she" or "they") as matter-of-fact as what game they'd like to play. Keep in mind that the answers may change over time.

Parents, guardians and siblings also benefit from openness and support. If you learn that a child will be transitioning, recognize that this experience can be both challenging and joyful. Depending on your relationship to the family, consider the same gestures (a call, a card or other acts of support) you might offer during other life events. A transgender child's siblings might be feeling left out, and appreciate extra time with relatives and friends during this period.

When a family seems to be struggling to affirm their child, you may be able to help by sharing resources, such as the information on the Human Rights Campaign's web site. Helping to locate an affirming therapist or healthcare provider can be especially valuable.

*This article is excerpted from [Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children](#) published by the Human Rights Campaign in 2016.*

*For more advice, specifically for educators and school administrators, see [Gender Spectrum's Gender Inclusive Schools Toolkit](#).*

# Engage

## Lesson Plan Index

The lesson plans in this section of the Toolkit (pages 56-68) are designed to complement A.R.T.'s production of ***Trans Scripts***, building on foundational themes and concepts of the show through personal reflection and critical analysis.

Use this index to get an overview of each lesson and to inspire ideas about how to integrate gender dialogues into your classroom.

**Starting Points for Discussion** (page 57) is an overview collection of pertinent questions to integrate into discussions of gender identity.

**Lesson Plan: Gender Spectrums** (page 58) introduces students to the concepts of and distinctions between gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. In this lesson, students reflect on their own identities as a starting point for reflection.

**Lesson Plan: Gender in the Media** (pages 59-60) applies a simple close-reading technique designed to analyze the presentation of gender in the media. The lesson focuses specifically on video content, though it is also adaptable to other forms of media.

**Lesson Plan: Privilege Beads** (pages 61-68) is a tactile lesson that visually illustrates students' privileges. Rather than focusing on the often problematic public discourse surrounding "privilege," this lesson encourages students to think positively about their privileges by reflecting on how they can be used for good.

# Starting Points for Discussion

*This list of questions is intended to be a helpful aid when engaging young people in dialogues about gender and may also be used in conjunction with the reading materials in this Toolkit as well as the lesson plans on the following pages.*

- Does everyone think of themselves as either a man/boy or a woman/girl?
- What patterns and expectations have you observed about gender from your peers? From the media?
- Can boys and girls like the same things? Do all boys like the same things? Do all girls like the same things? Who decides what things are for boys and what things are for girls? For women and men?
- Think of a “boy” thing or a “girl” thing. Why are these things assigned to a specific gender? Think about something that is associated with a gender different from yours. How would you feel if you were told that you could not use or experience that thing because of your gender?
- Have you ever been teased? How does it feel when you are teased or treated as an outsider?
- Does it feel good if you think others are talking about you? How do you think you would feel if people were always asking you about your gender?
- Can you tell a person’s gender by looking at them? Are there things about you that someone might not know just by looking at you?
- How would you feel to have to hide something as basic to you as your gender identity or your sexual orientation? How would this affect your life?
- What are the first things you remember learning about men and women? About homosexuality? About being transgender? Do you remember learning anything about these from friends, family, school, or a faith community? Was what you learned positive or negative? Does what you learned when you were younger align with what you currently believe?
- Have you ever felt sure that you wanted to be someone other than who you are (e.g. to be rich instead of poor, or have a different skin or hair color, or be from a different family)?
- Have you ever known anyone who wanted to be a different gender? Were you supportive? Why or why not?
- What are some things you can do to be supportive of people who are transgender?
- Why is it important for people to take a stand when they see injustices? Is it easy or difficult to speak up when your friends are discriminating against someone and you are present? Why? What would support you in standing up against discrimination?

# Lesson Plan: Gender Spectrums

## OBJECTIVES

*This lesson is designed to foster understanding of the nuances of gender-related identity within each person through self-reflection and discussion. This activity builds on the following skills: self-reflection, empathy-building, and decision-making.*

## MATERIALS

Copies of one or all of the gender spectrums on pages 19-21  
Masking Tape (to mark out the spectrums on the floor)  
Paper and markers (to create spectrum headers)  
Post-it notes  
Writing utensils (optional)

## PROCEDURE

### Setup

1. Recreate the spectrums on your selected gender spectrum page on the floor of your classroom. The idea is that all of your students will be able to move around at the same time while interacting with each spectrum.
2. Label each spectrum (e.g. "Biological Sex," "Gender Identity," etc.) along with the markers at the end of each spectrum (e.g. "Male" and "Female," "Man/FTM" and "Woman/MTF", etc.)
3. Provide students with enough post-its to be able to use one per spectrum.

