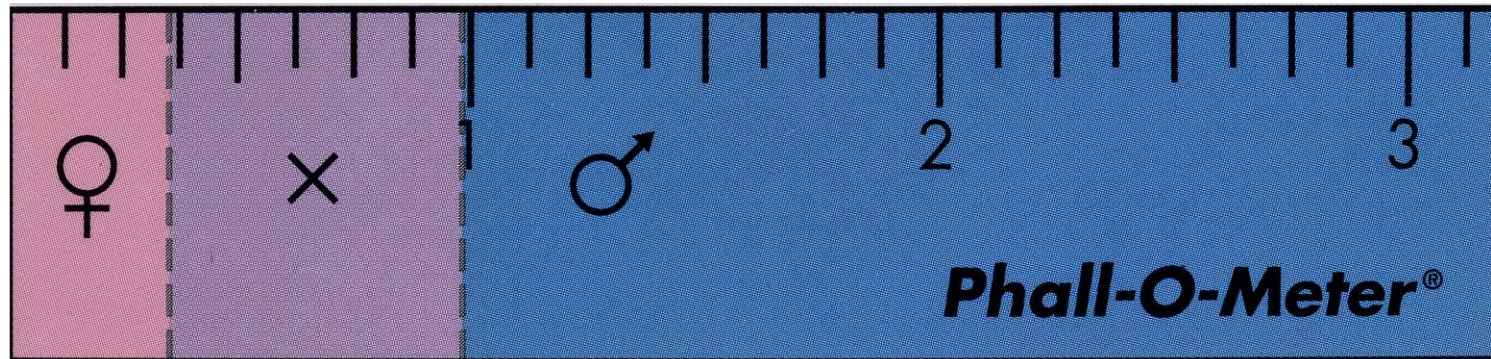


Trans

A workshop for everyone

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Keele University Counselling Conference 2017

Biological Sex (Sex Assigned at Birth)



Sex Biology - the reality

- ▶ Chromosomal sex (e.g. XX, XY, X, XXY, XXXY, XXX etc.)
- ▶ External genitals (penis, vagina, indeterminate genitals)
- ▶ Internal sex organs (e.g. uterus, prostate, etc.)
- ▶ Gonadal sex (ovaries, testes)
- ▶ Hormonal sex (e.g. oestrogen / testosterone levels)
- ▶ Secondary characteristics (e.g. breasts, Adam's apple)

Intersex People

- ▶ For most humans, all of these characteristics roughly align with a male/female binary. However, actual biology is highly variable.
- ▶ About 1 in 4000 people cannot be classified as male or female at birth.
- ▶ Around 1-2% of people (about the same proportion as humans with red hair) have DSD (differences of sex development).

Implications for human identity

“The main problem with a strong dichotomy is that there are intermediate cases that push the limits and ask us to figure out exactly where the dividing line is between males and females”

Dr Arthur Arnold, University of California

“Absolutely sex is a spectrum. It's not binary in any way and we are slowly coming to understand this.”

Dr Imran Mushtaq, Consultant paediatric urologist, Great Ormond Street

- ▶ All humans are on the sex spectrum. Most cluster around the male or female end of the spectrum, but plenty don't.
- ▶ The male/female sex binary is a social construct, just like gender

Trans identities around the world



Trans identities around the world

- ▶ Two-spirit: A concept in some first-nation American cultures referring to individuals whose spirit is a blend of male and female
- ▶ Māhū: Hawaiian term with a similar meaning to two-spirit but may include intersex, transgender or gender non-conforming people
- ▶ Hijra: South-Asian (esp. India & Pakistan) term for MTF transgender people
- ▶ Calabai, Calalai, Bissu: The Bugi people of Indonesia recognise three sexes (male, female, intersex) and five genders (men, women, calabai, calalai & bissu)
- ▶ The Chukchi people of Siberia recognise seven different genders. Shamans of the Chukchi (very roughly speaking, trans women) enjoy high social status and command great respect.
- ▶ In classical Judaism, ancient scripts describe at least five different genders

Transgender

- ▶ An umbrella term describing a person whose gender identity differs from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- ▶ Transgender people may have been assigned male or female at birth or may be intersex.
- ▶ The transgender umbrella includes women and men as well as gender-fluid and non-binary people
- ▶ Many people who social scientists describe as transgender would not use that word to describe themselves.



