

Transitions: Gender Identity and Gender Expression

The Stonewall National
Museum & Archive

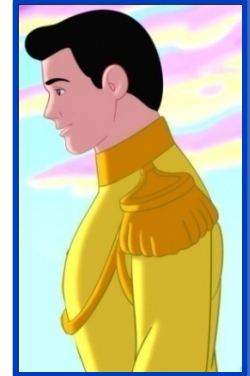


OVERVIEW

Children's stories tell us of ugly ducklings who finally come to understand that they're actually beautiful swans, and of frogs that are transformed into handsome princes through a loving kiss.



In Walt Disney's animated film, *Mulan*, the maiden dresses as a man to fight a war, and becomes one of China's greatest heroes.



Transgender people in our history and culture are those men and women among us who have discovered they are different from the norm, and who have learned to spread their wings more naturally, or who changed from one form to another because of the kiss of self-love, or who have changed into the clothes of the other gender for any number of good reasons, including comfort, relaxation, income, inner peace, to wage war, and to escape danger, among others.



Most people in every culture are accepted by others because they express themselves in ways that are considered consistent with their gender.



We have been told that boys are made of snakes and snails and puppy dog tails, and that girls are made of sugar and spice and all things nice. But what happens when the little boy feels certain that he was made of sugar and spice, and the little girl believes that she was made of snakes and snails?

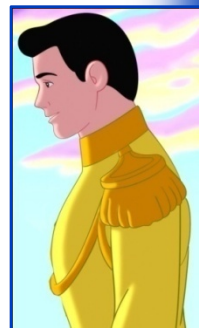
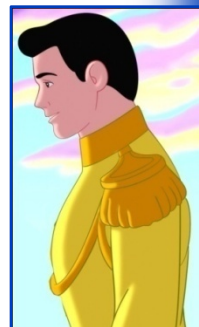
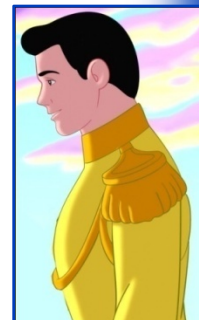
They either pretend to be like everyone else, or they dare to be different, and possibly pay the price for not conforming.





From the mid-1800s until nearly the end of the Twentieth Century, men who wore women's clothes, and women who wore men's clothes in public were prosecuted by the law. Today, this behavior is protected in many parts of the western world because it is better understood as essential self-expression rather than as misbehavior.

It is estimated that 1.5 percent of the population is transgender, with the majority of those people not feeling drawn to, or in need of, gender confirmation surgery. There are thought to be more transsexual women than men, though actual numbers are not known.



In one in two thousand births, the body of the baby doesn't clearly designate male or female sex. That child is referred to as being **Intersex**. It has been the tradition to immediately assign, and surgically create, a female anatomy because it is medically easier. This practice is very often not in the best interest of the child. Intersex also falls under the transgender umbrella.



Members of the transgender community, represented by the “T” in LGBT, are as different from one another as people who are left-handed or have blond hair. Some transsexual men and women feel drawn to the politics of their own liberation, and others simply want to be known as male or female, and move on with their lives, to be the beautiful swan or the handsome prince they were born to be without having to explain it ever again.



Glossary of Terms 1

Sex: Male and female are medical designations based upon our presumed capacity to reproduce, but most often we are named “male” or “female” at birth because of the outward appearance of our bodies. Sometimes, though, it’s not clear if the body is male or female.



Gender: Boy and girl, man and woman, are gender designations based upon cultural prescriptions.

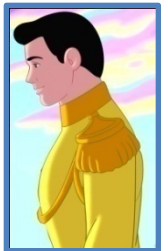
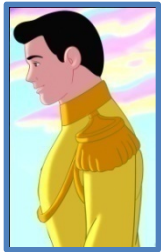
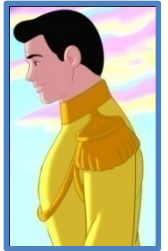
Gender Identity: We label ourselves as “man” or “woman,” or as something else, based upon our internal sense of ourselves.

Gender Expression: How you look and act as a man or woman, or some other gender identity. This relates to masculinity and femininity. There are cultural expectations of appropriate gender expression. “Big boys don’t cry.” But the expectations vary from culture to culture.

Gender Role: Social expectations of how men and women should behave.

