

June is Pride month—a time to celebrate the diversity of the LGBTQIA community. It is also time to re-assert threatened rights and bring attention to the many outstanding issues that continue to affect this community in a negative way. In this issue, we are providing information that we hope will be helpful to individuals and entities in educating themselves about transgender issues and beginning to think about how to provide services in a respectful and thoughtful way. - Karen Richards

*“People changed lots of other personal things all the time. They dyed their hair and dieted themselves to near death. They took steroids to build muscles and got breast implants and nose jobs so they’d resemble their favorite movie stars. They changed names and majors and jobs and husbands and wives, They changed religions and political parties. They moved across the country or the world -- even changed nationalities. Why was gender the one sacred thing we weren’t supposed to change? Who made that rule?” - Ellen Wittlinger*



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## Did you know?

Transgender is an adjective. Do not use it as a noun or verb (i.e. transgendered or trans gendering).

Gender is a [social construct](#)—a galaxy in which male and female are simply points on a continuum as opposed to a hierarchy.

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two completely different concepts. Gender is how we see ourselves on the gender continuum—it may or may not correspond to our identified “sex” at birth; sexual orientation is who we are physically and romantically attracted to.

[UCLA's Williams Institute](#) estimates there are 1.4 million transgender people living in the United States.

In 2015 the [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) conducted a [survey](#) of over 27,000 transgender people that identified pervasive mistreatment and violence, severe economic hardship and instability, harmful effects on physical and mental health and a compounding impact of other forms of discrimination. Despite this, there is also increased visibility and growing acceptance.

The [National Coalition of Anti-Violence](#) programs reported that 55% of all (reported) LGBT homicide victims were transgender women, with 50% being transgender women of color.

According to the [National Transgender Discrimination Survey](#), 78% of transgender/gender non-conforming students in grades K-12 experience harassment, 35% experience physical assault and 12% experience sexual violence. In a 2011 [study](#), 82% of transgender youth said they didn't feel safe at school.

# HAVE SOME RESPECT.

According to the Survey referenced in the Did You Know column to the left, transgender individuals are unemployed at rates three times higher than the national unemployment rate (15% vs 5%); experience high rates of employment discrimination (30% on average); experience high rates of housing discrimination (23%) and homelessness (30% during their lifetime, 12% in the past year). Transgender individuals are twice as likely to be living in poverty. This means that transgender individuals are part of the population in need of social services. Yet, nearly one-third of transgender individuals reported mistreatment in places of public accommodation including entities providing social/medical/legal services. Here are some dos and don'ts in dealing with transgender individuals:

1. Keep the focus on the issue being presented. It may not be about their gender identity.
2. Be aware of gender identity assumptions that you may personally make or that are part of assumptions made within the broader society.
3. Connect with other organizations that have experience working with transgender individuals to learn more about the challenges and issues they face.
4. Use the client's preferred name and pronoun. If you're not sure, keep it gender neutral by using the person's name instead of Mr./Mrs./Ms. Make sure that any records reflect name and pronoun information so that others in the organization who interact with the client are also aware. Ask for a person's legal name if you need it rather than asking for their “real” name.
5. Keep questions relevant to the problem at hand and do not ask unnecessary questions about the transgender person's transition process.
6. Make sure your materials are trans friendly— is there information on your website, visible symbols (rainbow), do forms have just male/female designations?



## Here are some other things your organization can do to ensure that it is providing respectful and appropriate services:

