

Video Transcript

Exploring Gender with Yema

Hi, folks, my name is Yema, my pronouns are she / her and in this video, we're going to explore gender. What is it what does it mean to be transgender? What is gender?

So to talk about gender we must first talk about sex. At birth, the doctor signs a baby their sex based on that baby's genital appearance, usually if the doctor sees a penis and testes, then they assign the baby as male or boy. And if they see a vagina and vulva and they sign the child as female or girl. If the doctor isn't sure what they're seeing, they sign the child as intersex. People then assign the child a gender based on their sex assignment.

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours and expression that society assigns to girls, women, boys, men and gender nonconforming people. These assignments influence a lot about a person's life, like how they act, how they talk and what they wear. For example, in our society, girls are expected to use her pronouns, wear pink. Wearing long hair. Wear dresses. Play with baby dolls. Care about their appearance. Learn to cook, clean, take care of a house and take care of their siblings as a mother would. Boys are expected to use him pronouns. Wear pants, not dresses. Play with action figures, not dolls. Be loud and rowdy. Love violence and sports, be tough and stoic and not cry.

These assumptions don't take into consideration the way that people are raised and nurtured. They also don't take into consideration the realities of intersex people whose combinations of genitals and hormones don't easily fit into the male or female category. What does it mean to be transgender or non-binary?

A cisgender person is someone who identifies with the gender that they were assigned at birth. A transgender person is someone who doesn't identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth. A non-binary person is someone who identifies as a combination of male or female or neither. A non-binary person can use the pronoun she, her, they, them, or him. Transgender and non-binary people often experience gender dysphoria, which is a state of extreme anxiety surrounding your gender and sex.

Gender identity is flexible and can change over time. There are many ways to identify and express yourself. Being transgender or non-binary is not a bad thing. It's also not a choice. You're great just the way that you are.

So you think you may be transgender or non-binary? What next? Find a support group or gender and sexuality alliance, talking with other transgender and non-binary youth about your experience can help you feel validated. Being part of a community can help you decide how you want to express your gender. Interacting with role models can help you see what your future will look like. Tell a trustworthy caretaker, as they may be able to help you get the support that you need. Set up an appointment with a doctor or a counselor. Having a counselor in your life can help create a positive environment. It can be helpful in case your caretaker doesn't know much about transgender and non-binary issues.

The counselor can also answer your questions about puberty. Puberty can be a really stressful time, and the emotional and physical changes that you go through can be scary if you don't identify with the way that your body is changing. You can take puberty blockers to delay puberty. Delaying puberty gives you and your caretaker time to develop a care plan and plan your future.

When you are an adult, you can medically transition or start hormone replacement therapy. Medical transition involves surgeries that help your body align with the way that you want to express yourself. Hormone replacement therapy involves injecting testosterone or estrogen so that you can feel more at home in your body.

At the end of the day, your gender expression is your personal choice. Other people can be there to support and inform you, but they can't make decisions for you. Stand up for yourself and explore your gender.