

## Gender Identity and Gender Dysphoria- SLP

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### Gender Identity and Gender Dysphoria

- Regardless of gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, physical and mental health, or other demographic factors, we express our sexuality in a variety of ways throughout our lives.
- Sexuality is an individually expressed and highly personal phenomenon.
- There are no normal, universal sexual behaviors.
- Satisfying or normal sexual expression can be described as whatever behaviors give pleasure and satisfaction to those adults involved, without threat or coercion or injury to others.
- The United States is a sexually multicultural society.

### Gender

- a. Gender Identity – is an individual, personal or private sense of identity as female or male.
  1. *Sex* refers to the biologic indicators of male and female and develops from an interaction of biology, identity imposed by others, and self-identity.
  2. *Gender Assignment*- an infant is assigned a sex (boy XY or girl XX) which is identity imposed by others according to the appearance of the external genitals (biology).
  3. *Gender identity*, the sense of maleness or femaleness, is not inborn but usually is established by the time a child is 3 years of age, the child says, “I am a girl” or “I am a boy” (self-identity). Although we may be predisposed to male or female gender orientation, gender identity is mainly a product of how we are raised.

### Gender Dysphoria

Gender identity is the sense of knowing whether one is male or female, that is, the awareness of one’s masculinity or femininity.

Considered to be a difference, and not a disorder or pathology.

Involves persistent, strong gender identification where a person feels he or she is of a different gender than that indicated by his or her physiology

Typically, first becomes apparent in childhood or adolescence

The DSM-5 stipulates that a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, in addition to incongruence between assigned gender and expressed gender, requires that the client expresses significant distress in school, social, occupational, and performance functions for at least 6 months. It is not sufficient to make a diagnosis solely on parents or other people’s discomfort with someone’s gender identity.

### Special Considerations

Individuals may experience embarrassment, shame, discrimination, and social isolation.

Experience practical challenges (such as with restroom designations).

May benefit from counseling to help patients compare and choose various paths they might take.

### **Persons who choose gender reassignment engage in specific steps to prepare for the transition:**

1. Psychotherapy to assist the person in fully considering and preparing for this very involved and long-term process.
2. Living for a period (e.g., 1 to 2 years) as a member of the desired gender to ensure readiness. During this time the person is usually given hormonal therapy to suppress undesired physical characteristics and elicit desired sexual characteristics such as to diminish facial hair and enlarge breasts, or to alter one's voice; this may be the last step for many people.
3. Surgical intervention to alter the person's secondary sex characteristics to match those of the identified gender.

### **Nursing Interventions:**

Use inclusive language, convey acceptance, & provide support.

Provide resources and refer to peer support groups:

[www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org)

[www.transgenderlaw.org](http://www.transgenderlaw.org)

Mutually set, monitor, and revise goals.

Teach stress reduction strategies.

Address comorbid disorders and mental health needs (substance abuse, anxiety, depression, etc.)

### **Terminology for Sexual Identity and Sexual Attraction**

- **Asexual:** Not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.
- **Bisexual:** Emotional, physical, and/ or sexual attraction to males and females.
- **Cisgender:** When a person's sex assigned at birth aligns with their current gender identity.
- **Gay:** Male-identified individuals who are attracted to males in a romantic or emotional sense.
- **Lesbian:** female-identified individuals who are attracted to females in a romantic or emotional sense.
- **Nonbinary:** When a person's gender expression doesn't fit inside the traditional male or female categories. These labels can include someone who identifies as both male and female, neither male nor female, or some other gender altogether.
- **Pan/ Pansexual:** A person attracted to all genders on the spectrum.
- **Transgender:** Individuals whose gender expression and/ or identity differs from conventional expectations based on the sex they were born into.
- **Transgender Man:** A person whose sex assignment at birth was female but whose gender identity is male. Many transgender men identify simply as men.
- **Transgender Woman:** A person whose sex assignment at birth was male but whose gender identity is female. Many transgender women identify simply as women.