Transgender: The umbrella term for all non-conforming or variant gender behaviors or expressions. It includes *transsexual*, *cross-dresser*, *intersex*, and *gender-variant behavior*.

Transsexual: A person whose gender identity is the opposite of the one corresponding to the sex assigned at birth. A transsexual does not identify as both genders. The person may be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.



Glossary of Terms 2

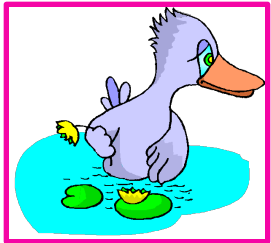


Cross-Dresser: Wearing the clothing of the other gender. Heterosexual cross-dressers usually do so to express feelings that are commonly associated with the other sex.

Drag: Cross-dressing for performance and fun. The gay men who do so are often referred to as drag queens. The women who do so are often referred to as drag kings.



Genderqueer: A person whose gender identity is not clearly male or female, and whose gender expression reflects that. Despite the offensiveness of the word “queer” to many gay people, this term is employed, particularly by the young. The person can be heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual.



Intersex: A person born with external genitalia that is not easily designated male or female.

Transition: The process of becoming one’s true gender when there is conflict between identity and assigned sex.

Gender Confirmation Surgery: The proper name for the medical operations desired for transitioning.



Meet...

I was born the second of two children to William and Fannie Broadus in the rural, small, mid-Missouri town of Fayette on August 28, 1963, the day of the march on Washington, led by Dr. Martin Luther King. My parents were expecting a boy, and the doctor that delivered me had only delivered boys. So, when I was born in the form of a female my parents had to choose another name.

As a child, I was very close to both my parents, and spent a lot of time with them. My working career began at the age of five, assisting my father at night jobs. I realized that I was different than other children before I was five. I never felt like a girl. I was always confused when people referred to me as a girl. I felt this from the inside out. I was a very angry child, and remember my mother taking me in for a mental assessment. She was told that I was perfectly fine, and just a “mean child.” I remember wanting to say, “No I’m not! You just don’t understand.”

I always wanted to be involved in politics and corporate law, but realized that I had to come to grips with my gender identity in order to be happy and successful in life. Now, I am happy, and I have never looked back since making the transition at the age of 31.

Kylan Broadus, ESQ
Associate Professor of Business Law, Lincoln University



...Mee

I had a happy childhood, but for nearly 40 years I struggled with my sex and my gender. Only after I transitioned (1988-1991) did I realize how difficult that struggle had been. I now know how much I was unable to accomplish because other people thought I was strange, because people couldn't tell what sex I was. I now know how much I held myself back because I was afraid of how people would perceive me, or because I couldn't wear the right clothing.



Jamison & Heidi

When I put on women's clothes, I looked like an awkward cross-dresser. Yet, men's clothes just didn't fit right, either, because of my female body. And people—strangers, mostly, but sometimes people I knew—often treated me cruelly, laughing at me, asking me, “What are you?” Saying, “You can't be a woman; no woman is as ugly as you.” My family loved me, but they didn't understand why I couldn't conform to female gender norms.

It just wasn't in me to be a woman. I even tried to be a lesbian because I was attracted to women. I've always cared about people, and about making a difference in the world, about being creative and kind and conscientious. But until I transitioned, I had no idea what I was truly capable of. I really don't think of myself as transgender any longer. I met my wife, Heidi, in 2001. My adult daughter and son are close to both of us. Except that I travel all over the world to help trans people achieve health, civil and human rights, and social safety, we have a very ordinary existence. Heidi and I value our family time, and strive for balance in our lives.

I'm a happy man.

Jamison Green, PHD
Author, Educator, Policy Consultant

Meet...

In 1962 at age 5, I told my parents that I was born wrong. That was before The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King said he had a dream. While I expected to be punished, instead my Mom retrieved a saved copy of Life Magazine featuring Christine Jorgenson on the cover. She said she didn't know if there were others like me, people who were born female who felt male, but Christine was born a boy, grew up to be a man and became herself, a woman. Mom said if it was okay for her, then by the time I grew up, things would be okay for me. My parents privately dually socialized me to prepare me for however my life evolved.