Sex, Gender & Gender Presentation

Sex Biology / Physiology

MALE

INTERSEX

FEMALE

Gender (Identity)

MAN

NON-BINARY / GENDER QUEER

WOMAN

Gender Presentation

MASCULINE

ANDROGYNOUS

FEMININE

Exercise One


:thinking about trans



Consider the following scenarios...


For each scenario, working in groups, discuss


- ▶ how you might feel
- ▶ What you might say
- ▶ what, if any, actions you might take

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- ▶ You discover that a close friend, who you've known for some years, was assigned a different gender at birth.

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- ▶ You've just read an article in the newspaper about a child at your children's school, who is being raised by two transgender parents.

- ▶ You are a parent of a 10 year old child. They've just told you they are not the gender they were assigned at birth and want to take steps to change their gender presentation and want to speak to the doctor about hormone blockers.

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- ▶ You're seeking a new romantic relationship. You've been on a date or two with someone you feel very attracted. You've subsequently discovered, via a mutual acquaintance, that they were assigned a different gender at birth.

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- ▶ You're attending a single-gender workshop run by a local domestic violence support service. You discover that one of the participants had been assigned a different gender at birth.

Exercise Two

:thinking trans



How safe do you feel?

- ▶ Imagine that you are a student at Keele.
- ▶ Think about how safe/unsafe or comfortable/uncomfortable you would feel in each of the following scenarios.
- ▶ Move between the zones to indicate your feelings.

Scenario 1 - You're non-binary trans

- ▶ Gay & Lesbian Bar

Scenario 2 - You're a trans woman

- ▶ At the gym

Scenario 3 - You're a trans man

- ▶ At an important family event

Scenario 4 - You're non-binary trans

- ▶ Visiting your GP

Scenario 5 - You're a trans woman

- ▶ Attending a female-only group as part of your faith/religion

Scenario 6 - You're a trans man

- ▶ Attending a male-only support group

Scenario 7 - You're a trans woman

- ▶ Moving in to single-gender student accommodation

Counselling and the trans community

- ▶ Livingsone (2008), “trans-identified clients offer particular challenges to many therapists in that their very existence tests one of the primary assumptions of our culture - that gender is an immutable binary and, moreover, is always congruent with physicality”.
- ▶ Hunt (2014) found that one fifth of trans people surveyed felt that their counsellor accepted them “slightly” or “not at all” and less than half were “very” or “extremely” satisfied with their counselling experience.
- ▶ Rachlin (2002) describes factors associated with positive experiences of therapy as, “experience in working with gender issues” and therapists who “demonstrated respect for the patient’s gender identity”.
- ▶ Bockting (1997), Ettner (1999) & Lev (2004) have recommended a phenomenological, client-centred approach, making use of unconditional positive regard and empathy, as described by Carl Rogers (1951)

Terms & Definitions

- ▶ Trans: Standard abbreviation of transgender.
- ▶ Cisgender: a person whose gender, sex, and gender presentation coincide and fit within the binary construct.
- ▶ Non-binary: a person who does not identify as either male or female
- ▶ Gender-fluid: a person who recognises the changes in their gender over time.
- ▶ Genderqueer: A cover-all term for gender non-conformance. Sometimes used by people who don't consider themselves transgender but don't adhere to gender norms.
- ▶ Man, Woman: Many people who have transitioned to a binary gender/sex drop the "trans" especially in situations where it's not relevant.
- ▶ Cross-dresser: a person who typically identifies as the gender matching their assigned sex but chooses to present in ways traditionally associated with a different sex
- ▶ Transvestite*: an older term with a similar meaning to cross-dresser
- ▶ Transsexual*: refers mainly to transgender people who have undergone medical transition and identifies as the binary sex opposite to their assigned sex
- ▶ Gender non-conforming: often used as a cover-all term for all people who don't conform to traditional gender standards, including transgender folk and also, for example, butch women and femme men (who don't identify themselves as trans)
- ▶ FTM: someone who was assigned female at birth but now identifies as male
- ▶ MTF: someone who was assigned male at birth but now identifies as female
- ▶ Transition: the process of changing various aspects of one's physical self to better reflect the person's gender identity. May include changes to clothing, grooming, legal name/sex, surgical procedures (SRS/GRS), hormonal sex.
- ▶ SRS*/GRS: Sex/Gender Reassignment Surgery. Various surgical procedures to change various aspects of a person's anatomy to better reflect their gender identity.

* signifies older terms that may be considered derogatory by some. However, some people do use these terms to describe themselves.