

GENDER 101

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For Recording Click [HERE](#)

Land acknowledgement

I am speaking to you for the lands that are now the Greater Toronto Area. The traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenasaunee and the Wendat people. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Living on this territory makes all people, treaty people, including those who have come as settlers, immigrants of this generation and earlier generations, including those that were brought by force and were enslaved. I recognize that not all of us are from the same territory. If you would like to make your own land acknowledgement in the chat, I invite you to type the names of the Indigenous people who lived, who continue to live where you live and work - PeerWorks



Land acknowledgement

Please share where you are located and on what Indigenous territory if you know!

I am located on the unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory of the Anishnaabek.



Mar Mohamed

- 1st peer support experience came from volunteering at an overdose prevention site: engaged and supported peers in their neighborhood.
- Embarked on a journey into the harm reduction sector as both an advocate and peer
- Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology
- Currently finishing Honours Forensic Psychology degree to apply to grad school
- Wants to make a difference on a communal and systemic basis.
- Multi-faceted identity: 1st gen Somali-Canadian and a nonbinary lesbian.
- They/them pronouns





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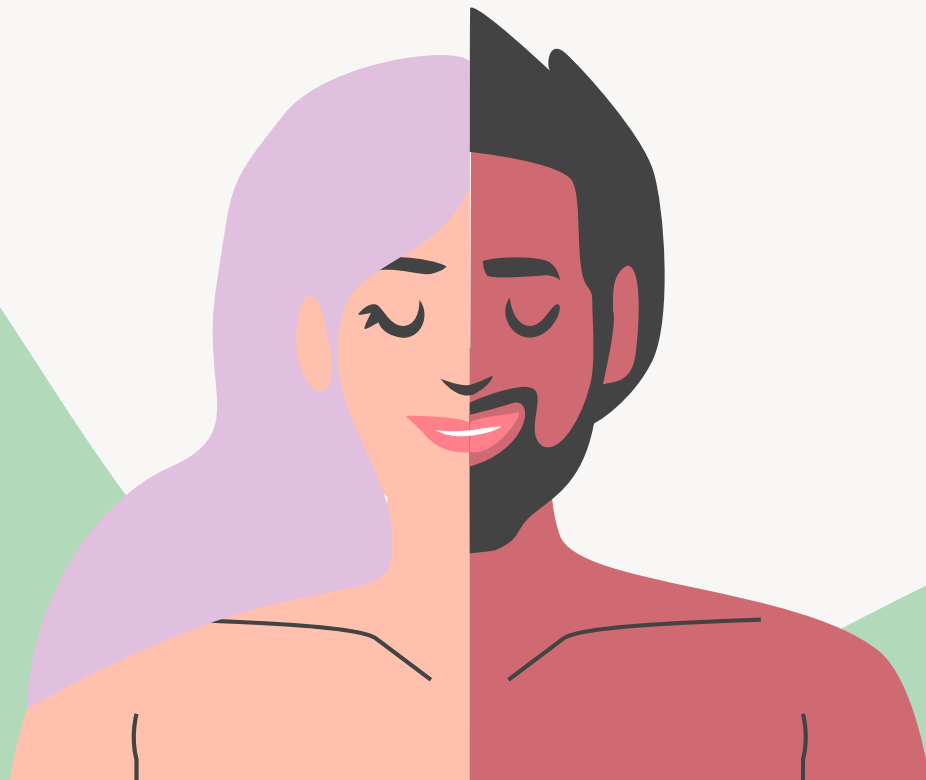
Gender and peer support





01

What is sex?





Sex: A label from a doctor or scientist that describes a person's body.

