

August 2023

'We are people and we exist'

Hearing from trans and gender diverse
children and young people in WA
- Young people's summary report



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Acknowledgement of Country

The Commissioner for Children and Young People proudly acknowledges and pays respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Western Australia and acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation upon whose lands the Commissioner's office is located. She recognises the continuing connection to culture, lands, skies and waters, families and communities for all the Aboriginal peoples. The Commissioner and her team also pay their respects to all Elders, past, present and emerging leaders. The Commissioner and her team recognise the knowledge, insights and capabilities of Aboriginal people, and pay respect to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.

A note about language

For the purposes of this report, the term 'Aboriginal' encompasses Western Australia's diverse language groups and recognises Torres Strait Islanders who live in Western Australia. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' in this way is not intended to imply equivalence between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, although similarities do exist.

About this project

All children and young people have the right to be loved, feel safe, belong and be recognised and respected for who they are. They deserve good health, education and access to important services. They should be treated fairly and not be bullied or discriminated against.

The Commissioner wanted to hear from trans and gender diverse children and young people for this project. She wanted to listen to their experiences and to their ideas on how to make things better for them.

The Commissioner's office worked with other organisations that help trans and gender diverse people, like TransFolk of WA, Freedom Centre, Youth Pride Network and Perth Inner City Youth Service. They helped plan sessions for these young people to share their thoughts.

The Commissioner also used feedback from other surveys by her office to learn more. These surveys were called the Speaking Out Survey 2021 (SOS21) and the Girls Wellbeing Survey 2022.

Speaking Out Survey 2021

During the SOS21, students were asked how they describe themselves: as a girl, a boy or 'in another way'. More than 500 children and young people chose 'in another way'.

While we can't be certain that all these individuals were trans or gender diverse, their experiences were similar to what other research says about trans and gender diverse young people. These experiences include things like feeling safe, finding a sense of belonging, their school experiences and accessing the help they need.

We also asked participants who they thought would be part of the group that chose 'in another way'. They said it would likely include gender diverse students, such as those who identify as non-binary, gender diverse or genderfluid. However, they also noted that trans children and young people were most likely to have selected either 'girl' or 'boy'.

Girls' Wellbeing Survey

In 2022, the Commissioner did an online survey about girls' wellbeing and gender inequality. A total of 938 people between the ages of 12 to 24 took part in the survey. Out of those, 104 people chose 'in another way' to describe their gender and explained it in their own words. It's interesting that 74 respondents who selected male or female said they don't always describe themselves this way.

We have some quotes and thoughts from children and young people who took part in these projects. If you want more detailed information, you can refer to the separate reports.

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Warning: This report contains words directly spoken by trans and gender diverse children and young people, who are sharing their own experiences. Some parts of the report may be upsetting or cause strong emotions for some readers. If you need help, there is a list of resources on page 23 that can provide support and assistance.

Disclaimer: A selection of quotations is included in this report on the relevant topics. The quotations are generally unedited to ensure the voice of the child or young person is authentically represented. Editing has only been done where necessary for clarity, understanding or for confidentiality. In this instance any changes or omissions have been marked with square brackets or an ellipsis (...).



Who is the Commissioner for Children and Young People?

Jacqueline McGowan-Jones is the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia (WA). The Commissioner’s role is to stand up for the rights and needs of all children and young people aged 0–18 years in WA. The Commissioner directly listens to children and young people’s experiences and their ideas for solutions, and shares these with decision makers.

What is gender identity?

Gender identity is how a person feels and defines themselves when it comes to being male, female or something different. Sometimes, people don't identify with the sex they were assigned when they were born. Instead, they may identify as transgender, trans, non-binary, gender diverse or use other terms to describe their gender. When somebody's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (that is, male or female), we call it being 'cisgender'.

Each person's gender identity is unique, and it might change over time. In this report, we use the term 'trans and gender diverse' to

include all children and young people who are transgender or have a gender identity other than the male and female binary. This can include being trans, non-binary, genderfluid, genderqueer, agender or questioning their gender.

