

011011
100110111101101110011000
100110100101101110011000010111001
0011110010110111 0011011110110111
001100010011010 010110111001100
001011100100111 100101101110011
011110110111001 100010011010010
110111001100001 011100100111100
101101110011011
110110111001100
0100110100101101
11001100001011100
1001111001011011
100110111101101
110011000100110
100101101110011
000010111001001
111001011011100
110111101101110
011000100110100

011
01110011011
11011011100110
001001101001011
01110011000010
11100100111

NON-BINARY GENDER IDENTITIES

Information for trans people & allies



gendered intelligence

understanding gender diversity in creative ways

Contents

Introduction	3
What is non-binary gender?	4
Sex vs gender	5
Non-binary identities	7
Identifying & presenting as non-binary	8
Pronouns	9
Surgery & Hormones	11
Accessing Treatment	12
Sexuality	14
Respecting non-binary people	15
Glossary	17
Resources & Further Info	18
Support & social groups	19

Introduction

The aim of this booklet is to explain **nonbinary gender identities** in a simple way.

Whether you're questioning your own gender identity or you know somebody who identifies as non-binary and want to try and better understand it, we hope this booklet is helpful.

We've **bolded** lots of words in this booklet when they are first used – you'll find definitions of these words in more detail in the Glossary on page 16.

To find more about the work Gendered Intelligence does, visit our website:

<http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk>

What is non-binary gender?

When we think about gender, we often think about it in the context of the **gender binary**. The gender binary refers to the idea that there are only two genders – male and female – and that all people will fall into one or other of these categories.

Non-binary is an umbrella term used to describe **gender identities** that don't fit within this gender binary. People who have a non-binary gender identity may feel that they fall outside the strict categories of 'male' or 'female' entirely, or that their gender identity incorporates parts of both.

Non-binary gender identities fall under the umbrella of '**trans**' - a term applied to individuals and groups whose behaviour varies from or crosses conventional gender norms.

Sex vs gender

When we are talking about non-binary gender, we are referring to the internal **gender identity** of a person - their sense of self. We are not referring to their sex - the physical characteristics of their body.

Sometimes, people are born physically **intersex**, which means the sex characteristics of their body are not exclusively male or female. This is not the same thing as having a non-binary gender.

Non-binary refers to your gender identity, not the physical sex of your body. Intersex people may have a gender identity that is male, female or non-binary, just like non-intersex people.

Non-binary is not another word for 'trans'. Some trans people have a binary gender identity and will identify as male or female. Non-binary only refers to people who identify as something other than strictly male or female.

Defintions

Non-binary is the umbrella term we use to refer to identities outside of male and female. However, some people may use more specific words to refer to their gender. Others may just say 'non-binary'. Below are some that are commonly used terms with a guide to their common definition. However, individuals may define their identity slightly differently to what is written here.

Agender - Having no gender identity or no gender to express

Androgyne - Identifying or presenting between 'masculine and feminine' or 'male and female'.

Bigender - Having two gender identities or expressions, either simultaneously, at different times or in different situations

Genderfluid - Moving between two or more different gender identities or expressions at different times or in different situations

Gender Neutral - Having a neutral gender identity or expression, or identifying with a preference for gender neutral language / pronouns

Genderqueer - Non-normative gender identity or expression. Sometimes used as an umbrella term, similarly to 'non-binary'.

Intergender - Identifying or presenting between 'masculine and feminine' or 'male and female'.

Neutrois - Identifying as non-gendered. Similar to agender / gender neutral.

Third Gender - Having a gender identity that is not defined in terms of the two binary options (male/female, masculine/feminine), but on its own terms.

Trans* - Identifying with the umbrella term covering all gender identities or expressions that transgress or transcend society's rules and concepts of gender.

Identifying & presenting as non-binary

There is no strict way to behave or present in order to identify as non-binary. Non-binary people may express their gender in completely different ways - even if they both identify as the same label.

For example, two genderqueer-identified people may look completely different. Just as people who identify as male, for example, may have completely different gender expressions, non-binary people are all individuals and may have a unique identity or way of presenting themselves.

Some non-binary people may look **androgynous** and try to remove or hide gender cues, whereas others may not look visibly androgynous at all.

Whichever way any particular non-binary person needs or chooses to present, express or perform their gender is as valid as any other.

Pronouns

Pronouns are words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, calling someone 'he' or 'she'. Many non-binary people are happy to be referred to with 'he' or 'she', or a combination of both.

However, some non-binary people prefer to be referred to using gender neutral language and pronouns. Some may even choose a gender neutral title such as, "Mx" or "Misc" for formal communications, instead of Mr or Ms.

An example of some gender neutral pronouns used by non-binary people are below. This is by no means a full list!¹

they / their (singular)

ze / zir

xe / xem / xyr

e / em / es

1. See

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:List_of_protologisms_by_topic/third_person_singular_gender_neutral_pronouns for an extensive list of gender neutral pronouns and their usage

Surgery & Hormones

Medically transitioning with surgery and hormones is something people may usually associate with binary gendered **transsexual** people - i.e people who are transitioning from male to female or female to male.

However, some non-binary people may choose to have surgery (such as chest surgery / breast augmentation, or genital surgery) or use hormones (such as testosterone or oestrogen) in order to make them more comfortable with their bodies.