For example: Male, female



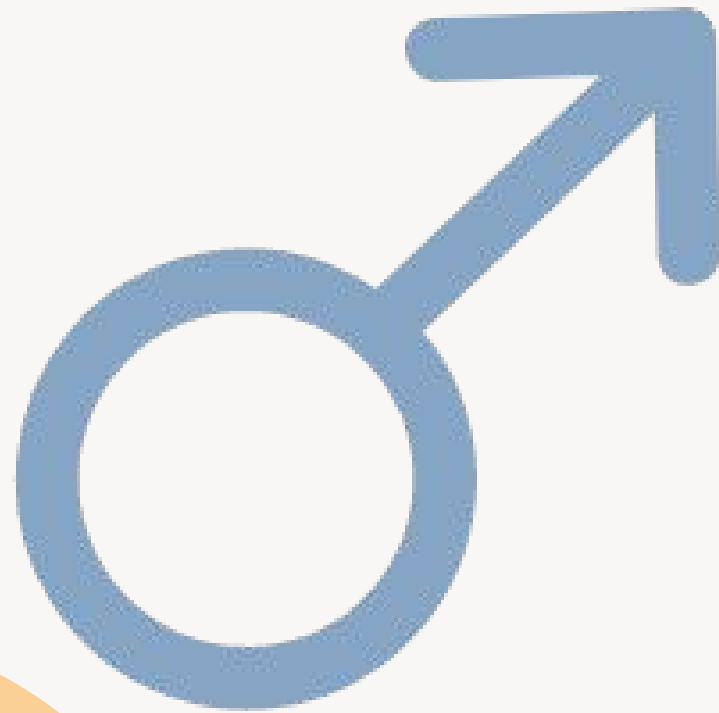
FEMALE (“It’s a girl!”)



Assumptions

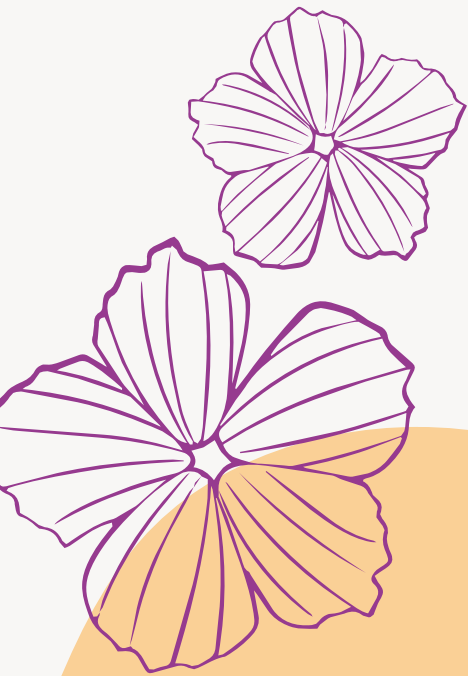
- Hormones: Estrogen
- Chromosomes: XX
- Puberty → Breasts, voice stays high
- Body parts: Vulva, vagina, uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes
- Can have a period, produce eggs, and give birth

MALE (“It’s a boy!”)



Assumptions

- Hormones: Testosterone
- Chromosomes: XY
- Puberty → Facial hair, voice lowers
- Body parts: Penis, scrotum, testes, vas deferens, prostate, etc.
- Can produce sperm





Did you know...

**That some people are not
biologically male or female?**

Intersex

- Intersex people: People whose bodies don't fit neatly within how we understand "males" or "females"
- Differences can be in someone's chromosomes, hormones, or anatomy
- An estimate of about 1.7% of people are intersex
- Most recently - Debate on polycystic ovarian syndrome