For students who selected 'in another way' during the SOS21, we use the term 'trans and gender diverse' to describe them. We only use specific gender identity if we know it or if a child or young person told us. At the end of this report, you can find a glossary that explains more about the terms used in the report.

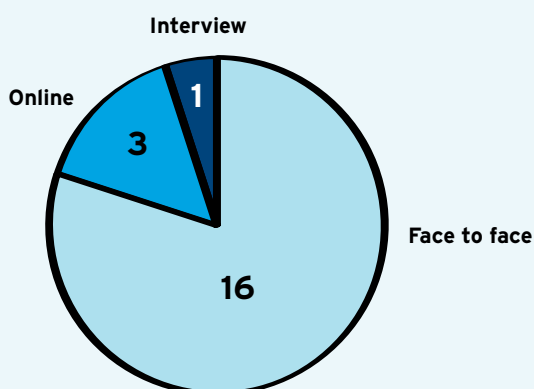
Who did we speak to?

The Commissioner's team spoke to 20 children who are trans and gender diverse. These individuals were between 11 and 18 years old.

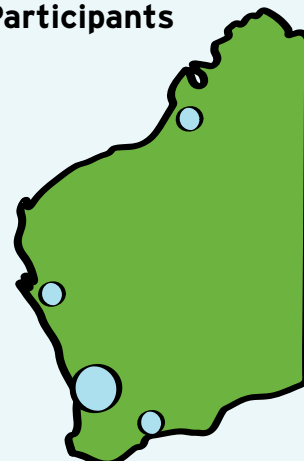
All the young people who took part in the consultations identified as trans or gender diverse. However, we wanted to respect their privacy, so we did not specifically ask them to disclose their gender identity. Instead, we asked them for their preferred pronouns to ensure we addressed them correctly.

We held three face-to-face focus groups, one online focus group and one interview as part of the consultations. Most of the young people who took part were from the Perth metropolitan area. However, we also had four young people from different regions, including Peel, the Great Southern and the Mid West.

How we heard from young people



Participants



Hearing young people's voices

This report is a summary of what we learned from talking to trans and gender diverse children and young people during our consultations. They told us about things that are important to them. We also looked at previous surveys to find out about other important issues.

The key concerns raised by trans and gender diverse children and young people in our consultations included:

- Sense of belonging in the community
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- Physical health
- Feeling safe in the community
- Feeling safe at home
- Importance of support from parents and carers
- Safety and belonging at school
- Regional differences for children and young people living outside the metropolitan area.

The report suggests some things that need to change to make life better for trans and gender diverse children and young people.



Sense of belonging in the community

'I just want like to feel equal to others and not feel ... isolated because that's how it can feel at times. And ... recognised, and I know some people are going to be like "It's just a fad they'll grow out of it", but to belong I feel like we just need education and mutual respect to each other.'

(17 year-old)



Some young people described the pressure they felt to fit into what society expected from them and to act a certain way based on their gender identity. This affected how they felt about themselves and how others treated them. Many faced challenges and difficulties because of their gender identity.

'I came out as non binary ... and it was really uncomfortable because you don't realise how binary gendered society is until you don't fit into it well.'

(16 year-old)

'Society kind of told me, you were born this way so you have to be a girl you have to be these things.'

(16 year-old)

'Being non gender confirming will impact my future, no matter what I pursue. Even if I am not open about my identity, it will still impact my personal life.'

(15 year-old, genderfluid - Girls Wellbeing Survey)

'I'm non binary and I have been misgendered, judged and denied opportunities by bosses, medical practitioners, lecturers, etc because of my gender... I am fearful of the impact my gender will have on my career in the future, and whether I will have to hide it in order to get anywhere in life.'

(19 year-old, non-binary - Girls Wellbeing Survey)

'Pressure of passing, especially when you are young and early in transition.'

(Anonymous)

'I would pick and try to present as what is it that I am going to let people perceive me as, am I going to be more alternative instead ... so it distracts away from the fact that I am trans ... so you get pegged as the weird kid for liking that, instead of the weird kid for being trans.'

