



TRANS SPECTRUM TRAINING by Trans Mission

A beginners guide to the Trans Spectrum.

First of all what do we mean by Trans Spectrum Trans Spectrum is an umbrella term, it relates to people whose gender identity differs to the gender assigned to them at birth. Trans people themselves often identify as being on the Trans spectrum. It can relate to those who identify as Transgender, FTM, MTF, Trans-Man, Trans-Woman, Non-Binary, Gender Queer, Gender Fluid, A-gender, Bi-Gender, 3rd Gender, Hijra, Transvestite and a range of other identities.

Transgender refers to someone whose physical genital identity does not match their psychological gender identity. This is called Gender Dysphoria. Some people who identify as Transgender will transition from the gender they were assigned at birth to the gender they identify as, for instance someone assigned female at birth transitions to affirm their male identity. This transition process may or may not include undergoing surgeries to alter their physical selves. Not everyone who identifies as Transgender will wish to undergo full reassignment surgeries, some people will have some surgery and some will opt out of medical interventions altogether.

Non-Binary Non-binary folk feel themselves to be outside of the old gender norms of Male OR Female. Non Binary folk can identify as between genders, no gender, a mix of genders or in some other personal way. Some Non-binary folk use male pronouns, some use female pronouns, some use a mixture of both, some use they/them and others use Zie/Zir or other terms. If in doubt politely ask “What pronouns do you use?”

Gender Fluid refers to someone whose gender identity can change depending on how they feel themselves to be at that time. Gender fluid people may use any pronouns. Some people who identify as gender fluid will opt for a medical transition, others will transition socially whilst others may not transition at all.

Transvestite is a term referring to people who wear the clothing usually associated with the “opposite” gender. Some Transvestites later come out as Trans. More commonly this refers to people who were assigned male at birth who wear “Womens” clothing.

There is a distinction to be made between sex and gender. Wikipedia describes it like this:

*The **distinction between sex and gender** differentiates sex (the anatomy of an individual's [reproductive system](#), and [secondary sex characteristics](#)) from [gender](#), which can refer to either social roles based on the sex of the person ([gender role](#)) or personal identification of one's own gender based on an internal awareness ([gender identity](#)). In some circumstances, an individual's assigned sex and gender do not align, and the person may be [transgender](#), gender-nonconforming, [non-binary](#), or [intersex](#). The sex and gender distinction is not universal. In ordinary speech, sex and gender are often used interchangeably.*
(Source: WIKIPEDIA - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_and_gender_distinction)

Increasingly gender is described as being a spectrum. At each end of the spectrum are the standard constructs of Male and Female, in between are all manner of labels relating to people who do not identify as fully fitting those assigned binary gender roles. Some people identify as being of neither gender (A-gender) or being a third gender, (legally recognised in some countries), still others identify as being bi-gendered (sometimes male and sometimes female), or gender non binary, gender fluid or genderqueer.

Loosely Trans covers all of these people although is most commonly associated with transgender individuals. In the same way as “Christian” is an umbrella term for many similar but different forms of religion so Trans(*) is an umbrella term for many different Gender Variant people. The use of the asterix * is sometimes used to denote all those people who do not fit “assigned at birth” binary ends of the gender spectrum.

What is meant by “TRANSITIONING”?

Some people who identify as Trans or transgender will wish to alter their social identity and/or their physical self to closer represent their gender identity.

This can include some or all of the following steps:

Name change.

Presenting publicly in their affirmed gender role

Hormone treatments.

Laser hair removal/electrolysis.

Chest binding.

Surgery; Mastectomy(ies), Vaginoplasty, Metoidioplasty, Phalloplasty, Hysterectomy, Breast Enhancement, Facial feminisation surgery and more.

Transitioning can take place over many years or just a few months depending on each individual's circumstances. Some people for instance refer to themselves as transitioning when they have started to dress in the clothing of their affirmed gender, others will consider their transition starts when they change their name. Others still will see their transition as starting when they first start the medical process whether this be by beginning hormone therapy or undergoing surgery.