My career did not suffer, but my spirit did. If I could have been fully me always, I know I would even more have enjoyed my successes at global businesses including at Coke-Cola, Holiday Inn, ITT Sheraton, and Starwood Hotels. Secrecy always restricts, and as I gained more success, I disclosed openly and eventually advocated for full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, including myself.

My dream to attend West Point could not be realized. Dad, a career Army vet, and I had intense conversations about integrity and honesty in service, and the explicit exclusion of people like me. At 54, I know that young people will live to see trans people attend and serve.

First, we need the right to work.

Diego Sanchez

Legislative Aide to U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (MA4)





Michael Walters

Who is a Cross-Dresser?

There have always been people, especially men, who thought it was funny to dress up like the other gender. They did it for laughs and then threw away the outfits. But some men feel more comfortable in the outfit than out of it, and it's not funny to them. Some women relax more in male attire than female attire. In most cases, these people don't want to change their bodies, just their clothes. They are called cross-dressers or transgender people.

When changing clothes is not enough to make a person feel like a swan or a prince, and they wish to change their bodies to better fit the clothes and their sense of self, they are called transsexual people. The point at which they start living full-time in their desired gender is called transition. The accompanying medical procedures are only available after the individual has satisfied the rigorous requirements of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). Even then, access may be greatly hindered if the employer's insurance coverage does not cover these procedures.



James Franco



Joan of Arc



Dustin Hoffman



Marlene Dietrich



RuPaul

Some Questions...

If a man wears women's clothes to entertain fellow soldiers, make a living, escape harm, or to have fun, is he a cross-dresser? If so, is he also transgender?

If a woman wears men's clothing to join a war, secure a job, avoid danger, or entertain, is she a cross-dresser? If so, is she transgender?

When is cross-dressing a verb, and when is it a noun?

When does a person who cross-dresses become designated as transgender?



Tony Curtis in
Some Like It Hot



Katherine "Jimmy" Hepburn



Robin Williams in
Mrs. Doubtfire

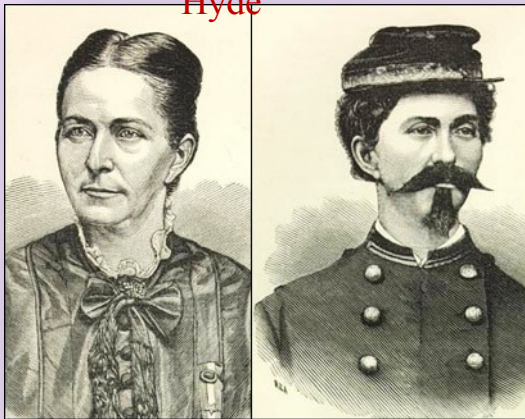


Jamie Farr as Klinger
in *M*A*S*H*

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 1



Edward
Hyde



Velasquez/Buford

American Colonial Period: Two spirit Native Americans , also called *Berdache*, were male bodied transgender people revered as being holy by the Lakota, Ojibwa, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Mojave, Navajo, and Cree tribes.

1701-1708: Edward Hyde, 3rd Earl of Clarendon, Governor of New York and New Jersey, cross-dressed in public while in office.

1760: Deborah Simpson impersonates a man in order to fight in the American Revolutionary War.

1775: Charlotte Clarke (England). First openly lesbian and transgender person dies destitute after writing *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Clarke*.

1850s laws: Different cities forbid cross-dressing in public, “in a dress not belonging to his or her sex.” Columbus, OH in 1848 and Cincinnati, OH in 1974.

1860: Herculine Barbin is found to be Intersex, is declared legally male against her wishes. She commits suicide.

1865: Dr. James Barry, a surgeon in the British army, assumed to be male, is discovered, upon his death, to have female sexual characteristics. Although Barry lived his adult life as a man, it is widely believed that he was born female and named Margaret Ann Bulkley and that he chose to live as a man so that he might be accepted as a university student and be able to pursue his chosen career as a surgeon.

1861-65: Loreta Janeta Velasquez posed as a Confederate officer (Lt. Harry T. Buford), fought at Bull Run, was discovered, discharged, and re-enlisted to fight at Shiloh.

1867: Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs writes memoir of childhood desire to be a girl.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 2

1910: Magnus Hirschfeld, pioneer in transgender studies, coins the term “transvestite.” (Considered pejorative today.)

1919: Hirschfeld founds the *Institute for Sexual Science (Institut für Sexualwissenschaft)* in Berlin.