(18 year-old)

Some felt like they had to 'pass', which meant being perceived by others as male or female (cisgender) rather than trans or gender diverse. They reported feeling pressure to hide who they really are because they think they have to fit in. Some also feel like they have to look and act more masculine or feminine, even if it doesn't feel right for them.

Sense of belonging in the community

Young people said they want to see more examples of diverse gender identities in their everyday lives. They think this would help them understand themselves better and help them to feel like they belong. Some said it gives them hope to see others who are trans or gender diverse and who have gone through similar experiences. It makes them feel like they're not alone.

'I think it would be nice if just like the general public had a bit more education on what it is to be trans, because like a lack of education in that field, is like one of the biggest things, that can contribute to the negative experiences.'

(16 year-old)

'If I had learnt about what it was to be trans and learnt that it was okay at like a younger age ... then I might've been like wow that's super cool, and that now I know it's actually okay, that would have, I think, helped me to come to terms with my identity.'

(16 year-old)

'Something that was really nice for me is people that I didn't know came up to me and they asked me for my pronouns and they gave me their pronouns and that it was so nice to be validated in that way.'

(16 year-old)

'Changing your name, like legally changing your name when you are under 18 and you need both parents signatures to change it and there's always one parent that's super transphobic.'

(13-year old)

Young people also wanted their gender identity to be acknowledged by others, including on official documents. But they said it can be hard for that to happen sometimes.

Getting emotional wellbeing and mental health support

We talked to young people about how they get help when they're feeling down or having a hard time.

We didn't ask participants directly about their mental health, but they talked about things that make them feel sad or stressed. These things include being treated badly by others, feeling pressure to 'pass' or be a certain way, not liking themselves, feeling like they don't fit in, and having difficulties in relationships with friends and family. They're also trying to figure out who they are.

They told us about different kinds of help they get. Some see doctors, specialists, counsellors and therapists. They also reach out to mental health organisations, friends and online support. Their parents and families, as well as people at school like counsellors or nurses, can help too. There are also special services for trans and gender diverse young people. They also have their own ways of taking care of themselves, like personal strategies and self-care.



Barriers to getting help

- 1** Some young people said they didn't know who they could trust or where to go for help.

'A way to tell if they're supportive or not would be good.'

(13 year-old)

'I got referred to the Perth gender clinic... ended up being like kind of too late for me, for them to actually really do much for me like I didn't even know that existed until I was like 15, so that like wasn't great... not knowing about ... there's no place for both information, that kind of has all the services and how to access them.'

(16 year-old)

- 2** They felt that some organisations didn't understand or have enough experience with trans and gender diverse people, so they didn't get the support they needed.

'[There can be] a lack of knowledge or a lack of understanding, especially if you go to like a psychologist who hasn't ever seen it before or has a very baseline level. And then while you're trying to receive like mental health help for whatever reason, it's really difficult for them to be sympathetic or empathetic towards you.'

(17 year-old)

'You are so suicidal that you're being forced to go to therapy by your school and then the therapist is transphobic and goes "It's just a phase", "You'll grow out of it", "Go for a walk".'

(13 year-old)

- 3** Some had bad experiences with support services, which made them not want to seek help again.

- 4** Others felt like they didn't fit the criteria to get help from certain services.

'My issues were too queer for not queer specific spaces, but then too "not specific to queer things" for queer spaces.'

(18 year-old)

'I've not had a great kind of history with help for mental health, I've always been told I am either too complicated or not complicated enough to get into the service.'

(16 year-old)

'Gender Diversity Service takes forever to get through.'

(16 year-old)

'I've never actually been able to use any mental health services, because then I would have to talk to like my mum or dad about it ... I don't want my parents to know, I want to be able to do it by myself without having to have parental permission.'

(13 year-old)

- 5** Some services had long wait times and were expensive. Some young people also needed permission from their parents or guardians, which made it hard for them to get support.

'Most services are also very expensive and waitlists are astronomical.'

(18 year-old)

'Most services immediately go to telling the parents, which I know is important, and in some cases can be really helpful ... but sometimes [the young person] is just not ready to tell you yet, and you need to give them time to think about it and talk about it because telling you will take a lot of labour.'