Intersex is an umbrella term

Some examples

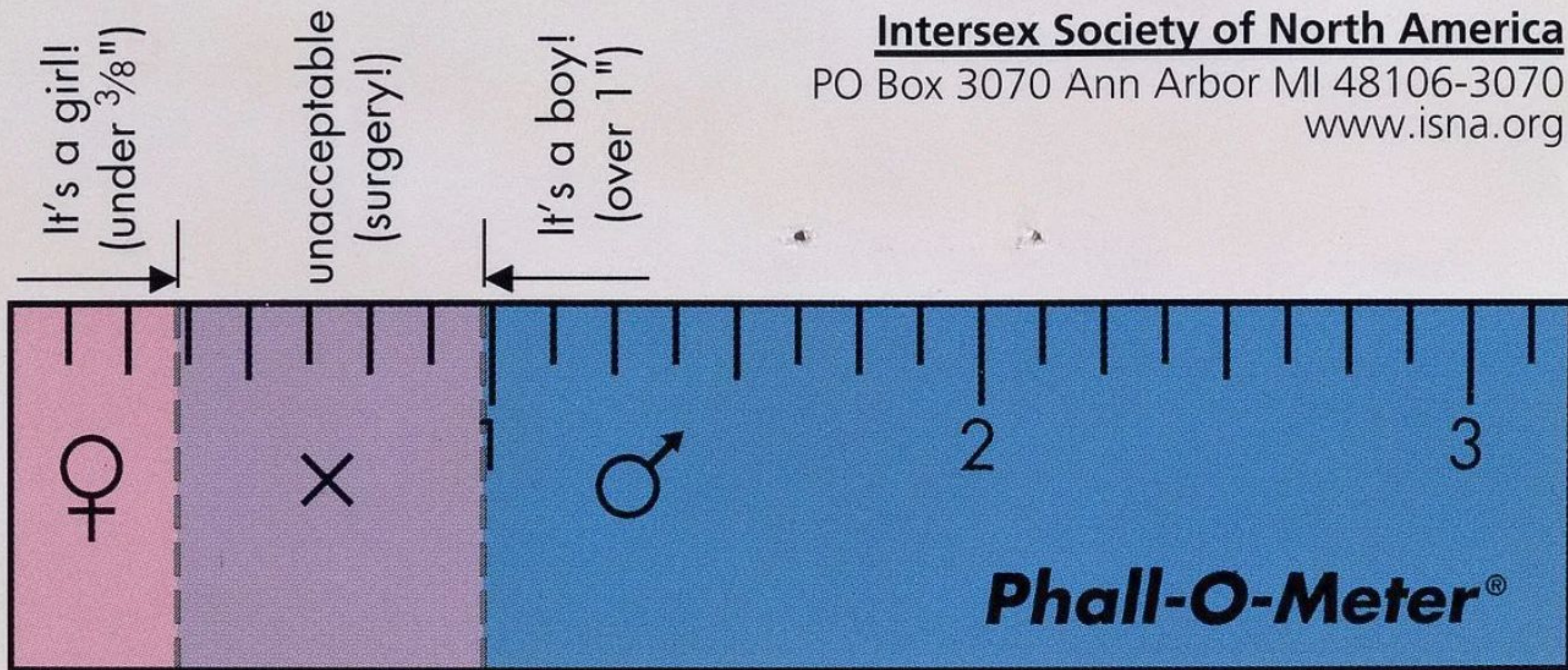
- Genitals that aren't clearly a vagina or penis (ambiguous genitalia)
- Some cells have XY chromosomes, some have XX chromosomes
- Female genitalia (vagina/vulva) with male internal reproductive organs (undescended testes)



Intersex Society of North America

PO Box 3070 Ann Arbor MI 48106-3070

www.isna.org



Actual scale. The above are actual current medical standards. Challenging these arbitrary standards, ISNA works to create a world free of shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital plastic surgery for children born with mixed sex anatomy.

What designates your sex?

- Reproductive systems
- External genitalia (penis, vulva)
- Secondary sex characteristics (breasts, facial hair)
- Chromosomes (XX, XY, XXY, XX and XY, etc.)
- Hormones (Estrogen, testosterone, etc.)