### Process

1. Explain the purpose of this activity: for students to explore the different spectrums that make up our sexuality and gender identities, discuss ways that they coincide and differ from each other, and gain a greater understanding of the plurality of gender and sexuality experience within.
2. As you move through each spectrum, take the time to define what each spectrum means, and allow space for clarifying questions. You may wish to use the definitions on pages 15-16 as an aid.
3. Once an understanding of each spectrum is reached, each student should place one of their post-it notes on the floor at the place where they believe they belong on the spectrum. If students are having trouble picking a place, encourage them to think about how they feel right now rather than considering the entirety of their experience.

**Alternative:** If you are concerned about students participating in this activity as a group, you may accomplish the same learning objectives by providing a copy of a gender spectrum to each individual student, instructing them to mark where they fall on each spectrum using a writing utensil.

### Starting Points for Reflection

- Were there any times when you didn't know or had trouble figuring out where to put your post-it? If you were to do this activity again on a different day, do you think you would place any of your post-its in a different place?
- What are some patterns that you can see on our collective spectrum? What do these patterns tell us about gender identity? Are there typical patterns that tend to go together, for example between gender identity and sexual orientation or between biological sex and gender expression? Are these patterns rules, or can you think of exceptions?
- How do you know what your gender identity is? How do you know what your sexual orientation is?
- Are there any sexuality and gender identity traits that you think are more "fluid" than the others?

# Lesson Plan: Gender in the Media

## OBJECTIVES

*This close-reading activity challenges students to look closely at how mainstream media portrays gender. This activity builds on the following skills: close reading, critical thinking, and expository writing.*

*This activity is designed as a stand-alone activity, though it could be adapted for students to analyze a film, novel, etc. already integrated into the classroom curriculum.*

## MATERIALS

Notebook with writing utensils or a word processor

Short videos or scenes from mainstream media (television, movies, etc.)

## PROCEDURE

### Setup

Students work independently or in small groups.

### Process

1. Students select OR instructor provides a short video clip of a mainstream media source (television, film, etc.). Most videos will work for this exercise, since gendered images are prevalent in the media.
2. Explain to students that the purpose of this exercise is to think about and analyze gender norms as they are presented in the media.
3. In order to analyze the video, students answer the following questions/prompts in writing. Students may need to watch the video multiple times to answer each question (you may think of more questions depending on the video sample):
  - Write a short summary of your video, and make sure to include the basics: **Who** (Who is depicted? Who is speaking and to whom are they speaking? Who is the audience?), **What** (What is happening in the video?), **When** (Is the video dated or is it clear when the scene is taking place?), **Where** (Where are the events taking place?).
  - Note any words, images, movements, clothing, etc. that stick out to you, and note any part of the video that is surprising, or different from what you expect.
  - Also note any words, images, movements, clothing, etc. that you think are “typical” for any of the characters.
  - Consider why you found certain elements of the video surprising and others typical. How are these elements related to the gender of each character, if at all. How do these images contribute to your understanding of the material? How do they re-inforce, question, or change how you would present the information in your basic summary? Do you notice any recurring patterns or metaphors in the elements you noticed? Do you notice a particular point of view, slant, or interpretation of the subject in this video?
  - Try to formulate a thesis based on your findings and answers to the questions above. You may think of your thesis having two parts. First: how do the specific features you’ve identified help to define the video? Once you have an idea about that, what does this video or document tell you about how gender is portrayed in this particular video?
  - **NOTE:** For the purposes of this exercise, students should be encouraged to focus on their video specifically and not make large extrapolations about gender representation in the media. Such a discussion would be appropriate for a larger conversation, but not for a close-reading exercise.



## Lesson Plan: Gender in the Media (cont'd)

4. **HOMEWORK:** Students write a short thesis paper (2-3 paragraphs minimum) explaining their analysis of the video, based on their close reading, responding to a prompt such as: Does mainstream media foster gender diversity?
5. If all students work on the same video, build in time after papers are drafted for a classroom discussion and/or peer review of papers. If students work on separate videos, focus on students discussing their videos and papers in pairs, building in time for peer review of their writing if time permits.