(18 year-old)

'I've come across psych or two that wasn't really supportive of [me being trans].'

(13 year-old)

'A lot of people assume when there is an issue with a child they need to talk to the parents, and a lot of the time that will escalate the situation.'

(16 year-old)

- 6** Some young people worried about their privacy when using a service. They were afraid their gender identity would be told to their parents or others without their permission.

Improving services

Young people said it would be easier for them to get help if:

1 The staff at mental health and emotional wellbeing services were educated about gender diversity. This means they would understand and know how to support people who are trans and gender diverse.

'Having a greater amount of people/services that are specialised (well educated) in gender diversity for people to access.'

(Anonymous)

2 Organisations were more inclusive and welcoming to trans and gender diverse people. They should ask for preferred names and pronouns right away, even if they already have that information on forms.

'I like services that ask for your preferred name and all that before they even meet you, like even if it is on the form, and they know it, they still ask you when you first meet them.'

(18 year-old)

3 They received support from other trans and gender diverse people who understood their experiences. They think they can relate better and provide better support than people who aren't trans or gender diverse.

'Run by trans people - because they have a certain level of understanding that cis people, no matter how accepting they are, will never be able to fully grasp.'

(16 year-old)

4 Organisations focused on individual needs and made sure the support was personalised to each person. Young people want services to be more centred around the person's safety and wellbeing.

'I think more person-centred things, and more of a focus on how do we keep this person safe, how can we make this person feel more safe, and also have more supports.'

(18 year-old)

These are the things that young people said would make it easier for them to get the help they need for their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Physical health

Many young people said they had trouble in getting the necessary support to live according to their gender identity.

'What's annoying is that you need both parents [to get hormonal therapy], like my mum hands down will do it, but my dad I don't know if he will, coz he is like kinda iffy on the whole thing.'

(16 year-old)

'I just had the appointment today and they told me I could go get all my bloods done, which is the first step in starting testosterone ... I have been waiting for four years,'

(16 year-old)

'I have pretty bad gender dysphoria with my chest but can't afford a binder, so I have to live with a chest until I'm at the age to get top surgery that costs a lot.'

(14 year-old - SOS21)

'Being AFAB [assigned female at birth] and gender non-conforming, my choices and opportunities in health (physical, mental and sexual) have definitely been limited or heavily impacted ... I've been told that I'm faking symptoms, that I can't be autistic because I care about people, and had snide, queerphobic and transphobic comments said when I accessed birth control.'

(21 year-old, non-binary/gender non-conforming - Girls Wellbeing Survey)

'My first therapist when she found out I was trans, she gave me a diagnosis for epilepsy, because I kept zoning out and I had ADHD symptoms, and she gave me epilepsy because "No, you are trans so it's different" and then a year later I have ADHD.'

(13 year-old)

They said it was hard to find healthcare services that understood and respected their gender identity. Some of them mentioned that having a diagnosis for ADHD made it even more difficult.



Feeling safe in the community

Many trans and gender diverse children and young people we talked to were worried about their safety in their community. Some of them said they were bullied or treated badly because of their gender identity. They felt scared and anxious about being hurt when they were out in public.

'I will go into the men's toilets if that's the only option but I actually fear for my safety in them which is not fun.'

(16 year-old)

'I think one of trans people's biggest fears is like going into the bathroom of their actual gender and having someone be like oh you're in the wrong bathroom, because that is like so invalidating and it will cause too much dysphoria.'

(16 year-old)

'Out in public, I am just in some like public area, I get really scared, well, pretty much anything can happen, and there's nothing really I can do about it. So having systems in place to make it feel like a safe place for trans people, that would be great.'

(16 year-old)

They wanted better systems in place for reporting and stopping discrimination and abuse. They wanted to know that their reports would be taken seriously and that action would be taken.

'I know there's some (trans) people ... who have gone out in public and have said they got a can thrown at them.'

(18 year-old)

'I can't walk around my local shops because there are a group of teenagers who want to beat me up for no reason, I have never talked to them or anything, but based on my appearance they want to beat me up.'

