



## Understanding Gender

You have the right to define your own gender identity, and decide what feels most comfortable and safe when exploring coming out, even if others don't understand how you identify at first.

When it comes to gender, a diverse spectrum of identities exists. In fact, the number of ways a person might identify is infinite. Gender identity and gender expression can be very fluid for some people. Some may feel like they were given one sex or gender at birth but actually identify as another, while others feel limited and boxed in by labels. Others may embrace identities beyond being just male or female, man or woman, masculine or feminine.

Everyone deserves the right to make choices about their own bodies and genders. Unfortunately, many trans\*, non-binary and gender diverse individuals experience forms of oppression that try to take away this right. Society pressures individuals to be either men or women and trans\* identities are often not recognized as real genders or sexes. Most of the time, trans\* people have to obtain approval from officials in order to transition.

Not everyone in society recognizes that there are more than two genders. Fortunately, people all over the world are challenging society's norms and stereotypes about sexuality, gender identity and gender expression.