### Extension Options

- Have student transcribe a small portion of a scene they analyze for this exercise, or work with an existing play text. Have students re-write the scenes by changing the gender of one or all characters and/or neutralizing all gendered language.
- Have students take a photo or screen shot of every advertisement they see within a whole day and ask them to take an inventory of the gendered images and messages within the ads.

### Starting Points for Reflection

- After doing a close-reading of your video, do you think the characters accurately represent what it means to be a man, a woman, or neither? Where do your ideas about what is “masculine” or “feminine” come from?
- Which specific positive and negative representations of men/women/neither did you see in the video? Is there a way you think the negatives could be improved?
- What do the terms “masculine” and “feminine” mean to you? Are there particular people you could name who embody what it means to be “masculine” or “feminine”? Do these terms have negative connotations or positive connotations (or neither or both)? Would you use either of these words to describe yourself? Your friends? Members of your family?

# Lesson Plan: Privilege Beads

## OBJECTIVES

*To explore ways that we enjoy privileges based on being members of social identity groups. This exercise seeks to highlight the fact that everyone has SOME privilege, even as some people have more privilege than others. By illuminating our various privileges as individuals, we can recognize ways that we can use our privileges individually and collectively to work for social justice. The purpose of this exercise is not to make anyone feel guilty or ashamed of their privilege or lack of privilege related to social identity categories. The categories and questions presented in this exercise are non-exhaustive and may be adapted or discussed as appropriate for your class.*

*This activity builds on the following skills: self-reflection, critical thinking, and empathy-building.*

*This exercise is adapted from practices developed by Colorado Leadership for Equity, Advocacy and Discovering Social Justice.*

## Materials

Colorful pony beads or other colorful items like post-it notes, index cards, buttons, etc.  
Cups or other portable container  
Multiple copies of each “privilege surveys” (pages 63-68)  
String (optional)

## PROCEDURE

### Setup

1. Create “bead stations” around the room. They should be far enough apart for multiple people to stand around each station.
2. Place a bowl of multicolored beads at each station.
3. Provide enough copies of one “privilege list” so it can easily be read by multiple people at one station. Each station should feature one “privilege list.” You might adjust this setup based on which lists you would like to use and how many stations you can set up.
4. This is a silent activity – you may choose to play calm music in the background while participants complete the exercise.

### Process

1. Explain the purpose of the exercise, as summarized in the objectives above, and/or in the context of the learning goals for your class.
2. Explain the setup of the exercise:
  - Each station includes a list of statements.
  - Each statement describes an example of privilege around a system of oppression/ privilege (i.e. gender privilege, race privilege, sexuality privilege, etc.).
  - **NOTE:** These systems and statements are not comprehensive, and you may be able to think of many more examples.
3. Each participant will rotate through the stations at the signal of the instructor.
4. Read each list carefully. For every item on the list to which you answer “Yes,” take one bead.
  - **NOTE:** Respond to each statement based on how you feel right now, and remember to do so quietly. Our bead selection today is based on the here and now, not in where we, our families, or others of our identity group have been or are. Some identities and privileges can and do change over time, for “better” or “worse”; but we are discussing the present, not past or potential.

## Lesson Plan: Privilege Beads (cont'd)

Don't overanalyze or overthink – if you can quickly answer “basically yes,” take a bead. If your answer is “basically no,” do not take a bead.

5. When you are finished going through all the statements at each station, your cup will contain a set of beads that represent a composite of your privileges.
6. **EXTENSION OPTION:** Allow students to craft an accessory using their beads (i.e. necklace, bracelet, etc.) if they would like to.
7. Provide some points of reflection (see below) for students, allowing them to first focus on their own experience before reporting out as a group.

### Alternative Option

To focus this activity on cisgender bias, follow the outline of the lesson, substituting the privilege surveys with the examples featured in “30+ Examples of Cisgender Privilege” (pages 31-33).