(16 year-old)

'I don't drink water at school because I know I'll probably end up needing to go to the toilet and I am like I can't do this.'

(13 year-old)

Using bathrooms was a big concern for them, so some of them chose not to eat or drink so they wouldn't have to use the bathrooms.



Feeling safe at home

The children and young people we spoke to also talked about how important it was to have supportive and caring parents or carers. They needed their parents or carers to help them understand and feel good about their gender identity. Parents and carers played a big role in helping them and standing up for them to make sure they got the help and support they needed.

'I am very lucky because my mum is a social worker ... so she is very understanding ... but I know people that if their parents disowned them they wouldn't have a fallback system.'

(13 year-old)

Some young people didn't have this support from their parents, and it had a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

'My dad is very transphobic and he literally disowned me when he find out that I was trans, he blocked my number and everything.'

(13 year-old)

'I'm aware and understand that some parents really really struggle with their child not being who they thought that they were going to be ... I think it is vital that the parent engages in some community supports ... Validating their fears, and validating their emotions ... showing healthier ways of working through those emotions.'

(18 year-old)

'I came out them like 8 times with the same thing, because it didn't go well. Each time, I wouldn't bring it up unless I knew I had somewhere else to go that night ... I know that the fear I felt was very real.'

(18 year-old)

'I feel like [parents] might need more of support in [when someone comes out], a bit of a transition, a bit more education, so they don't get more aggravated and push against you.'

(17 year-old)

They wanted parents and carers to learn more about gender diversity and how to support their child in a sensitive way. They also felt that parents and carers needed emotional support and ways to share their feelings and concerns outside of the family.

Safety and belonging at school

'School is not great. And they are a place that could be so supportive and could be helpful with this sort of thing, or even just as ... a middle person for information and they aren't.'

(16 year-old)

The children and young people we spoke with who are trans or gender diverse shared their experiences about school.



They talked about not always feeling like their gender identity was recognised and that the school didn't have inclusive structures and processes for students like them. This included things like only having options for male or female uniforms, physical education classes and bathrooms.

'Someone outed me and then I would tell most of the teachers they wouldn't do anything ... they would say like oh we will talk to them, we will talk to their parents and then they never did.'

(12 year-old)

'On the first day of Pride, some students in Year 8 printed off some pride flags, and stuck them on their lockers, and on the communal Year 8 noticeboard ... And these girls in their year ... ripped some of the pride flags down, someone brought a lighter to school and burnt some of them.'

(18 year-old)

They also mentioned being bullied by other students and feeling frustrated that teachers and school staff didn't always step in to stop it or give consequences to the bullies.

'When I was like filling a form in to be able to go the high school I go to now - it was either boy or girl, and at that time I hadn't come out to my mum and there was no other option, so I had to put female, and it really sucked.'

(13 year-old)

'I find it really annoying like when we are having a sports lesson and we decide we are going to dodgeball or something, and like everyone wants to do a boys vs girls, and I'm just like, I go over to the boys and all the boys are like wait why aren't you on that side, and then I'm like, and all the girls are like you should be, and then all the boys are like you should be on that side, and I'm like no I shouldn't.'

(11 year-old)

'There is a lot of homophobia and transphobia in schools, its not okay, there aren't just teasing, its a serious problem and more need to be done, all of the bullying has been about this.'

(15 year-old - SOS21)

The children and young people felt that there wasn't enough representation or teaching about trans and gender diverse people in the curriculum, especially in sex education and health classes.

'Having it be more normalised when you're younger, and it being safe when you're younger - it's going to make people feel more accepted and more ok with themselves.'

(18 year-old)

They believed that schools should do more to support students like them, especially if they didn't have support from their families or anyone else. They wanted schools to show more leadership and commitment in supporting trans and gender diverse students, have better policies and teaching materials, and provide education for teachers. They also wanted to have connections with peers who understand their experiences and other forms of support.

'I'd love to see like transphobic and homophobic [behaviour] put in anti-bullying policies.'

(17 year-old)

'I am in year 11 so I have finished with classes and that kind of education, and I've never heard anything about trans people or queer people anything like that.'

