

What Do All These Terms Mean?

Gender identity: A term that describes an individual's inner-most sense of self as male, female, somewhere in between, or somewhere outside of those gender designations; everyone has a gender identity. Sometimes this "innermost sense" does not correspond with anatomy (e.g. a person identifies as female but was assigned male at birth).

Gender expression: Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, or changing their bodies' characteristics.

Transgender: An individual whose gender identity, expression or behavior differs from that usually associated with their birth sex. This includes those who live or seek to live in a gender other than that of their birth sex; those who have or want to physically modify their bodies to transition to other sex; and those who cross dress but identify as their birth sex. Transgender is an umbrella category of identities that may include such identities as cross-dresser, drag queen or king, genderqueer, transsexual, and more.

Transsexual: Often refers to someone whose inner sense of self does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. People who are transsexual may or may not choose to seek surgery and/or hormones to physically transition into accord with his or her sense of self.

Resources

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns

<http://www.quaker.org/flgbtqc>

PFLAG Transgender Network

<http://community.pflag.org/NETCOMMUNITY/Page.aspx?pid=380&srcid=194>

TransYouth Family Allies

<http://imatyfa.org/>

National Center for Transgender Equality

<http://www.nctequality.org/>

GenderPAC

<http://www.genderpac.org>

ACLU list of state and local gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender organizations

www.aclu.org/getequal/disc/statelist.html

Contact Us

BYM Ad-Hoc Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity Concerns

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Comments, critiques, and offers to help with this pamphlet are welcome! Contact Laura Goren at goren.laura@gmail.com.

7 Ways to Help Your Quaker Meeting be More Trans Friendly



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“But my Meeting doesn’t have anyone who is transgender. Why consider this before it comes up?”

- **Wouldn’t you rather be prepared than have a new attender turn away** because of an unwelcoming situation? Although there are no good estimates of the percentage of people who are trans, most mid-sized and even small cities have large transgender communities.

- **You might have a transgender Friend and not know it.** While some transpeople are easy to identify, others are not. Many transgender Friends are not out in their Meetings, whether because they don’t yet feel safe to be out or because they are now living comfortably in a post-transition identity. Contrary to popular belief, many post-transition transpeople cannot be recognized. Having allies take proactive steps to create a friendlier Meeting helps take the burden off individual transgender Friends.

- **Creating a more trans friendly Meeting will also help create** a space where all Friends are able to be themselves, whether or not that always matches traditional gender norms.

- **Friends Meetings can take a leadership role** in demonstrating principles of gender diversity inclusion for the wider community.

7 Ways to Help Your Quaker Meeting be More Trans Friendly

1. **Welcome and accept transgender visitors to your meeting** exactly as you would any other visitor. Some people are obviously transgender; others are indiscernible from those whose gender expression corresponds with their birth sex.
2. **Use whatever pronouns (he/she, him/her) a person prefers.** If you don’t know someone’s preferred pronouns, just ask! Do not ever use “it” to describe someone.
3. **Create safe space for gender non-conforming children.** Let children define and express their gender however they choose, whether or not that expression matches their assigned sex. If other children are engaging in “gender policing,” make it clear that bullying and teasing is not tolerated at Meeting. When there are activities that are gendered—like assigning roles for a pageant, let children choose whether they want to be in a “boy” or a “girl” role.
4. **Organize a first day school lesson** about how Friends were leaders in recognizing the rights of women. Make the connection to recognizing people’s value regardless of whether they conform to “traditional” norms of masculine and feminine behavior and dress.



5. **Make sure young people in the Meeting know** that there are adults who are willing to listen to their truth and experience and act as their ally.
6. **If your meeting has single-stall bathrooms, consider making them unisex.** Many trans folk, particularly those who are not “out” or who are just beginning to transition, are more comfortable using single-stall gender-neutral bathrooms. Plus, making single-stall bathrooms gender-neutral means less waiting time since you can use either bathroom.
7. **Invite a guest speaker** from the BYM Ad-Hoc Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity Concerns or your local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) organization to give a “Trans 101” presentation to the Meeting so you can be better informed. Alternatively, contact the BYM Committee for suggestions on films or study guides.