### Starting Points for Reflection

- Do you usually think about the ways that you are privileged? The ways that you are oppressed? Was this exercise a new experience for you? How did it feel (TIP: use real emotion words)?
- Why is it important for us to be aware of this aspect of our identities/experience? Why don't we always think about it very much?
- What does it mean for us to have multiple, intersecting identities where we can experience BOTH privilege AND oppression? How do you think this effects how we connect with others, and how might knowing this help us better connect with others? What does this intersection show us about being patient and generous with other people and with ourselves? With holding ourselves and others responsible for our actions? Being allies or advocates?
  - **NOTE:** We can't do “oppression algebra” where our oppressions and privileges across multiple identities cancel out some “net” oppression or privilege score. It's both/and.
- What identities or systems of privilege (i.e. the headers on each privilege list) were not represented here today? If they were included, how would that have affected your collection of beads?
- What does collective privilege (i.e. the collection of our collections of beads) mean for us as individual leaders? In collaboration at our school? In our community? What should we be aware of in these contexts?
  - **NOTE:** Emphasize that this is the BEGINNING of a conversation and the students can carry these ideas forward in their friendships, families, and communities.

*If students created a wearable piece from their beads:*

- If you've turned your beads into something wearable, what would it mean or feel like to wear this noticeably for the rest of the day? What messages could others take from it?
- How noticeable, to us and others, are our privileges on a daily basis?
- Can we and how do we hide (deny, justify, ignore) our privilege on a daily basis?

# Sexuality Privilege Survey

1. If I were of legal age to marry, I would be able to obtain a legal marriage and receive all of the benefits that accompany marriage.
2. In public, I am not afraid of being harassed or physically attacked because of my sexuality.
3. I do not fear facing economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences if my family or friends find out about my sexuality.
4. If I want to, I can easily find a religious community that will not exclude me for my sexuality.
5. No one questions the “normality” of my sexuality or believes that my sexuality was “caused” by psychological trauma, sin, or abuse.
6. People don’t ask me why I “chose” my sexual orientation.
7. I can go for months without me or anyone else referring explicitly to my sexuality.
8. I easily can find sex education literature for couples with my sexual orientation.

# Ability Privilege Survey

1. I can assume that I Will easily have physical access to any building.
2. I have never been taunted, teased, or socially ostracized due to a disability.
3. I can do well in challenging situations without being told what an inspiration I must be to other people of my ability status.
4. I can go shopping alone and expect to find appropriate accommodations to make the experience hassle-free.
5. I can hear what's going on around me without using an assistive device.
6. I can easily see the letters on this page.
7. I am reasonably certain that others do not think that my intelligence is lacking, just because of my physical status.



# Gender Privilege Survey

1. If I have children and a successful career, few people will ask me how I balance my professional and private lives.
2. My elected representatives are mostly people of my sex. The more prestigious and powerful the elected position, the more this is true.
3. When I ask to see “the person in charge,” odds are I will face a person of my sex. The higher-up in the organization the person is, the surer I can be.
4. I do not have to think about the message my wardrobe sends about my sexual availability.
5. In general, I am not under much pressure to be thin or to worry about how people will respond to me if I’m overweight.
6. I will never be/was never expected to change my name upon marriage or questioned if I don’t change my name.
7. Most individuals portrayed as sexual objects in the media are not the same sex as I am.
8. Major religions in the world are led mainly by people of my sex.

# Race Privilege Survey

1. I can look at the mainstream media and find people of my race represented fairly and in a wide range of roles.
2. Schools in my community teach about my race and heritage and present it in positive ways throughout the year.
3. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or closely watched by store employees because of my race.
4. I can take a job with an employer who believes in Affirmative Action without people thinking I got my job only because of race.
5. When I use credit cards or checks for a face-to-face transaction, I don't have to wonder whether someone will challenge my financial reliability because of my race.
6. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
7. I am never asked to speak for all people of my racial group.
8. I can consider many options – social, political, or professional – without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.

# Religious Privilege Survey

1. I can assume that I will not have to work or go to school on my religious holidays.
2. I can be sure to hear music on the radio and watch specials on television that celebrate the holidays of my religion.
3. My religious views are reflected by the majority of government officials and political candidates.
4. Food that honors my religious practices can be easily found in any restaurant or grocery store.
5. Places to worship or practice my religion are numerous in my community.
6. Most people do not consider my religious practices to be “weird.”
7. Implicit or explicit references to religion where I work or go to school conform to my religious beliefs.
8. I do not need to worry about the ramifications of disclosing my religious identity to others.