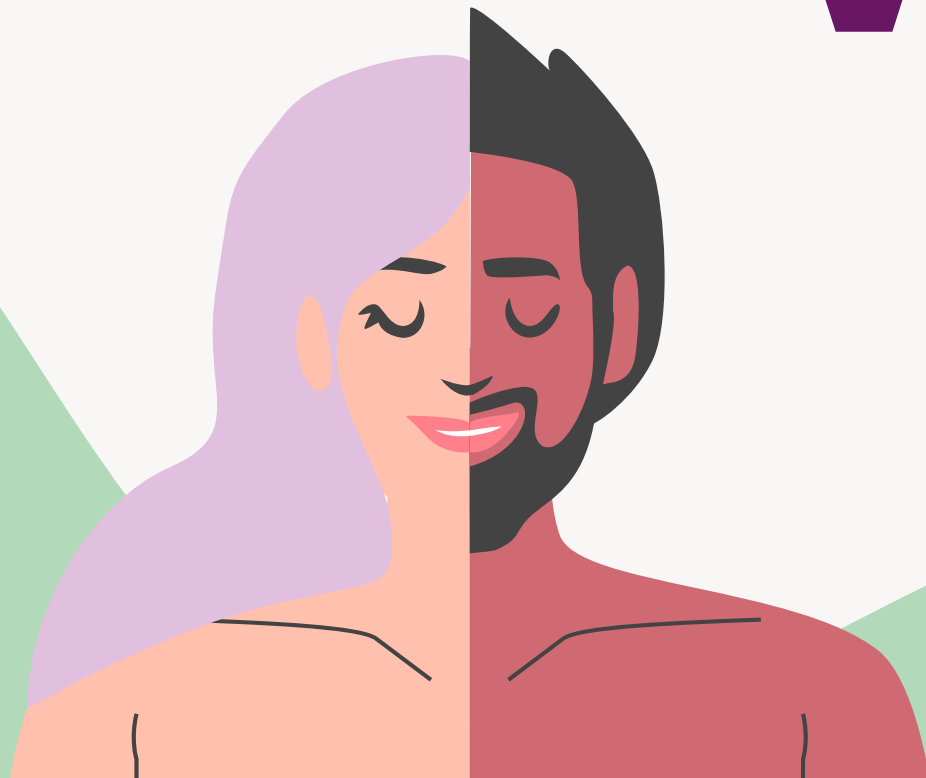
Practical takeaways: Sex

- Sex is goes beyond “male” or “female”
- Sex is not the same as gender - Someone can be a woman but don't necessarily have a vulva, a period, etc.
- Sex is not always immediately visible - Just because someone looks a certain way, it doesn't mean you know their sex or anatomy



02

What is gender?





Gender: Your unique understanding of who you are as a person.

For example: Man, woman, Two Spirit, nonbinary, gender-diverse



Man



Woman



Man

Non-binary

Woman

Man

Cis man
Trans man

Non-binary

Gender-fluid
Two Spirit
Agender etc.

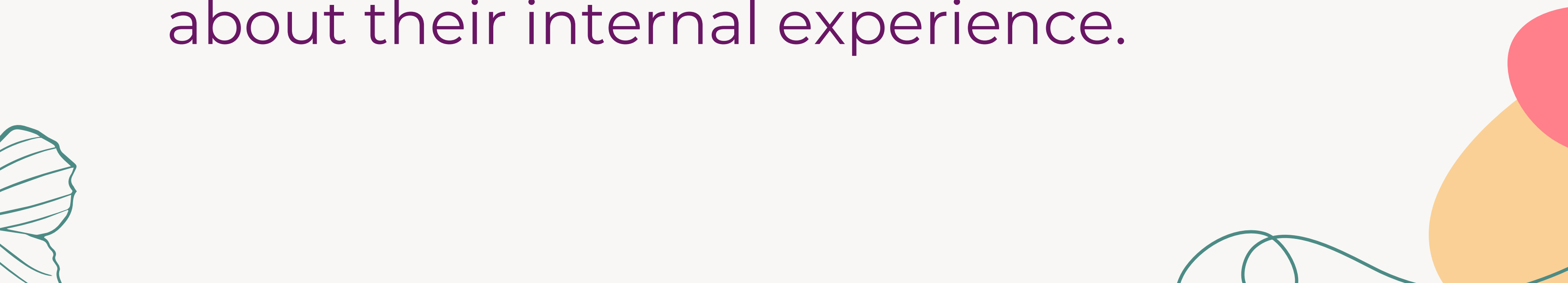
Woman

Cis woman
Trans woman



Gender Identity: Each person's internal and individual experience of gender.

