Non-binary Trans and Genderqueer Fact Sheet

Transgender, trans, and trans+ are terms that encompasses a variety of identities used by individuals whose gender identity does not match the identity they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: Individuals whose gender identity matches the identity they were assigned at birth are often referred to as “cisgender.”

Genderqueer and Non-binary may be used as umbrella terms or stand-alone identities, typically encompassing those who are in one, or more, of these categories:
(1) both man and woman (bigender); (2) between genders or a combination of genders (androgyne, intergender); (3) neither man nor woman (agender, non-gender, neutrois); (4) many genders or gender expressions (pangender); (5) moving between two or more genders (gender fluid); (6) those who prefer “genderqueer” or “non-binary” to describe their gender without labeling it otherwise; (7) having an overlap or blur of gender and sexual orientation; (8) those who “queer” gender, in presentation or otherwise (i.e.- do not conform to stereotypical gender expression or are otherwise gender non-conforming); (9) those who partially, but not wholly, identify with one gender (demigirl, demiguy). (Reference: http://www.genderqueerid.com) Note: This is not a complete list, and there are no firm definitions for any of these identifiers. Some individuals may define their gender identity differently. Also, genderqueer and non-binary are typically used as adjectives, not nouns: “genderqueer individuals” or “a non-binary person” not “genderqueers” or “a non-binary.”

Transition: The time when a person begins to live as the gender with which they identify rather than the gender they were assigned at birth. Transitioning for genderqueer and non-binary individuals may look very different depending on the individual. Genderqueer and non-binary individuals may or may not: (a) desire hormones or surgery, (b) use a chest binder, clothing, or hairstyle to create a gender-neutral appearance, (c) change their name to a gender-neutral name, and/or (d) change their pronoun. Gender expression and gender identity are separate; therefore many genderqueer and non-binary individuals may have a feminine or masculine gender presentation, retain their birth name or use a societally gendered name, or retain the pronoun given to them at birth or choose “he” or “she.” Some may feel that their transition began when they first became dissatisfied with the gender they were assigned rather than basing it on presentation.

Discrimination: Currently, the United States does not allow for sex/gender identifiers other than “Male” and “Female” on governmental identity documents (e.g. driver’s license, passports, Social Security record) and many institutions do not allow for additional gender options. Due to the lack of recognition of genders outside the gender binary, non-binary and genderqueer individuals often face individual as well as institutionalized discrimination. Some other countries, such as Australia, Germany, and India for example, allow for a third gender identifier on some official documents. Note: The terms “Male” and “Female” are social constructs often used to tie gender to sexual anatomy. Since gender and sexual anatomy are separate constructs, these terms are sometimes not used at all by non-binary and genderqueer individuals.

Pronouns: Many non-binary and genderqueer individuals choose to use a pronoun other than “he” or “she.” One of the most common gender-neutral pronouns is the singular they (they, them, their). Example: Teri put on their sweater because they were cold. There are multiple other gender-neutral pronouns (i.e. - ze, hir). Some individuals may be comfortable with two pronouns or use different pronouns in different settings. Some individuals may prefer no pronouns and the use of their name only. Example: Teri put on Teri’s sweater because Teri was cold.

Do not make assumptions about someone’s identity or pronoun based on their appearance. It is polite to ask “What pronoun do you use?” when you are alone with a person and are uncertain of their identity and/or pronoun. It is invalidating and inaccurate to point out that the singular they is grammatically incorrect. The singular they has been used by many popular and current writers dating back to at least the 15th century (i.e. - Shakespeare). Note: Do not ask about
an individual’s genitals or sex. Do not ask what someone’s “birth name” is if you suspect they have changed names. Be respectful and use the name and pronoun people ask you to use.