# Class Privilege Survey

1. I can be sure that my social class will be an advantage when I seek medical or legal help.
2. I am reasonably sure that I or my family will not have to skip meals because we cannot afford to eat.
3. I or my family have a savings account with at least a month's rent and bills set aside in case of an emergency.
4. I have taken a vacation outside of the country within the past three years.
5. I have never been homeless or evicted from my place of living.
6. I or my family has health insurance.
7. I don't have to rely on public transportation to travel to work or school; I can afford my own vehicle.
8. The neighborhood I live in is relatively free of obvious drug use, prostitution, and violent crime.

# Resources

*The following resources are offered in addition to the other materials presented in this Toolkit. This is a non-exhaustive list of resources that is meant to provide a deeper dive into some of the topics raised in this Toolkit. Please also visit [americanrepertorytheater.org/TransScripts](http://americanrepertorytheater.org/TransScripts) as the A.R.T. community builds a list of local organizations that support and raise awareness for transgender people.*

## History and Background

Transgender Timeline (New York Times)

[nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/15/opinion/editorial-transgender-timeline.html?\\_r=1](http://nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/15/opinion/editorial-transgender-timeline.html?_r=1)  
[trans timeline](#)

## Health

“What Health care Reform Means for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans”

[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/aca\\_lgbt.pdf](http://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/aca_lgbt.pdf)

“The Conversion Therapy Ban Bill” (MTPC)

[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ConversionTherapy\\_FactSheet2.pdf](http://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ConversionTherapy_FactSheet2.pdf)

“Beyond the Bathrooms – Meeting the Health Needs of Transgender People”

[nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1605912#t=article](http://nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1605912#t=article)

## Public Accommodations

“Non-Discrimination in Public Accommodations for Transgender People” (MTPC)

[masstpc.org/pubs/legis/PublicAccommodations.pdf](http://masstpc.org/pubs/legis/PublicAccommodations.pdf)

“Talking About Public Accommodations” (MTPC):

[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PA\\_TalkingPoints-1.pdf](http://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PA_TalkingPoints-1.pdf)

“Transgender People & Public Accommodations” (MTPC)

[masstpc.org/pubs/legis/FactSheet-20150423.pdf](http://masstpc.org/pubs/legis/FactSheet-20150423.pdf)

## Inclusion in School

“Safe & Supportive Schools” (Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education)

[doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html](http://doe.mass.edu/ssce/safety.html)

“A Guide for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students” (ACLU)

[aclu.org/files/assets/transstudent\\_kyr\\_20120508.pdf](http://aclu.org/files/assets/transstudent_kyr_20120508.pdf)

“Best Practices for Serving Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students in Schools” (MTPC)

[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MTPC-2013-K-12-Best-Practices.pdf](http://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MTPC-2013-K-12-Best-Practices.pdf)

“Back to School: Know your Rights for LGBTQ Students & Parents” (GLAD)

[glad.org/current/post/back-to-school-know-your-rights-for-lgbtq-students](http://glad.org/current/post/back-to-school-know-your-rights-for-lgbtq-students)

“Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools” (Gender Spectrum)

[genderspectrum.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Schools\\_In\\_Transition\\_6.3.16.pdf](http://genderspectrum.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Schools_In_Transition_6.3.16.pdf)

“Creating a Welcoming Campus and Community” (LGBTQ Friendly Colleges & Student Resources, AC Online)

[affordablecollegesonline.org/lgbtq-college-student-guide/](http://affordablecollegesonline.org/lgbtq-college-student-guide/)

## Support for Parents and Families

“So Your Child is Non-Binary: A Guide for Parents”

[lifeoutsidethebinary.com/post/96149381358/so-your-child-is-nonbinary-a-guide-for-parents](http://lifeoutsidethebinary.com/post/96149381358/so-your-child-is-nonbinary-a-guide-for-parents)

“Providing Competent and Affirming Services for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults”

[tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07317115.2016.1203383#aHR0cDovL3d3dy50YW5kZm9ub-GluZS5jb20vZG9pL3BkZi8xMC4xMDgwLzA3MzE3MTElLjIwMTYuMTIwMzM4M0BAQDA=](http://tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07317115.2016.1203383#aHR0cDovL3d3dy50YW5kZm9ub-GluZS5jb20vZG9pL3BkZi8xMC4xMDgwLzA3MzE3MTElLjIwMTYuMTIwMzM4M0BAQDA=)