You can't guess someone's gender identity from how they look because it's about their internal experience.





Gender Expression: How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender.

Your gender expression is how you present your gender to others.





What are some ways that people express their gender outwardly?



Gender expression

Dressing

Dresses, suits, heels

Hairstyle

Short, long, colour, bows

Speech

Tone, word choice

Behaviours

Movement, hobbies

Pronouns

She, he, they, etc.

Customs

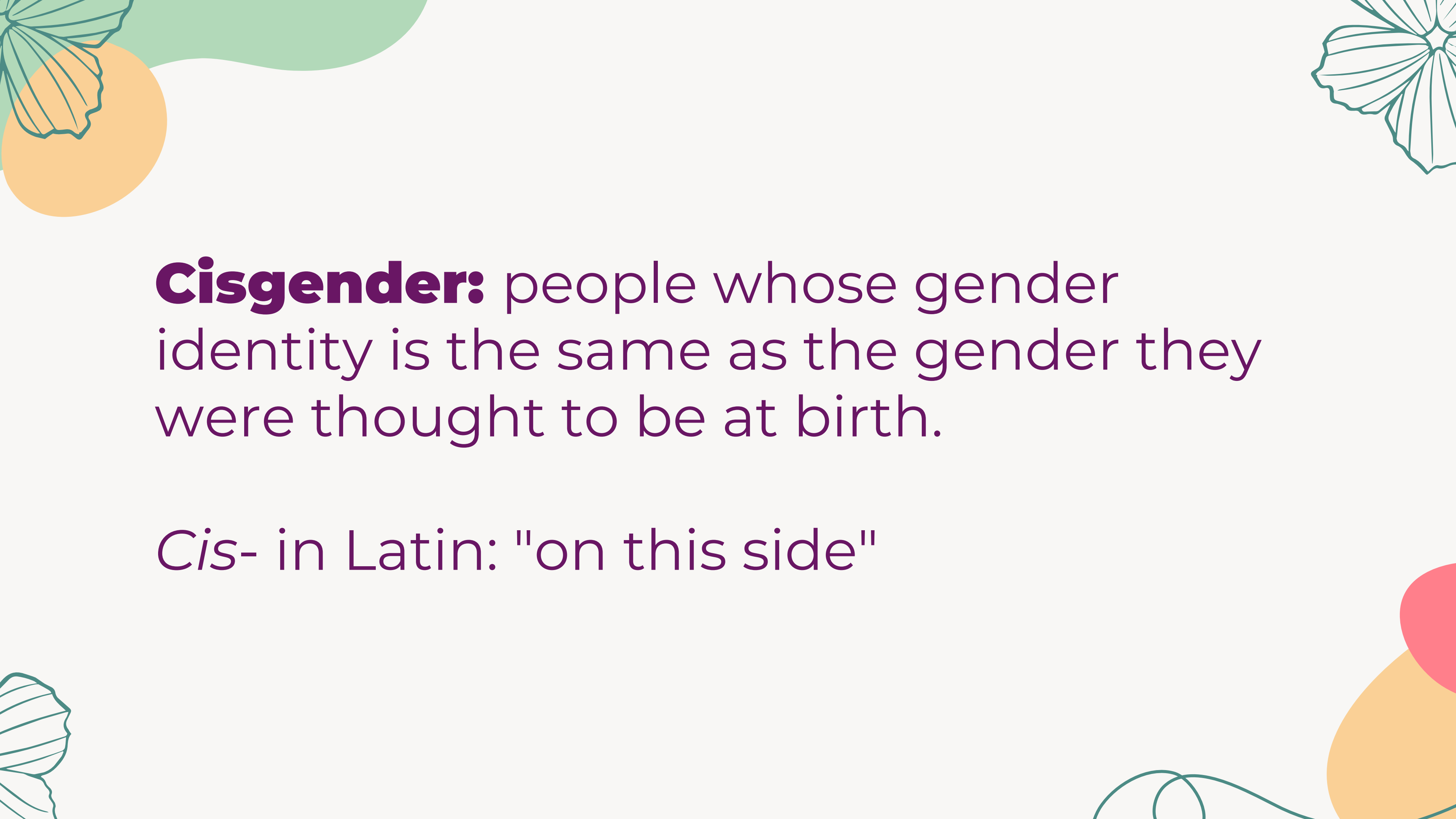
Hijab, yarmulke, etc.