(16 year-old)

'Definitely in high school and having in the health curriculum that ... [trans and gender diverse people] exist and that's important for everyone to know, because that can help young people who might be questioning their gender identity to know that they're not alone, but also for other people to know that they aren't the only group of people and how to be respectful of others.'

(16 year-old)

'Schools will be like oh you can always talk to us we'll always be supportive, but they don't actually show that when you need it, and that's a really big thing.'

(16 year-old)

'In my school we have GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) that helps significantly in making people feel seen and respected.'

(15 year-old, non-binary)

'Being more inclusive. Asking your name, how you want to be referred to in the classroom ... on your reports/certificates? ... So you're not making as many assumptions.'

(18 year-old)

'I think all teachers should get LGBT training.'

(18 year-old)

Seeing support for gender diversity within the school was really important to them, and they appreciated when their school and teachers made efforts to show visible support for trans and gender diverse students.

'If I have an email from the teacher and it has their pronouns in it, I am like oh ok, it kind of flags on my radar that this person might be good to talk to.'

(16 year-old)

'In health at the beginning of every lesson my teacher is always like if you are trans or gay or whatever and you want to tell me or tell someone, you should always like talk to me or talk to someone ... all my teachers are accepting, most of them in their classroom actually have like Pride flags in their room ... so I know that all of them are accepting.'

(12 year-old)

'I know that they're really accepting ... because they are always like celebrating like Wear it Purple day ... they like go all out, like they decorate the entire team in purple ... there is like massive paintings on the wall with like Pride flags hidden in all of them and I think that's really cool.'

(12 year-old)

Regional differences

The trans and gender diverse children and young people living in regional areas faced similar challenges, but they also mentioned additional difficulties. They talked about having fewer services and face-to-face support available to them in regional areas.

'The services I need are say in Perth, and we kinda have to constantly go back and forth, back and forth. To get services that I need to access like more specific services like a Gender Clinic ... [you're] generally coming down there for one appointment ... it just takes so long to get down there and back.'

(13 year-old)

'... I feel like most of the mental health services that you can access in regional Western Australia are pretty limited. And with that comes like a lack of knowledge or a lack of understanding.'

(17 year-old)

'I did online counselling for not too long, but ... I didn't have like a safe space where I could go because it was online so there's no way I can get anywhere in my town ... wasn't like you go to library because that's public ... So that's ... a reality where some young people wouldn't access it because you know, they're in their room, their parents barge in and now they're out[ed].'

(17 year-old)

They also mentioned a lack of privacy because everyone in small towns knew each other's business.

'... some of my friends [in regional areas] have that issue with lack of anonymity ... Some people have no filter and will just be like, Oh, hey "preferred name", how did you enjoy that LGBTQ plus thing last night?'

(17 year-old)

'... being anonymous, is definitely a big thing. Because in small towns ... one of the counsellors at headspace just said I'm not going to see anyone from [this town], because he was living there at the time and you just know everybody and you know their parents and you see them every week and then being like, knowing about them, so that's definitely an issue.'

(16 year-old)

The young people in regional areas were not aware of many state-based supports that could help them because these services were provided only in the city [Perth] or were not well advertised in regional Western Australia.

'I now know that the health service sends up an endocrinologist to [regional town] like a once a month and I was like "Why was that never told to anyone" and then there's also online counselling specifically for LGBTQ plus young people or any age, and I guess all of these services are there, but they're mostly advertised to Metropolitan people, or, you know, they just write off the regions completely.'

(17 year-old)

'I would love to see the government fund more services like what Western Australian Aids Council are doing at the moment with the Freedom State project. I know that they have someone in Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and I'd love to see that extended.'

(17 year-old)

'... Probably just a way to meet other people kinda like me. Just a way to meet them really and I can probably take it from there.'

(13 year-old)

They wanted better local support for trans and gender diverse children and young people in regional areas and to address the isolation that many of them experienced.



What needs to change?

