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Transgender Literacy
The Traditional View of Gender
Biology Is Messy

- Human embryos start off with potential for both genders, but looking more female
- The process of becoming fully male or fully female is complicated, involving many biochemical pathways
- We have barely begun to understand how it works
- “Biologists have never been under the illusion that genes and chromosomes are all there is to the biology of sex.” – Sarah Richardson, *Sex Itself*
What Determines “Sex”? 

- Chromosomes
- Specific genes that control development
- Gonads (testes or ovaries)
- Sex hormones (testosterone & oestrogen)
- Internal sex organs
- External genitalia
- Secondary sex characteristics (breasts, facial hair, etc., mostly acquired at puberty)
What Determines “Sex”? 

- Chromosomes ✗
- Specific genes that control development ✗
- Gonads (testes or ovaries)?
- Sex hormones (testosterone & oestrogen) ✓
- Internal sex organs ✗
- External genitalia ✓
- Secondary sex characteristics (breasts, facial hair, etc., mostly acquired at puberty) ✓
Intersex Variations

- These people are all “biologically male”, i.e. have XY chromosomes
- They have not had medical treatment, they developed female bodies naturally
- Mostly such people don’t have wombs, but…
- There is at least one case of a person with XY chromosomes giving birth to a female-bodied person with XY chromosomes
- Mothers of boys have XY cells in their bodies
- Swyer Syndrome has same effect but different cause
- Many different variations exist

Picture via *The Independent*, Nov 30th 2013
What Is Gender?

- Gender Role & Presentation
  - Jobs for boys v. jobs for girls
  - What you wear & how you behave
  - Mostly socially constructed
  - Some lesbians adopt very masculine gender presentation, but still identify strongly as female
  - Some historical male fashions have been very feminine to our eyes
What Is Gender Identity?

- Gender Identity
  - Who you are
  - No more “curable” than being gay
  - Often manifests at a very early age but may not manifest until puberty or later
  - How do you know what gender you are?

- Being trans may be a collection of intersex conditions whose origins & mechanisms we don’t yet understand

- Endocrine Society says, “a durable biological underpinning to gender identity that should be considered in policy determinations”

- But beware simple explanations and tests for transness
Trans Is Not

- A Mental Illness
  - USA: Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, version V (2013)

- A Sexuality
  - Trans people exhibit the same range of sexualities as non-trans people

- Dangerous
  - Trans people are not pre-disposed to become sex criminals
  - Being trans is not contagious

- Simple
  - A wide range of different identities and needs
Terminology
The Leaky Umbrella

- LGBT -> LGBTQQIAP+
- Trans
  - Medical or not
  - Binary or not
- Non-Binary
  - But how?
- Gender Non-Conforming
- Culture-specific
  - Hijra, Two Spirit, etc.
- Intersex
- Cisgender
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Stereotypes, Prejudices and Discrimination

- **A stereotype** is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group based on our personal frameworks.

- **A prejudice** is an opinion, pre-conception or attitude about a group or its individual members.

- **Discrimination** is behaviour that treats people unequally because of their group memberships.

- **Power dynamics** are important, a dominant group, or personal attribute such as being white, heterosexual, able-bodied, cisgender, middle or upper class can exert power over less dominant people through discrimination or omission.
**Definitions: Actions**

- **Transphobia**: Irrational fear and hatred of Trans (Transgender) people; denial of the validity of trans identities
- **Misgendering**: the act of addressing or describing someone in a gender other than the one they prefer (can be accidental or deliberate)
- **Deadnaming**: Using the birth name of a trans person to imply that’s who they “really” are
How Many Trans People Are There?