Transgender: people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth.

Trans- in Latin: “on the other side of”



Cisgender: people whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were thought to be at birth.

Cis- in Latin: "on this side"

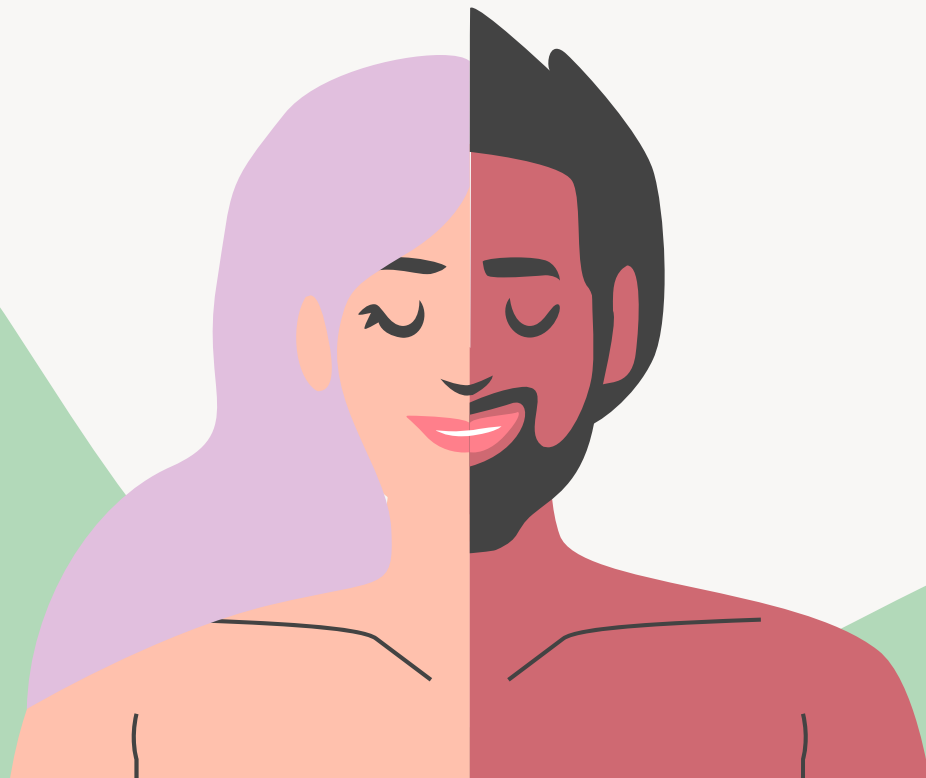
Practical takeaways: Gender


- You don't know someone's gender from looking at them (what you see is gender expression, which doesn't always match gender identity)
- Trans and non-binary people have been around as long as humans have been around



03

Understanding transition





Transition is a process in which someone changes aspects of their assigned gender to match their gender.

E.g. Mariann was assigned male at birth and is now transitioning because she's a woman.





Gender dysphoria: Distress that comes from a mismatch between someone's biological sex and their gender identity.



Gender and the DSM: For a long time, trans people were assigned specific mental illnesses (*Transexualism, Gender Identity Disorder*).