1920s & 1930s: Carl Jung introduces concept of Animus and Anima, saying every person has the other gender in their unconscious.

1923: Magnus Hirschfeld introduces the term “transsexual.”

1927: Mae West appears in the play, “The Drag.”

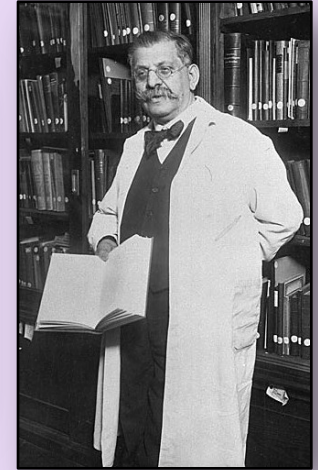
1928: Virginia Woolf writes *Orlando: A Biography*, the story of a man who awakes in the body of a young woman, and sees the world through her eyes.

1930: Marlene Dietrich, film star popularizes wearing men’s clothing.

1933: Nazis vandalize and have a public burning of the books at the *Institute for Sexual Science*.



Virginia Woolf



Magnus Hirschfeld



Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 3

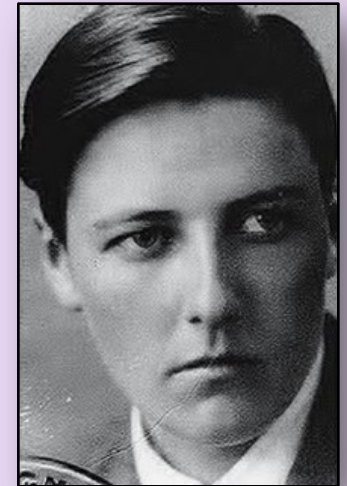


Louise Lawrence

1941: *The term “Drag Queen” first appears in print. Thought to mean “DRessed As a Girl.”*

1942: Louise Lawrence, early organizer who enabled transgender people to find each other. She begins living fulltime as a woman. Her home was a “safe house.”

1948: *Alfred Kinsey introduces Harry Benjamin to boy who wants to be a girl and has his mother’s blessing. Benjamin starts treating transgender people with hormones.*



Michael Dillon

1949: Michael Dillon becomes the first female-to-male transsexual person to complete gender-confirmation surgery.

1949: *Dr. Harry Benjamin begins his career in transgender medicine, influenced by contact with Louise Lawrence and her friends.*



Dr. Harry Benjamin

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 4

1952: Christine Jorgenson. Young and pretty, she is “outed” in the American press for having had gender-confirmation surgery two years prior and receives international attention. She receives mail from thousands of people worldwide. “You gave me a new hope for the future.” “God bless you for your courage.”

1953: Ed Wood stars in the film *Glen or Glenda, I Lived Two Lives*, now a cult film, that takes a sympathetic approach to cross-dressing. Wood later becomes known for cross-dressing.

1950s-2006: Dr. John Money, psychologist at Johns Hopkins University, becomes well known for sex research and the theory that gender identity develops as a result of social learning, which is later disputed.

1960: Virginia Prince begins publishing “*Transvestia*” magazine, and founds *Hose and Heels Club* in Los Angeles, thought to be one of the first transgender support groups. She bars gay or bisexual people, and transitioning transsexuals, from club. Coins the word “transgender” for heterosexual cross-dressers. In the 1990s, word also includes transsexual persons.

1961: Jose Sarria becomes the first transgender-identified person to run for public office. He receives 5,600 votes in run for San Francisco Supervisor. He declares himself as “Her Royal Majesty, Empress of San Francisco, Jose I, the Widow Norton.”

1964: Millionaire transgender man, Reed Erickson, founds *Erickson Educational Foundation*, publishes self-help pamphlets for transgender people, and funds Harry Benjamin’s work.

1965: David Reimer is born “Bruce” but after a botched circumcision, is raised as “Brenda,” at the encouragement of John Money. The advice is later found wrong.



Christine Jorgenson



Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 5

1966: *Harry Benjamin publishes The Transsexual Phenomenon.*

1966: Gene Compton's Cafeteria management calls San Francisco police about "unruly" transgender people. After attempted arrest, riot ensues, pre-dating the Stonewall Riot.