- 26,000 adults have presented for treatment, 13,000 have undergone transition (2014 data)
- Growth rate > 20% p.a.
- A 2018 government publication estimated the total UK trans population to be between 200,000 and 500,000
- Only youth clinic is the Tavistock; 91 patients in 2009/10, 441 in 2013/14, 2016 in 2016/17
- Increasing visibility of non-binary patients
- 57% of trans people have some or all treatment privately
Trans Care Pathway

- Referral to Gender Identity Clinic by GP
- Psychiatric assessment at GIC
- Hormonal intervention (or puberty blockers for youths)
- Fertility preservation, especially for young people
- Living in desired gender role (originally 2 years full-time, some GICs now only require 1.5 or 1)
- Surgical intervention if desired (min age 18)
- Discharge to GP care
- The regret myth
- Purpose is a happy patient, not forcing anyone through transition if it isn’t right for them
Diversity Trust Trans Health Needs Assessment

• In 2017 the Diversity Trust carried out a Trans health needs assessment with the aim of improving access to health services for local Trans communities

• The project has focused on the specific health inequalities experienced by Trans communities across the South West

• The project has been supported by funding from our Local Healthwatch including: Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire
What We Found

- 27% have waited a year or more for a first appointment
- 61% of participants had sought help for anxiety or depression
- 32% had hurt or injured themselves (known as self-harm)
- 20% were feeling unhappy and depressed in recent weeks
- 59% had thought about suicide or tried to kill themselves
- 35% stated they had a physical health condition expected to last 12 months or more
- 34% stated they had a mental health condition expected to last 12 months or more
- 30% of participants felt discriminated against in the health care system
Trans People in Education

- Trans students may have already had bad experiences in school

- Data from 2009 study
  - 34.8% of trans students fear losing financial support if they come out to their parents; 9.2% are already estranged from their families
  - 22.6% of trans students report being bullied or discriminated against at university
  - 28.5% of trans students have taken time out from their courses due to abuse, stress, etc.

- Trans people and issues can be invisible or erased in course material

- The Students’ Union LGBT+ group knows more about trans identities than you do.
Two in five trans people (41%) and three in ten non-binary people (31%) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.

One in four trans people (25%) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.

One in eight trans employees (12%) have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year.

Almost half of trans people (48%) don’t feel comfortable using public toilets.

More than a third of trans university students (36%) in higher education have experienced negative comments or behaviour from staff in the last year.

Separately: 20% of trans people have been pressured to undergo conversion therapy by NHS staff.
How Can I Help?

- Respect trans people identities
- Understand that students may be going through a lengthy and difficult transition process
- Change records when asked
- Have information on trans issues available
- Advocate for trans people in the university community
If In Doubt, Ask

- Everyone is a stranger until you have asked, “How may I pronoun you?” – Rachel Hartman
- If you need to ask, do so in private
- Variety of gender-neutral terms – it would help if there was an official one like in Finland or Sweden
- Singular “they” is not ungrammatical
- Everyone makes mistakes, so it is important to learn how to apologise
The Bathroom Issue

- Zero evidence of trans people harassing women in bathrooms
- Different trans people have different requirements regarding bathrooms (and at different stages of transition)
- Do single-stall rooms need to be gendered?
- Look at providing “all gender” bathrooms as an option
- Think about what signs you use
- Don’t re-purpose disabled bathrooms
Book Recommendations

1. Transgender Health: A Practitioner's Guide to Binary and Non-Binary Trans Patient Care
   - Ben Vincent, PhD
   - Foreword by Dr. Stuart Lorimer

2. Understanding Trans Health: Discourse, Power and Possibility
   - Ruth Pearce
Trans History

- Trans Doctors
  - James Barry
  - Alan Hart
  - Michael Dillon
  - Richard Curtis
Trans Theory
What Trans People Want

The same rights and respect as everyone else in society
Any questions?
Resources

- Gender Identity Research and Education Society: [http://www.gires.org.uk/](http://www.gires.org.uk/)
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health: [http://www.wpath.org/](http://www.wpath.org/)
Trans People Speak

- The My Genderation Project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byz4U51tJX8&list=PLbeZBtR_FvDH-IXWdP5IO6-srPj6hG2u9

- Diversity Trust films: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYz1ZSS2PRTE_u4UoAxYNMQ

- What is Gender (Bristol trans youth film): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlYtj0sf6ec
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