



Gender Identity Myths and Facts

Myth: Youth are not old enough to know their gender identity/

Fact: Because of greater awareness about gender and transgender issues, more and more young people are becoming empowered to express their identity at young ages.

Myth: Youth are identifying as transgender just to be trendy.

Fact: Identifying as transgender brings with it challenge and often discrimination. It is not something people do to be cool. Like in many other areas of life, some students may be exploring their gender expressions and the labels they use to describe themselves. Such exploration is a normal part of adolescent development.

Myth: All gender non-conforming students are white.

Fact: Gender non-conforming students are from all socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Myth: Transgender youth deceive others about what their “true” gender is.

Fact: Transgender people are not deceiving others by expressing their gender identity. For example, when a student transitions from male to female, she is expressing her true self to the world. She deserves to be recognized and respected like any other girl should be.

Myth: Transgender and gender non-conforming students are actually gay.

Fact: Sexual orientation and gender identity are different. A person’s sexual orientation is related to whether the person is romantically attracted to men, women, or both. Gender identity, on the other hand, is about the person’s own internal identification as male, female, or a gender in between male and female. Just like non-transgender people, transgender people can be of any sexual orientation.

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Myth: All transgender youth will eventually take hormones and have sex reassignment surgery.

Fact: Some transgender people take hormones and/or have surgery. However, for a number of reasons, many transgender people do not take either of these steps. Some feel comfortable with their bodies the way they are. For others, hormones and surgery are inaccessible because they may be too expensive and/or require parental permission.

Myth: Transgender women are not “real” women and transgender men are not “real” men.

Fact: People’s “true” gender is not defined by the sex they were assigned at birth. Our true gender is based on our gender identity. When a person who is transgender expresses an identity different from the one they were assigned at birth, the gender they are expressing is their “real” gender.

Myth: Communities of color are more transphobic or homophobic than white communities.

Fact: No one community is any more transphobic than any other. Unfortunately, most transgender people experience transphobia regardless of the racial or ethnic community they are a part of.

Myth: It’s okay to make fun of girls who are too masculine and boys who are too effeminate because that is just harmless teasing.

Fact: Teasing is never harmless, particularly regarding gender stereotypes. Gender non-conforming youth are often very clear about their gender identity. Their appearance or expression may seem confusing, but that is only because it doesn’t fit into stereotypes we have about gender.

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