A key stage is social transitioning. This is when a person lives their life as their affirmed gender, or in the case of someone who is gender non-binary or a-gender, when they live as the person they identify as. Social transitioning can take many forms, from merely dressing more androgynously to legal name changes or altering the appearance using surgery, make up or other substances. (ie steroids etc). There is no such thing as “The Operation”. There can be a series of operations each with their own risks and recovery times. This is especially true of trans men. Some people will wish to undergo gender confirming surgeries, others will retain use of their current genitals for sexual or

reproductive purposes. Some people will be on hormone treatment and opt not to have any surgery and others will have no medical intervention at all and present as their affirmed gender only by outward cosmetic changes: (make up, hair, clothing etc.). Some people are not able to have any form of surgery due to medical risk factors.

This is a VERY IMPORTANT point:

NEVER ASK ABOUT A TRANS PERSON'S GENITALIA

It is none of your business

How to treat a Trans Person?

Like a person is the short answer. If someone tells you they are trans, respect that knowledge and be respectful of them as a human being. Trans and gender variant people may not appear the way you have always known "Males" or "Females" to present themselves but their gender identity is valid and should always be respected. Equally those who do identify as binary transgender or transsexual may not appear stereotypically male or female, whatever that means, they may not "pass". For some this is a cause of great upset and concern for others the need to "pass" is no more than a societal concept that is as outdated as the gender roles of our great grandparents. Each trans person is different.

If you are unsure of a person's pronouns it is acceptable to ask them which pronouns they use, (NOT prefer) they may respond with he or she or they may use the singular "They" and "Them" or the modern "Ze", "Zir". The gender neutral prefix Mx is now accepted on governmental forms and is increasingly used by trans and gender nonconforming people.

Trans people often lose their families and friends when they come out as trans. The journey to acceptance can be very hard and people can lose their entire social support networks, their jobs and their homes. People may experience transphobia as an everyday occurrence which may take the form of verbal abuse, malicious misgendering, threats of violence, physical assaults and even murder.

Trans Day Of Remembrance happens on November 20th every year to remember the hundreds of trans murder victims.

Trans people have a much higher rate of suicide attempts with one study putting this figure as high as 48%. The figure for the general population is less than 5%. Most suicide prevention work recognises the fact that those trans and gender variant people with the most support are the least likely to have suicidal thoughts.

The most recent in-depth study "Trans Mental Health and Emotional Well Being Study 2012" has recommended that "trans specific mental health policies need to be incorporated into all parts of the health system as well as trans training for all staff and managers across general health care, mental health and gender identity services."

Here are some UK based and international advice and support resources

Trans Mission – Trans Information and Support organisation.

(Including our Bradford, Leeds and Doncaster based social & support groups.)

<http://www.facebook.com/uktransmission>

enquiries@uktransmission.org

<http://www.uktransmission.org>

Transgender Advice – Norfolk

<http://www.transgender-advice.com/index.html>

Mermaids – for trans youth and their families -

<http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk>

Gender Identity Research and Education Society -

<http://gires.org.uk>

NHS ADVICE LEAFLET PDF FORMAT -

<http://gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-transgender-experiences.pdf>

Government advice leaflet - " Gender Reassignment - a guide for employers!"

<http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/documents/Gender%20Reassignment%20-%20Employers%20Guide%202005.pdf>

FTM LONDON - Support group for Female to Male trans guys -

<http://www.ftmlondon.org.uk/>

Useful tips for FTM trans guys to create a male chest.

<http://www.ftmguide.org/binding.html>

Gender Trust - Support for people with gender identity issues -

<http://gendertrust.org.uk/>

The Equality Act -

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/your-rights/transgender/>

Gendys - For people who have experienced Gender Identity issues -

<http://www.gender.org.uk/gendys/index.htm>

Beaumont society - one of the oldest support groups in the UK -

<http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk/>

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