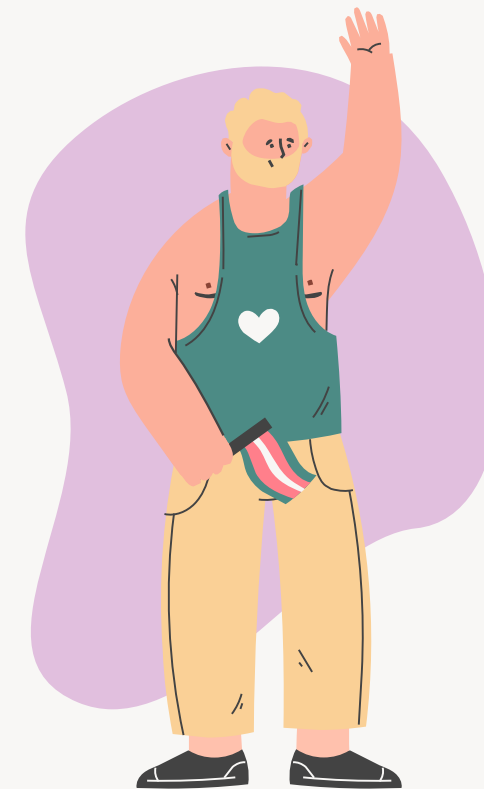
Three ways to transition



Medical



Social



Legal

Medical transition

Medical transition includes gender affirming changes that require medical care.



Hormone Replacement Therapies



Masculinizing

Testosterone
(via gel or injection)

*Puberty blockers

Feminizing

Estrogen
(via injection, patches, or pills)

Testosterone blockers

*Puberty blockers

Gender affirming surgeries



Masculinizing

Top/chest surgery

Bottom/genital surgeries
(phalloplasty, scrotoplasty,
metoidioplasty)

Feminizing

Top/chest surgery

Bottom/genital surgeries
(vaginoplasty)

Social transition

Social transition includes changes that are gender affirming within society: gender expression, name & pronoun changes, coming out.



Names & Pronouns

Names

It is important to respect people's names. Using the wrong name for someone, or refusing to make an effort to learn someone's name is an act of gender based violence.

Pronouns

It is important to respect people's pronouns. Using the wrong pronouns for someone, or refusing to make an effort to learn someone's name is an act of gender based violence.

**Important reminder:
Everyone has pronouns!**

Names

- A trans individual may decide to change their assigned birth name to something that is gender affirming
 - For example, someone named Samantha at birth may feel more affirmed changing their name to Sam.

- Some people may also have a legal name that is used for legal document purposes, that is different than the name they use in their everyday life.
 - For example, someone's legal name may be Ifeoma but their name is Alexis.




Legal name - When is it required?



For staff: Payroll, healthcare insurance plans

For peers: Immigration documents, legal documents, healthcare, honorariums (cheques)

When legal names change, we change our files accordingly.



Pronouns

Reminder

It is important to respect people's pronouns. Using the wrong pronouns for someone, or refusing to make an effort to learn someone's name is an act of gender based violence.

**Important reminder:
Everyone has pronouns!**

Pronouns are words how people refer to you. This is how you identify pronouns in a sentence.

“Alex is going to the store, let me talk to **him**, as **he** is on **his** phone with me.”

The above sentence is an example of how he/him/his pronouns work.

HE/HIM, IL



SHE/HER, ELLE



THEY/THEM, IEL



THEY/SHE, IEL/ELLE

Making mistakes

Mistakes happen. If you make a mistake and use the wrong name or pronouns, it's not the apology olympics!

When you make a mistake, correct yourself and move on:

“He said... Oh, I mean *they* said that it was fun!”

Legal transition

Legal transition includes updating government and legal identification/documents to align with your gender.