1968: *Mario Martino, a transsexual man, founds Labyrinth, a support organization for transgender men.*

1968: Gore Vidal publishes *Myra Breckinridge*, described by the critic Dennis Altman as "part of a major cultural assault on the assumed norms of gender and sexuality."

1969: *Stanley Bieber performs confirmation surgeries in Trinidad, CO, and the city becomes the "Sex Change Capital of the World."*

1969: Stonewall Riot. The Stonewall bar was raided by New York police, during which cross-dressers were the first to fight back. A riot ensued. Sylvia Rivera, a transgender woman, is credited with throwing the first beer bottle at the police. This event is considered the birth of the modern gay liberation movement.

1970: *Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson form STAR, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, the first transgender activist organization.*

1972: The television series *M*A*S*H* features "Klinger," played by Jamie Farr, who hopes to be discharged because of cross-dressing.

1973: *Beth Elliott, a popular folksinger, joins the lesbian organization Daughters of Bilitis, but is forced out when it is learned she is transsexual. Lesbian organizations and feminist leaders object to inclusion of transsexual women.*

1973: "Rocky Horror Show" premieres as a play in London, and then is made into a cult film, "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."



Arrested at Stonewall Riot

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 6

1974: Jan Morris publishes *Conundrum*, one of the earliest biographies on being transsexual.

1974: Lou Sullivan writes *Looking Towards Transvestite Liberation*. *Sullivan's journals on his thoughts from childhood about female-to-male transgender identity maturation offer great insight.*

1975: Sylvester James, "Queen of Disco," becomes a sensation in drag, doing disco and popular ballads.

1975: *Fantasia Fair*, annual transgender gathering in Provincetown, MA, begins.

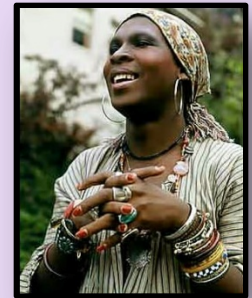
1975: Steve Dain, a girls gym teacher in Union City, CA, is fired after transsexual transition to male. He was an important early role model who influenced thinking for many years.



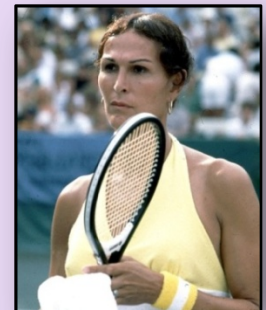
1976: Renée Richards is outed as a transsexual and barred from playing tennis in women's U.S. Open.

1977: Sandy Stone, a recording engineer outed as a transsexual at the all-women's Olivia Records, and forced to resign after threatened boycott by lesbians.

1977: Dr. John Money's successor at the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic, refutes the idea of gender being learned, and asserts that transsexuals need to transition.



Sylvester James



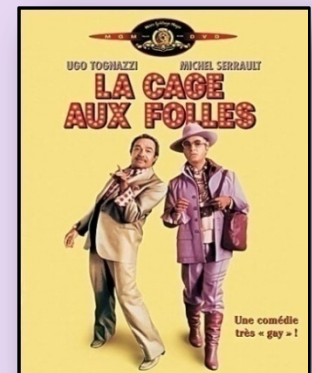
Renée Richards



1978: Sr. Mary Elizabeth Clark led a successful effort to have California Department of Health issue new birth certificates to post-operative transsexuals.

1978: Movie "*La Cage Aux Folles*" comes out in France.

1979: Paul Walker organizes the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association to promote standards of care for transgender clients after surgeon John Brown loses a patient while performing surgery in a garage.



Sr. Mary Elizabeth Clark

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 7



Boy George



k. d. lang



Billy Tipton

1980: *American Psychiatric Association adds "Gender Identity Disorder" to its manual. Controversial diagnosis is required for gender confirmation surgery.*

1980: *Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, high camp, high profile, order of cross-dressers in nun's attire, with names such as Sister Missionary Position, forms in San Francisco to bring joy, challenge Catholic guilt, and do community work.*

1980: *Tula. British press outs Bond Girl actress Caroline Cassey, who later becomes the first post-operative transsexual to pose for "Playboy."*

1982: *ACLU Transsexual Rights Committee formed in California.*

1982: *Boy George. The Culture Club and its flamboyant, cross-dressing singer, release, "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?"*

1982: *The movies "Tootsie" and "Victor/Victoria" are released.*

1982: *HIV. The new epidemic moves quickly through the gay, and part of the transgender community.*