The Commissioner has listened to trans and gender diverse children and young people, and agrees changes are needed to make their lives better. Here are the important changes the Commissioner wants to see happen:

- **Trans and gender diverse children and young people be given greater recognition and support.**
- **Trans and gender diverse children and young people have access to the help and services they need.**
- **Bullying, discrimination and harassment towards trans and gender diverse children and young people be firmly rejected.**
- **Parents and the community learn about how best to support trans and gender diverse children and young people.**
- **Schools strive to create a supportive and inclusive environment for trans and gender diverse students.**

These changes are important to make sure trans and gender diverse children and young people feel safe, supported and included in their communities.

Glossary*

AFAB: Assigned or presumed female at birth. This means that when a person was born, they were considered or assumed to be a girl. See 'Sex assigned at birth'.

Agender: Someone who doesn't feel like they belong to any specific gender.

Binary gender identity: The belief that there are only two genders: male and female.

Binder: A tight-fitting top that can make someone's chest look flatter. It is often worn by people who want their chest to appear less prominent.

Brotherboy and Sistergirl: Terms used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to describe trans people.

Brotherboy typically refers to masculine spirit people who may be assigned female at birth, and Sistergirl typically refers to feminine spirit people who may be assigned male at birth.

Cisgender (also cis): A person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if someone was identified as a girl at birth and still feels like a girl, they would be cisgender.

Gender diverse: This term is used to describe people whose gender identity doesn't fit into the traditional categories based on their assigned sex at birth. It includes individuals who are trans, non-binary, gender questioning, genderfluid or identify with another gender.

Gender dysphoria: The feeling of discomfort or distress that some trans or gender diverse individuals may experience because their gender identity doesn't align with their assigned sex at birth or physical appearance.

Genderfluid: Someone who experiences changes in their gender identity over time. They may feel more male, female or non-binary at different times.

Gender identity: How a person deeply knows and understands their own gender. It can be male, female, both, a mix of both or neither. It may or may not be the same as the gender they were assigned when they were born.

Gender non-conforming: This term is used to describe people who express their gender in ways that are different from what is traditionally expected for boys or girls. It means they don't fit the usual ideas of how boys or girls should act or look. This is different from how they feel inside about their gender.

Genderqueer: A term for people who don't see themselves as strictly male or female. They may feel like they don't fit into the categories of 'man' or 'woman'. Some may feel in between or outside those categories, or they may not like being labelled with a specific gender. It's important to know that not everyone who identifies as genderqueer is trans or non-binary.

Gender questioning: Describes people who are still exploring and trying to figure out their own gender identity. They are asking themselves questions and trying to understand how they truly feel.

Homophobia: A term that describes negative feelings or actions towards people who are attracted to the same sex or who like more than one gender. It means not accepting or treating people badly because of who they love or are attracted to.

Hormonal therapy: A type of medical treatment that helps people feel more comfortable with their gender identity. It can involve using hormone blockers (or puberty blockers) to stop certain hormones from being released, as well as taking hormones that can make someone's body more masculine (like testosterone) or more feminine (like oestrogen and progesterone).

LGBTQIA+SB: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning and Sistergirls and Brotherboys.

Misgender: When someone accidentally or on purpose uses the wrong pronouns for a person. It means using pronouns that don't match how the person identifies their own gender or body.

Non-binary: A term that includes many different gender identities. It's an umbrella term for people who don't feel like they fit neatly into being just male or just female. Some non-binary people feel like a mix of both, some feel like their gender can change, and others feel like something completely different.

Out: When someone identifies as LGBTQIA+SB, they may choose to be open about it in their personal, public or professional lives.

Outing/outed: Outing is when someone reveals another person's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without that person's permission. It's not okay to out someone without their consent.

Passing: Passing means being seen by others as cisgender (not trans) or as fitting into traditional ideas of being masculine or feminine. It means that others may assume someone's gender without knowing they are trans or gender diverse.

Pronouns: Words we use to refer to people when we're not using their name. Some pronouns are specific to gender, like 'he' (for boys and men) or 'she' (for girls and women). There are also gender-neutral pronouns, like 'they' that don't imply whether a person is male or female. It's important to use the pronouns someone prefers to respect their gender identity.

