

What is Gender Transition?

Transitioning is the process by which many transgender and non-binary people move from living and presenting as the gender assigned to them at birth to their true gender – the gender they know themselves to be. The pace and timing of a person’s gender transition can take place at different ages, at different speeds, and in different ways.

It is important to note that – whether due to circumstances or choice - not all trans-identifying people choose to transition. There are generally three major aspects to transitioning.



Social Transition

This refers to living your everyday life as your true gender.

Social transition typically includes coming out to friends and family as transgender/nonbinary along with asking people to use your chosen name or pronouns. That can also include how you identify yourself on social media and in your email signature.

Individuals who socially transition often change their gender expression or physical appearance. This could mean changing their hair style, altering body hair and nails, changing their use of makeup, and the way that they dress to express the gender they identify with.

Legal Transition

This refers to changing legal documents to align with your chosen name and/or gender identity. For most people this involve obtaining a legal change of name. It can also include changing the gender marker on legal records.

Should a person seek legal transition, the key documents that must be updated include one's driver's license/State ID, Social Security information and Passport along with their birth certificate. Other items that will ultimately need updating include bank accounts, utility bills, insurance records, car registrations and more.

Medical Transition

Refers to changing your body to align with your gender identity. In most cases, a person of transgender or nonbinary experience will receive a recommendation for medical transition from a licensed therapist.

Medical transition can include hormone replacement therapy (HRT), surgical procedures such a mastectomy, breast augmentation or the modification of the patient's genitalia to align with their gender identity. Other medical procedures could include voice modification, tracheal shaves, or facial surgery.

It should also be noted that many transgender and nonbinary people never undertake medical transition. It is not a requirement in any way.

Transition and Disclosure is an Ongoing Process

For many people of transgender or nonbinary experience, the process of transition and disclosure is an ongoing one. For example, depending on the circumstance, they will likely need to disclose their gender assigned at birth to medical providers. They may also choose to disclose to romantic or sexual partners.

Your primary responsibility is to take care of yourself and to make the choices that will keep you healthy and safe.