1984: *International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) becomes the first organization to welcome both transsexuals and cross-dressers.*

1985: *The movie Kiss of the Spiderwoman is released.*

1987: *k.d. lang, a popular singer whose appearance pushed lesbian acceptance of "butch."*

1989: *Billy Tipton, a popular jazz musician is discovered upon his death to have a female body. He had lived as male since 1933.*

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 8

1990s books: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990); Holly Boswell, *The Transgender Alternative* (1990); Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation—A Movement Whose Time Has Come* (1992); Kate Bronstein, *Gender Outlaw* (1994); Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (1994); Loren Cameron, *Body Alchemy*, photographs of transsexual men, (1996).

1990s movies: “*The Crying Game*” (1992), “*Mrs. Doubtfire*” (1993,) “*Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*” (1994), “*La Vie en Rose*” (1997), “*Boys Don’t Cry*” about Brandon Teena who was raped and murdered when it was discovered that he had female genitalia (1999), “*Flawless*” (1999).

1990: 1) Pat Califia, a prominent lesbian writer, comes out as transsexual man and loses credibility in much of the lesbian community.
2) American Educational Gender Information Services, founded by Dallas Denny. Later becomes Gender Education and Advocacy.

1991: *Michigan Womyn’s Festival bars transsexual woman from event.*

1992: Transgender Nation, a network of focus groups led organized protests against subjugation of transgender people.

1993: 1) Cheryl Chase *founds the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA)* .
2) *Minnesota passes Transgender Protection laws, the first state to do so.*

1994: Transsexual Menace, a political action group, is formed.

1995: 1) *Georgina Beyer becomes New Zealand’s, and the world’s, first transsexual mayor.*
2) *GLBT --The “T” becomes commonly added to the acronym. Transgender issues become linked to those of gay people.*

Late 1990s: Eddie Izzard, cross-dressing comedian and actor, gains attention.

1998: *Transgender Day of Remembrance. Community creates annual day of mourning and remembrance following the murder of Rita Hester.*

1998: Out and Equal is formed, a national advocacy group that addresses gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues in the workplace.



Cheryl Chase



Georgina Beyer

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 9

2000s books: Chris Bohjalian, *Trans-Sister Radio* (2000); Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex* (2002); Jennifer Finney Boylan, *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders* (2003); Jamison Green, *Becoming a Visible Man*, on gender politics, masculinity, transgender male history, and visibility (2004); Paisley Currah et al. (editors), *Transgender Rights* (The first comprehensive work on the transgender civil rights movement (2006); Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (2008); Joanne Herman, *Transgender Explained—For Those Who Are Not* (2009); Vanessa Sheridan, *The Complete Guide to Transgender in the Workplace* (2009).



2000s movies: “Southern Comfort” (2001), “Hedwig and the Angry Inch” (cult musical film released about a transsexual rock band singer 2001), “Normal” (2003), “Soldier’s Girl” (2003), “Transamerica” (2005), “Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She” HBO Documentary (2006).

2000s television: “South Park” (The schoolteacher Mr. Garrison has surgery and becomes Janet Garrison, who later reverses the surgery to again become Mr. Garrison 2005), “The L Word” (popular lesbian-themed program introduces Max, the first character to transition on television 2006), “Dirty Sexy Money” (transsexual actress Candice Cayne has key role as a transsexual in the popular series 2007).



2000: 1) Monica Helms designs the Transgender Pride flag which makes its debut in the Phoenix parade.



2) Holly Boswell creates the Transgender Symbol.

2001: San Francisco is the first city to offer gender confirmation surgery coverage in employee benefits.

2002: Transgender Law Center founded in San Francisco.

2003: Mara Keisling founds the National Center for Transgender Equality.

2004: Gender Recognition Act passed by UK Parliament to guarantee legal rights for transsexuals, including new birth certificate.



Gender Identity and Gender Expression Timeline 10



Victoria Kolakowski

2007: *13 States and District of Columbia now offer transgender non-discrimination legal statutes.*

2007: *1) Johnny Vera runs for, and wins, title of Prom Queen at Roosevelt High School (Fresno, CA).
2) Stu Rasmussen is the first openly transgender mayor in the U.S. (Silverton, OR).*

2008: *Transgender man, Thomas Beatie, draws headlines for giving birth to child.*

2009: *Chaz Bono, known to millions of television viewers as Chastity, the only child of entertainers Sonny Bono and Cher, begins transition from female to male at age 39.*

2010: *1) Lana Lawless sues the Ladies Professional Golf Association for right to play. LPGA changes rules. Danish transsexual golfer Mianne Bagger welcomes change, but pushes for education.*

2) Kye Allums, first male-identified player on girls basketball team to compete in Division I college basketball game.

