TRANS HUB

HEALTH & GENDER AFFIRMATION IN NSW

AM I TRANS?

An exploration of identity and self discovery

TRANSHUB.ORG.AU

Terms like ‘trans’, ‘transgender’ and even ‘trans and gender diverse’ can be defined pretty simply and inclusively. These are umbrella terms that describe women, men and non-binary people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth. This definition is not contingent on how we socially, medically or legally affirm our gender, it doesn’t mean surgery, or birth certificates, or bathrooms.

Being trans is about the relationship we have with ourselves and who we know ourselves to be, being trans is not about what we do about that.

If you’re just beginning to feel like this might be you, or even if you’re further down the road, it can be easy to wonder about whether or not you’re trans enough.

There are so many myths to navigate about being trans, and the environments we come out in might not always support who we are, so it's not surprising that many of us question what it means to be trans.

It's understandable to experience anxiety or doubts. After all, what your identity looks like can be a complicated thing to map out, and a lot of us aren't given a whole lot of tools to easily imagine ourselves or our futures outside of the genders we were presumed to be at birth.

Plus, you're not alone.

Many trans people have gone through a period of heavily questioning their gender and what it means before being able to come to a place where they feel comfortable enough to talk about, express and lean in with.

If you feel like you're trans, chances are you probably are – but here's the thing, the ways you express this, and what makes you feel most comfortable, is totally up to you.

Cis people generally don't need to spend a lot of time interrogating their own gender. If you're at the point where you're asking yourself questions like "am I trans enough?" the short answer is, yes, if you feel like you are. It's also perfectly okay to question your gender and realise you're not trans.

EXPLORING GENDER IDENTITY

Let's unpack it a little

There are lots of reasons why you might struggle to feel like who you are is real, valid or enough.

For so long, trans narratives have been rooted in, not only pain and hardship, but also a very specific and binary understanding of gender.

If that's what works for you – that's great, but if your gender feels a little more ambiguous – or if you don't feel an association with any gender at all – it might be much more difficult to understand, or explain who you are.

This can also be upheld by *gatekeeping* in certain medical contexts – for instance, doctors not prescribing gender affirming hormones for people who are non-binary.

The concept that every trans person has gender dysphoria can be really harmful, and many trans people don't experience dysphoria at all. The idea that experiencing dysphoria must be alleviated through medical processes like taking hormones or undergoing surgery, is one that is helpful for many people – but it may not be for you.

There are lots of reasons medical affirmation might not be a comfortable or accessible path for you to take, and that doesn't make who you any less real.

At the same time, if you do feel like medical affirmation is the right path for you, you deserve to be supported in that decision, no matter how you identify.

Remember, at the end of the day, it's your body, and the choices you make about how you affirm your gender are yours to make.

On being unsure

It's okay to go through a process of questioning your gender with no fixed answer – in fact, it's also okay for you to never settle on a "permanent" identity.

Rigid and *cisnormative* ideas about gender get instilled into a lot of us at a very young age, and it can take a whole lot of heavy lifting to undo the notion that the way we experience gender has to align with one neat category.

It's also totally okay if the way you perceive and express your gender shifts and changes over time. Just because you realise you're not the gender you were presumed to be at birth, there's no reason why you must remain in a permanent, immutable state for all eternity.

Your gender expression, pronouns and name may shift, change and expand any number of times, throughout your life, and that's completely fine – gender is not a locked-in contract.

You are trans enough

Being trans means getting to explore the ambiguities of identity, body, gender and the self, and to connect with ourselves and who we are in a deep, meaningful, and not always linear way.

At the end of the day, many people, be they trans or cis, are in an almost constant state of affirming parts of themselves throughout life.

As long as you're taking steps to make yourself feel comfortable in your own skin, you're doing it right – and you are certainly "trans enough".

You are the expert about yourself and your gender, and no one else gets to decide what being trans looks like for you.

There's no right or wrong way to be trans.

TransHub is ACON's digital information and resource platform for all trans and gender diverse people in NSW, their loved ones, allies and health providers.

For more information and resources, visit:
www.transhub.org.au

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