There is no requirement for non-binary people to have surgery or use hormones. However, it may be that some non-binary people do experience **body dysphoria** around the sex they were assigned at birth and take steps to align their bodies more closely with how they feel.

For example:

- Some non-binary people may undergo transition with hormones and genital surgery, similarly to some binary trans people, but maintain their non-binary gender identity.
- Others may just use hormones for a short time and not have any surgery.
- Others may for example, have chest surgery or breast augmentation, but not use hormones.

Or any range of combinations of surgery / hormones - including none at all! The most important thing for many non-binary people is feeling comfortable in their skin - but this can mean different things to different people.

Accessing treatment

Non-binary people who choose to transition medically may struggle to access surgery and hormones through the National Health Service, which often has strict criteria about the order in which treatment can commence (i.e hormones before surgery).

Non-binary people who wish to do things in a different order – or do some things but not others – may face barriers in accessing treatment on the NHS. This may vary depending on the clinic and doctor.

Many non-binary people may present themselves as having a binary identity in order to access treatment. This is not always necessary, but some people find this less complicated than explaining the full extent of their gender identities to medical professionals. How you proceed with your own treatment path is up to you.

Sexuality

Being non-binary doesn't impact upon who you fancy - non-binary people can be attracted to men, women, other non-binary people or no one at all!

However, most of the words we use to describe sexuality assume that the person the label is being applied to will identify as 'male' or 'female'. For example, when we call someone 'straight' or 'heterosexual', we assume they'll either be a man or a woman who is attracted to the 'opposite' sex. However, if you fall outside of any of these categories, defining your sexuality to others may be difficult.

Non-binary people may use common words to describe their sexuality but apply their own definition - for example, identifying as 'gay' despite not strictly falling under the categories of 'male' or 'female'.

Other non-binary people may use words like **queer**, which imply fluidity and a less strict definition of an individual's sexuality.

Some people who feel attraction to people regardless of their gender may use **pansexual** instead of bisexual to describe their sexuality. The word 'pan' means 'all'. This is more inclusive to non-binary identities, as 'bi' implies there are only two genders - which can exclude non-binary people. Pansexuality implies an attraction to people regardless of their gender identity or sex characteristics.

It is best to ask someone how they would describe their sexuality as opposed to making an assumption.

Respecting non-binary people

- Use the pronouns requested by the non-binary person, even if it feels a bit odd at first. Gender-neutral pronouns especially can take some adjustment and sometimes be more difficult initially than using straightforward 'he' or 'she' pronouns. If you get it wrong, apologise and move on - but keep trying your best.
- If a non-binary person asks you to avoid using some gendered language around them or inviting them to gender-based events, respect that!
- Don't ask people what they 'really' are or details about their assigned sex. Non-binary people are really non-binary. The sex or gender assigned to them at birth is irrelevant.
- Similarly, if you do know the sex or gender someone was assigned at birth, don't 'out' them and tell other people this information. It may be that is not something a non-binary person would wish to be publicised.

Glossary

Androgynous – Appearing neither male or female.

Body dysphoria – In trans people this refers to feeling unhappy with the sexed characteristics of your body – for example genitals, secondary sex characteristics, hair etc.

Cisgender – Cis is Latin for 'same'. Cisgender refers to someone who is not transgender, i.e someone born physically female who identifies as female / a woman.

Gender binary – The idea that male and female are the only two gender categories and that everyone will fall into one or the other.

Gender identity – Someone's internal sense of self in relation to their gender.

Intersex – Variations of sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, genitals or reproductive organs which make someone's body difficult to define as male or female. In the past this made have been called 'hermaphroditism', but this is incorrect and considered offensive.

Medical Transition – Transitioning medically refers to the process of taking hormones or having surgery to realign an individuals body with their gender identity.

Non-binary – Having a gender identity that falls outside of the traditional male / female or masculine / feminine binary.

Pansexual – Being attracted to all genders.

Queer – A term that is often defined by the individual using it. Often used as an umbrella term to refer to all non-heterosexual or non-cisgender people. Also used to refer to a more fluid and non-specific sexuality than more traditional labels such as 'gay'.

Trans*– Identifying with the umbrella term covering all gender identities or expressions that transgress or transcend (go beyond the limits of) society's rules and concepts of gender.

Transsexualism – People with transsexualism are usually people with binary gender identities who transition using hormones or surgery. Some non-binary people may however still identify as transsexual or has having transsexualism, especially if they transition medically.

Further information & Resources

Websites:

Gendered Intelligence

<http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk>

Nonbinary.org

<http://nonbinary.org/>

New Statesmen – Non-binary: An introduction to another way of thinking about identity

<http://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2013/01/non-binary-introduction-another-way-thinking-about-gender>

Genderqueerid

<http://genderqueerid.com/what-is-gq>

Neutrois.com

<http://neutrois.com/community/>

Support / social groups

Gendered Intelligence Youth Group

For all trans and questioning people, binary or non-binary, in the UK aged 13 - 25. We meet twice a month in London, as well as running regular arts projects and a yearly camping trip.

<http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk>

Trans*genderqueer London

Monthly social group for trans people in London, actively genderqueer-inclusive.

<http://transgenderqueerlondon.tumblr.com/>

Trans London

TransLondon is a discussion / support group for all members of the trans community.

<http://www.translondon.org.uk/>