3) Theresa Sparks, U.S. Army veteran, former head of San Francisco Police Commission, runs for Board of Supervisors.

4) Victoria Kolakowski, first openly transgender judge in the U.S., elected to Alameda (CA) County Superior Court bench.

5) Dylan Orr, first transsexual person appointed by President Obama, to serve in the Department of Labor.

6) Amanda Simpson, appointed by President Barack Obama to the Department of Commerce.

7) Christine McGinn featured on Oprah for nursing twins she fathered.

2011: *Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index requires insurance coverage for gender confirmation surgery to secure 100% rating in 2012.*

2011: *Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), with protections for transgender people, before Congress.*



Meet...

I first sensed that something was not right at age seven. Even when I attended Dartmouth College as part of its last all-male class (1975). I didn't get the significance of my decision to study at Smith College (a women's college) during my junior year, nor why I was so much more comfortable there.

At 41, I met other transgender people and realized I was not alone. By age 48, after reading everything I could, I understood my problem—my true gender was female.

When I underwent transsexual transition that year (2002) to live as a woman, my wife of 27 years amazingly chose to stay with me. We'd still be together today except that Barbara had terminal cancer. While she was helping me get established in my new life as Joanne, I was also helping her deal with some very difficult health issues. I was delighted to have had 30 years with an extraordinary woman, and when she passed away, I found myself feeling that, if that's all I get in life, I did pretty well.

So it was a surprise and delight to meet Terry on Match.com in 2008. We dated with her fully aware that I was transgender; that didn't bother her at all. In 2010 we were married in Boston, and now I'm a wife--again. I'm also the stepmom of two wonderful young women. Life couldn't be better.



Terry & Joanne

Joanne Herman

Accountant & Finance Professional, Columnist & Author

...Meet

I'm a mother, wife, daughter, surgeon, Navy veteran, and a lesbian who is a transsexual woman. I've served as flight surgeon for two NASA shuttle missions, and was trained in Tae Kwon Do. I was an altar boy, senior class president, Boy Scout, fraternity brother, waitress and an invited guest of Oprah Winfrey. But the most awe-inspiring experience of my life has been looking into the beautiful eyes of my own biological children as I nursed them in the early hours of the morning.



Lisa and Christine
Lucas and Eden

Think of me simply as Christine. You may see me at the park with my twins, at the grocery store, or in an emergency room if you or a loved one requires medical attention.

I've always had the full support of all of my friends and family, including during my gender confirmation 10 years ago. I've had these feelings since I was 3-years-old, yet I had no words or insight about what was wrong until I had a chance to speak with someone who specialized in the area. That was the moment my life was saved.

As a physician helping other transgender men and women, I see firsthand how lives are slowly destroyed and people dehumanized. Sadly, it no longer surprises me to hear my patients report suicidal thoughts and mental anguish after they lose their employment, health insurance, visitation rights to their children, or their right to be legally married to the person they have been married to for years.

My everyday life is quite ordinary and extraordinary, but I'm one of the lucky ones.

Christine McGinn,
Plastic Surgeon &
Founder of Papillon Gender Wellness Center

Meet...

Though I consider myself to be transgender, I am not transsexual. Yet, for as long as I can remember, I've had an innate need to express my gender identity through cross-dressing. As a child, I secretly did so in my conservative religious home. Today, I express myself with the love and support of my spouse and children.

I knew I was different when I was two or three, although I didn't understand what that difference meant. I recall envying my sisters because of the pretty clothes they got to wear, and I distinctly remember trying on one of their dresses when I was seven. It was magical. Decades later, it still is.

I have never felt a need to physically transition to become a woman. I enjoy my masculinity, and have no desire to lose it. Nevertheless, I seek to access and embrace the femininity that's always been inside me. Expressing my femininity is how I become a more completely actualized person. It's not at all a sexual thing. It's a psychological, emotional, and spiritual doorway into a more fulfilling—sometimes even transcendent—human experience.