Queer: A word that includes many different sexual orientations and gender identities, often an umbrella term used to describe the full range of LGBTQIA+SB identities.

Queerphobic: Describes a person who has negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and fears towards queer individuals. It means having unkind or unfair thoughts or feelings towards queer people.

Questioning: When someone is unsure or still exploring their gender identity or how they feel about their gender. See 'Gender questioning'.

Sex assigned at birth: The sex that is recorded when a person is born, usually based on their physical body. It's the legal sex that is written on birth certificates and other official documents.

Top surgery: Reconstructive chest surgery to remove breast tissue and shape the chest to have a more masculine appearance.

Trans: A term used for people whose gender is different from the one assigned to them when they were born. It can include different identities like transgender, non-binary, agender, genderqueer and more. People may describe their gender identity in different ways.

Transition (also known as **gender affirmation**): The personal process that a trans or gender diverse person goes through to live as their true gender and be recognised as such. This process can include different things like telling people, using a different name and pronouns, dressing differently (social affirmation), changing names or sex markers on legal documents (legal affirmation), or undergoing hormonal therapy or surgeries (medical affirmation). However, not everyone's transition includes all of these steps.

** For the sources used to develop this glossary, see 'Glossary references' on page 24.*

Resource List

Support services

For immediate or urgent help, please call 000 for emergency services.

24 hour services

Kids Helpline provides 24/7 free online and phone counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25.

Ph: 1800 551 800

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Lifeline offers suicide prevention support by phone or online chat.

Ph: 13 11 14

<http://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Mental Health Emergency Response Line

provides a rapid response to mental health emergencies.

Ph: 1300 555 788 (Metro)

Ph: 1800 676 822 (Country)

LGBTQIA+SB / Youth-friendly services

Living Proud/QLife provides LGBTI support services in WA, including the QLife Counselling and Info Line.

Ph: 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight, 7 days a week)

<http://www.livingproud.org.au>

National/IM chat: qlife.org.au

Freedom Centre (WAAC) offers support for LGBTQIA+ young people, providing free face-to-face and online/phone counselling across WA, as well as other supports such as drop-in sessions.

Ph: 08 9482 0000

<https://www.waac.com.au/what-we-do/freedom-centre/>

TransFolk of WA is a support service for trans and gender diverse people and their loved ones in Western Australia, offering peer support and services for young people, adults and families.

<https://www.transfolkofwa.org/>

headspace provides free mental health support and counselling for young people, offering face-to-face and online or phone support.

Ph: 1800 650 890

Online support at <https://www.eheadspace.org.au/>

Youth Focus operates a free face-to-face and online counselling service for young people aged 12 to 25 who are experiencing suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety and self-harm.

Ph: 6266 4333

<http://www.youthfocus.com.au>

The Gender Diversity Service is a specialist outpatient service for the assessment and care of children and adolescents up to the age of 18 experiencing gender diversity issues in WA.

Ph: 6456 0202

<https://pch.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health/Gender-Diversity-Service>

Youth Pride Network is a group of young LGBTIQIA+ people from across Western Australia who are working to improve the lives of all young LGBTIQIA+ people through advocacy, education and community events.

www.youthpridenetwork.net

Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS)

supports young people aged 16 to 25 experiencing or at risk of homelessness with supported transitional accommodation. PICYS also provides wellbeing support, Base Camp and Base Camp *aGenderdrop* in times.

Ph: 9380 4660

Ph: 9388 2792 (accommodation support)

www.picys.org.au

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www.unomaha.edu/student-life/inclusion/gender-and-sexuality-resource-center/lgbtqia-resources/queer-trans-spectrum-definitions.php



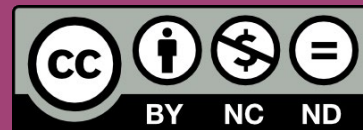
Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia



Level 1, Albert Facey House,
469 Wellington St, Perth WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 6213 2297
Country freecall: 1800 072 444
Email: info@ccyp.wa.gov.au

ccyp.wa.gov.au

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Further information

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