Letter of support from a doctor

Changing your name or sex designation on
an Ontario driver's license



\$137 (minimum)

Name change on a birth certificate in Ontario





\$92

Replacement Carleton University Diploma





\$120 (minimum)

Changing your name on a Canadian passport

Recap: Transition



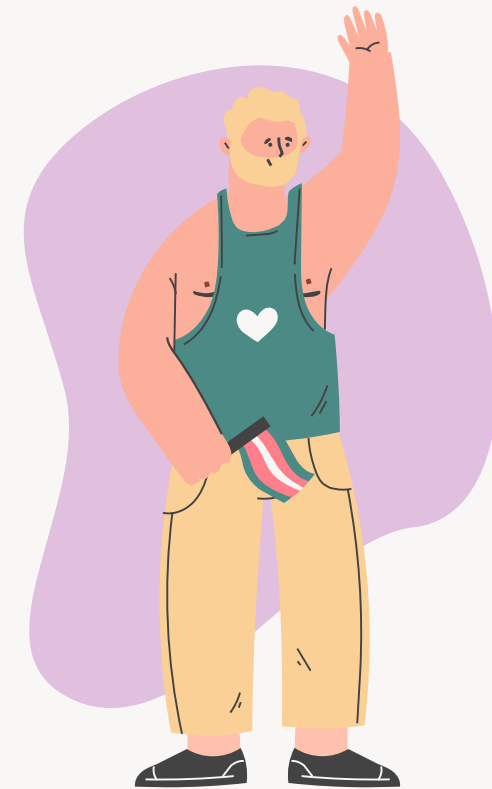
Medical

Hormones
Surgeries
Procedures



Social

Clothes + appearance
Name
Pronouns



Legal

Legal IDs
Name
Sex designation



04

Gender & Peer Support

Where does gender come up?

- Intake with new peers
- Referring peers to gender-specific agencies
- Referring peers to closed events (or targeted ones)
- Any discussions of gender-based violence
- Clinical settings like hospitals or clinics/doctors office
- Applying for various services like housing, ODSP, OW

Serving the Trans Community

Who is knowledgeable about trans rights & issues?

What are ways the organization is supporting trans people?

When can trans folks access trans specific services & care?

Serving the Trans Community

Where can trans people go for services & support?

Why should trans folks use your services specifically?

How are trans staff & clients treated?

Raise your hand if...

- You've previously attended a Gender 101 workshop
- You know when legal names are required versus a preferred name
- Your organization has trans specific programming
- You know how to help someone access gender affirming care
- Your organization has gender-inclusive washrooms

Barriers

- Misgendering
- Outing
- Lack of general or gender-specific counselling
- Lack of knowledge on trans-specific services (for housing, food, or safer spaces)
- No doctors or appropriate referrals given
- No access to transition-related healthcare

Mental health impacts

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Dissociation (leaving your body)
- Suicidal thoughts
- Social isolation

Social health impacts

- Not seeing yourself represented in peer spaces
- Due to transphobia:
 - Losing housing &/or job
 - Losing social support
 - Denied opportunities
- Experiencing the intersection of racism & transphobia
 - Transmisogyny and transmisogynoir

Physical health impacts

- Complications from “black market” hormones
- Mental distress translates into chronic pain
- Avoiding the doctor, ER, medical settings due to mistrust
- Health conditions developing from neglect
- Death

PeerWorks Values

- Lived Experience and Experiential Knowledge
- Independent Peer Voice
- Diversity as Strength
- Hope and Wellness/Recovery
- Integrity, Transparency, and Honesty
- Innovation through Partnership and Collaboration

Important takeaways

Myths:

- You can tell someone's trans/their gender just by looking at them
- The “sex binary”

Truths

- There is no one singular way to be a gender
- Gender and gender identity is self determined by the peer



Trans Resources

Rainbow Health Ontario (website)

- Directory for trans-friendly service providers
- FAQ for trans people (transitioning, human rights, etc.)

Transgender Map (website)

- List of various trans friendly and related services across Canada and more specifically Ontario
- List of various resources on navigating name changes, pronouns, legal questions





THANKS!

Does anyone have any questions?