I cross-dress as the situation calls for it. There are days when I dress exclusively as Vanessa, most often for my work. There are other days when I dress solely as a male. I'd be emotionally at a loss if I had to choose just one. Unlike many cross-dressers, whose numbers are much larger than most people assume, I have the complete support of my family and colleagues. It's a gift to me to move across society's arbitrary gender barrier with such encouragement. I am proud and happy to be transgender. My life is very fulfilling.



Vanessa Sheridan

Author & Educator

...Meet

At 5 years old, I realized I wasn't normal. I lied to myself, saying, "I'm just like the rest of my cousins. I get in trouble, get yelled at, get spankings, and eat dirt." I still don't know how I knew I wasn't normal. I never went hungry, wore new clothes, and got mom's hugs. I had everything I needed. What a great life. But something wasn't right...



Emy and Breanna

When I turned nine, things didn't make sense to me anymore. I discovered I had feelings, thoughts, and desires that made me different. Feeling as though my life had just ended, I curled up and cried. I felt no one would love me. I'd be thought of as a freak. All I wanted was to be like everyone else—normal.

I fought myself. I married, joined the United States Air Force, divorced, and married again. Fed up with life, I looked in the mirror and realized I was normal. I am beautiful! If no one could love me, forget them. As long as God loves me, I'm ok.

Finally, I fell in love with me. I accepted who I was, and became the woman I am. I now have a purpose. Though I feared I'd be rejected, instead, I found a world waiting just for me. I have a church that celebrates my African heritage, a wonderful wife, Emy, and a great job. With a new zest for life, I earned a bachelor's degree in computer information systems. I served as Chairman of the Board for Global Diversity and Inclusion Foundation, and now I'm working on my MBA.

Regardless of any challenges, you can be all you desire to be—even normal.

Breanna Speed

Data Analyst at United Stationers

Do's and Don'ts

Here are a few ideas on what behaviors from others are considered welcoming to transgender people, and what behaviors are considered unwelcoming.



DO use proper terminology, such as transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, intersexual. Never use the terms transvestite, hermaphrodite, he-she, or tyranny.

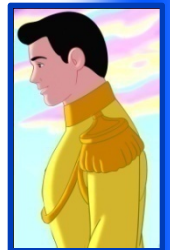
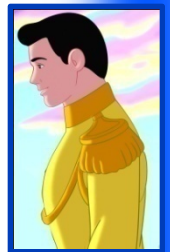
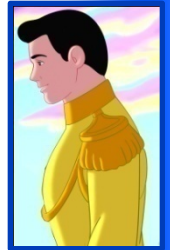


DO call a transgender person by the name they prefer when cross dressing, or during their transition.



DO use the appropriate pronoun when referring to a transgender person. If the person is presenting as female, refer to the person as “her,” or “she.” If the person is presenting as male, use the pronouns “him,” “his,” or “he.”

DO expect that it's appropriate for transgender persons to use the restroom that coincides with the gender with which they are presenting themselves.



These “Dos” and Don'ts” are considered “Best Practices.” They have been created by Brian McNaught with input from transgender people and corporate directors of diversity and inclusion.

Do's and Don'ts, continued



DO engage transgender people in social conversations, such as asking about his or her weekend plans. Feel comfortable complimenting how they look or their clothing. Seek permission to ask a personal question.



DO NOT feel free to ask a transgender person personal questions about his or her past, whether they have fully transitioned, or any inquiry that would be offensive to a non-transgender person.



DO assume that there might always be a transgender person present. Most transgender people are often not easily seen.

DO NOT share with other people that someone they know is transgender.

DO NOT assume the sexual orientation of a transgender person.

DO familiarize yourself with the challenges faced by transgender people, such as filling out legal documents and insurance forms.

DO relax, have a sense of humor, and don't worry about making a mistake.





Final Words

Discrimination against people who are transgender is based on personal attitudes about nature's intention. Young women and men who don't conform to arbitrary concepts of appropriate gender behavior are generally bullied and isolated. Instead of understanding that making someone live a life at odds with their nature is destructive and futile, we often use social pressure to make the person conform. Fortunately, more and more people today realize that we all benefit when each of us is allowed to reach our full potential, able to share our energies and talents with those around us. With understanding, acceptance, and support, the duckling can bring the beautiful swan to life.



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