

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE:

Learn (and Practice) their chosen name and/or pronouns

Changing the words we habitually use to refer to someone is not something that happens automatically. It's not unusual to have difficulty with this. You can accelerate this process by practicing and correcting yourself when you speak, or think, about them when they are not around. Remember, that when you say "I'm trying" your loved one hopes that promise means they will hear you use their chosen name or pronouns more frequently.

Give them positive feedback if they change their wardrobe or appearance

While different clothing and changing appearances can be a source of happiness, the fear of being judged or criticized by others can make the process stressful. Compliments and encouragement can go a long way to make your loved one feel supported and enjoy the positive emotions that come from a more affirming outward presentation of their gender.

Offer your help in navigating the obstacles they face in society

Whether it's school, the health care system, or some other aspect of society, knowing they don't have to face the challenges alone can go a long way to help them feel less overwhelmed by those challenges.

USEFUL TERMS:

Transgender:

Denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex registered for them at birth

Cisgender:

Denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity does correspond with the sex registered for them at birth; not transgender

Non-Binary:

Denoting or relating to a gender identity that does not conform to traditional binary (Male/Female) beliefs about gender.

Assigned Gender at Birth:

The label a medical professional gives to a child when it is born based on the baby's genitalia.

Gender Dysphoria:

The emotional and psychological distress that can arise when a person's internal sense of gender doesn't align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

OTHER RESOURCES:

www.transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-transgender-people-the-basics

www.pflag.org/find-resources/#my-loved-one-is-lgbq

<https://heshezewe.org/>

www.FarmvillePride.com



Farmville
PRIDE 

PROCESSING THE CHANGES

and

SUPPORTING YOUR LOVED ONES AS THEY TRANSITION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN THEY SAY: *"I AM TRANS"*

Being trans can encompass a wide variety of gender differences from what you may be used to. These differences may include some or all of the following elements:

- A feeling that the gender they were assigned at birth is "incorrect"
- Mental or emotional distress from living and being perceived as their assigned gender at birth
- A desire to dress or act in ways that are typically associated with the another gender
- A desire to avoid or delay the changes that will come with puberty, or to start taking hormone replacement therapy
- A desire to change their name to one that is more congruent with their gender
- A desire to seek medical/surgical procedures that will change physical features that are incongruent with their gender

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN THEY SAY: *"I AM NON-BINARY"*

Being non-binary could also mean a variety of differences. It may include elements of being trans, or it may not include any of them. People who identify as non-binary might describe their gender with in any of the following ways:

- Feeling their gender is "in-between" male and female
- Feeling their gender is BOTH male or female
- Feeling their gender is something separate from either male or female
- Feeling their gender fluctuates over time
- Feeling they have no connection to any gender
- Feeling their gender encompasses all genders

HOW DO I MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T MAKING A MISTAKE?

It's important to remember that ultimately your loved one knows who they are better than anyone, and they can best determine which, if any, of the elements of gender diversity or non-conformity apply to them.

I'M WORRIED THAT TRANSITIONING WILL BE HARMFUL FOR THEM. WHAT DO I DO?

If you have concerns about your loved one potentially pursuing any course of action as a result of being trans, take some time to understand what it involves without being influenced by bias or misinformation. Take some time to consider why they might want to pursue this decision despite any potential risks. Have an open discussion where you can hear their reasons directly from them and respectfully voice your concerns for their wellbeing.

Gender identity involves a very personal understanding of oneself. It is important to remember that gender diversity or non-conformity and any changes your loved one might make to their outward presentation of gender, is not inherently harmful. It is in fact the influence of external factors such as family acceptance, and social rejection, that frequently harms the mental wellbeing of your gender diverse or non-conforming loved ones.

THIS IS HARD FOR ME. DOES THAT MAKE ME A BAD PERSON?

Absolutely not!

Change is difficult. Humans are programmed to recognize patterns and use those patterns to predict outcomes on a deep level. Because gender is a deeply ingrained part of our social structures, our ability to identify a person's gender and make predictions based on that is psychologically important to us. Having to re-learn how we do this to account for trans or non-binary genders can be overwhelming on a deep psychological level. We often default to rejecting new information that contradicts our understanding of the world around us if the change is too much to process easily.

What is important that you remember your loved ones have likely gone through an even more difficult re-adjustment of their understanding of themselves. Despite societal pressures, they still concluded that their gender is different and their quality of life depends on their ability to embrace their true understanding of themselves.

With this knowledge, we hope you will choose to work through any difficulty you might have adjusting your own habits for the benefit of your loved ones. Choosing to be a continued source of hurt and rejection is contrary to love and support. If their well-being is your chief concern, then choosing to be a source of affirmation and acceptance is the best way to show that.