1. **Create a Policy and Provide Appropriate Staff Training-** Policies should address correct name and pronoun usage, access to sex-segregated facilities or programs or other specialized services.
2. **Identify the Unique Needs of Your Transgender Clients and Meet Them-** Some of those needs may be obvious after reviewing the materials referenced in this newsletter or you may want to find out through surveys or focus groups. Hiring transgender people creates a welcoming environment and can be helpful in addressing issues as they arise.
3. **Recognize the Diversity of the Community-** The transgender community is really an overlap of many communities and therefore addressing general diversity issues such as language access and institutional racism, sexism and homophobia not only benefits the transgender community but benefits your organization as a whole.
4. **Recognize Similarities-** While there may be unique issues for transgender individuals, they are just like all of your other clients in most respects and share many of same interests and concerns. Most people simply want to be acknowledged and accepted for who they are as individuals irrespective of any protected status whether that be race, color, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or any other “difference.”
5. **Examine Whether Policies or Procedures Related to Identity Documents May Impact Clients and if so Address Them Proactively.** Only 11% of 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey respondents reported that all of their identification documents had the name and gender of preference while 68% reported that none of their IDs had their preferred name and gender. Nearly 32% of respondents indicated that they experienced verbal harassment, denial of benefits or services, were asked to leave or were assaulted when showing ID that did not match their gender presentation. The cost of changing IDs was one of the main barriers respondents faced.
6. **Make Sure that Restroom Facilities are Trans Friendly-** More than 59% of respondents avoided use of a public restroom in the past year due to fear of confrontation or other issues. This can have serious health effects. Legislation currently pending in Vermont ([H. 333](#)) passed the House last year and if passed by the Senate and signed into law by the Governor next year will require that all single stall bathroom facilities in public places be gender neutral. If you have single room facilities, get ahead of the curve! If you do not, make sure that any policies and procedures permit usage of the restroom of the transgender person’s choice.



### Definitions—Transgender From the Pride Center, Inc.

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## NEWS

[Upper Valley Veterans Celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month](#)

[Before Federal Guidelines on Transgender Bathroom Access, Vermont Had Its Own](#)

[Transgender firefighter marches as NYC Pride Parade grand marshal](#)

[Name of Bar Had Community Talking About Transphobia](#)

- **Transphobia**—The fear or hatred of transgender people or gender non-conforming behavior.
- **Cisgender**— Type of gender identity where an individual's experience of their own gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender**— This term has many definitions. It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system this includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueer, drag queens, non-binary, two spirit people and other others. Some people feel they exist not within one of the two binary gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders.
- **Gender Expression**— They way we manifest our gender — by the way we style our hair, select our clothing, or even the way we stand. Our appearance, speech, behavior, movement, and other factors signal that we feel — and wish to be understood — as a particular gender.
- **Gender Identity**— The sense of being male, female, genderqueer, agender, etc. For some people this is in accord with physical anatomy, for others this may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles.
- **Sexual Orientation**— The type of sexual, romantic, and/or physical attraction someone feels toward others. Often labeled based on the gender identity/expression of the person and who they are attracted to.
- **Queer**— An umbrella term sometimes used by LGBTQA people to refer to the entire LGBT community. It is important to note that this word is an in-group term, and a word that can be considered offensive to some people depending on their generation, geographic location, and relationship with the word.
- **Pronoun**— A word that refers to either the people talking (e.g. I or you) or someone or something that is being talked about (e.g. she, it, them and this).
- **Intersex**— A person whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers or “female” and “male.”
- **Coming Out**—The process of revealing your sexuality or gender identity to individuals in your life; often incorrectly thought to be a onetime event; this is a lifelong and sometimes daily process.
- **Transition**—A person's process of developing and assuming a gender expression to match their gender identity. This can include: coming out to one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some sort of surgery.
- **LGBTQIA (or any variations)** - Stands for Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (sometimes Questioning), Intersex, Asexual. General acronym used to encompass the many different individuals who do not identify as heterosexual.

## RESOURCES

[Vermont Human Rights Commission](#)

[Outright Vermont](#)

[PRIDE Center of VT](#)

[Vermont Diversity Health Project](#)

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

## NEWS

[Vermont Officials Reaffirm Protections for Transgender Kids](#)

[The Mental and Medical Sides of Transgender](#)

[Transgender Discrimination](#)

[Vermont Mayor Issues Controversial Travel Ban to 'Protect' Transgender People](#)

[Collecting LGBT Census Data is 'Essential' to Federal Agency, Document Shows](#)