## Resources (cont'd)

### Human Resources and Discrimination

- “Diversity & Inclusion” (United States Office of Personnel Management)  
[opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reference-materials/gender-identity-guidance/](https://opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reference-materials/gender-identity-guidance/)
- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) FAQ  
[mass.gov/mcad/faq-mcad-gen.html](https://mass.gov/mcad/faq-mcad-gen.html)
- Text of Senate Bill #735, An Act Relative To Transgender Anti-Discrimination  
[masstpc.org/pubs/legis/2015Senate735.pdf](https://masstpc.org/pubs/legis/2015Senate735.pdf)
- “Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey”  
[endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/NTDS\\_Report.pdf](https://endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf)
- Findings of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (Massachusetts)  
[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Massachusetts-State-Report.pdf](https://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Massachusetts-State-Report.pdf)

### Other Transgender Policy Resources

- Local Non-Discrimination ordinances map  
[lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non\\_discrimination\\_ordinances/gender-identity-ordinances](https://lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_ordinances/gender-identity-ordinances)
- Healthcare laws and policies map  
[lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/healthcare\\_laws\\_and\\_policies](https://lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/healthcare_laws_and_policies)
- “Know Your Rights” Guide (National Center for Transgender Equality)  
[transgenderequality.wordpress.com/2012/05/30/ncte-releases-trans-job-discrimination-know-your-rights-guide/](https://transgenderequality.wordpress.com/2012/05/30/ncte-releases-trans-job-discrimination-know-your-rights-guide/)
- “Transgender Equal Rights Coalition Fact Sheet”  
[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Consequences-of-Not-Having-Equal-Access-Protections.pdf](https://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Consequences-of-Not-Having-Equal-Access-Protections.pdf)
- “What the EEOC’s Decisions in Macy v. Holder Means for You” (Transgender Law Center)  
[scribd.com/document/92419763/F-A-Q-EEOC-Ruling-in-Mia-Macy-V-Eric-Holder](https://scribd.com/document/92419763/F-A-Q-EEOC-Ruling-in-Mia-Macy-V-Eric-Holder)
- “Voting While Trans: Preparing for Voter ID Laws” (NCTE)  
[transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws](https://transequality.org/issues/resources/voting-while-trans-preparing-voter-id-laws)
- “Shelter for All Genders” (MTPC)  
[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Shelter-for-All-Genders.pdf](https://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Shelter-for-All-Genders.pdf)
- Shelter Discrimination Story Share (MTPC):  
[surveymonkey.com/r/B2CK2XD?sm=B7gtvrrLCzOyvVZ%2b3ChX6Q%3d%3d](https://surveymonkey.com/r/B2CK2XD?sm=B7gtvrrLCzOyvVZ%2b3ChX6Q%3d%3d)
- Executive Order No. 526: “Order Regarding Non-Discrimination, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action” (Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of the Governor, 2011)  
[masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Executive\\_Order\\_526.pdf](https://masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Executive_Order_526.pdf)
- “LGBT People and the Prison Rape Elimination Act” (NCTE)  
[transequality.org/issues/resources/lgbt-people-and-prison-rape-elimination-act](https://transequality.org/issues/resources/lgbt-people-and-prison-rape-elimination-act)

### Further Reading

- Transgender reading list for youth (PFLAG)  
[pflag.org/resource/transgender-reading-list-young-adults](https://pflag.org/resource/transgender-reading-list-young-adults)
- Transgender reading list for teens  
[dropbox.com/s/jt79den1taegzro/Annotated%20Bibliography.Teens.pdf?dl=0](https://dropbox.com/s/jt79den1taegzro/Annotated%20Bibliography.Teens.pdf?dl=0)
- “Transgender Today” Story Wall (*New York Times*)  
[nytimes.com/interactive/projects/storywall/transgender-today](https://nytimes.com/interactive/projects/storywall/transgender-today)
- Gender Issue Reader Comments (*National Geographic*)  
[nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/01/gender-issue-reader-comments-faq/](https://nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/01/gender-issue-reader-comments-faq/)

**Want to get involved? Check this page for local resources and organizations:**  
**[americanrepertorytheater.org/TransScripts](https://americanrepertorytheater.org/TransScripts)**

**To view the full A.R.T. Toolkit Library, visit [americanrepertorytheater.org/toolkits](https://americanrepertorytheater.org/toolkits)**