



Let's Be More Aware – and Care – About Our Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students

Introduction

Schoonmaker Memorial Center for Gender Studies at Aoyama Gakuin University strives every day to promote gender equality and respect for gender non-conformity and sexual diversity at Aoyama Gakuin and in society at large. This pamphlet reflects our aims.

It is common for students to come to the Gender Studies Center to consult about gender issues. Recently, students have raised concerns about faculty members who make discriminatory transgender comments in the classroom.

Each faculty member should make conscientious efforts to share accurate information, be aware and care about gender issues in the classroom, and provide educational opportunities for students to gain greater understanding about gender. In so doing, you are on the front lines of improving our educational environment, and helping us to get rid of transgender and gender non-conforming discrimination and exclusion while also protecting our students.

This pamphlet was created with the aim of creating an environment where all students at our university can study with peace of mind and in safety.

We ask for the understanding and support of all faculty members to provide appropriate accommodations and educational opportunities for students exploring transgender issues and gender non-conformity. To that end, we provide this pamphlet with useful basic information for our faculty.

Column: Mental Well-Being for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students

In our society, where gender non-conforming and transgender people are in the minority, many such students face serious hurdles in simply living their lives each day. Consequently, we must take seriously the very real challenges they face, including those to their mental health and overall well-being. A survey conducted in the United States of transgender persons revealed the following results:

- 44% of respondents experienced serious psychological distress in the last 30 days
- 30% were verbally harassed in the last 12 months
- 39% were harassed online in the last 12 months
- 73% would feel “very/somewhat uncomfortable” asking for help from the police when needed
- 80% of adult experienced one or more form of mistreatment or negative experience
- 30% had experienced homelessness in their lifetime
- The unemployment rate among respondents was 18%

FAQs about Transgender and Gender Non-Conformity

Transgender refers to a person whose gender assigned at birth does not match or does not fit well with the gender identity one forms as one grows and develops as part of a family and society.

Some people have a gender identity that is opposite to the gender assigned to them at birth (if we use binary terminology to talk of gender), while others form identities that do not fit into a clear binary framework of “masculine/male” or “feminine/female.”

In this latter case, such individuals often call themselves non-binary (or X-gender) (and there are many non-binary people who do not categorize themselves as “transgender”).

Of course, there are many other ways of living one’s gender, including questioning, which is when people don't know or don't want to fix a label on their gender identity; bi-gender people, who have two gender identities; and gender fluid, which is when one’s gender identity is more open and in flux.

Reference: Han Toransu Sabetsu ZINE Hensyu-bu (Anti-Trans Discrimination ZINE Editorial Department) , “Han Toransu Sabetsu ZINE –Wareraha Sudeni Tomoni Aru” (“Anti-Trans Discrimination ZINE-: We are Already Together”) , 2022.



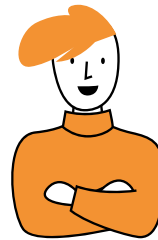
Cisgender

One’s sex and gender assigned at birth continues to match one’s ongoing gender identity



Transgender

One’s sex and gender assigned at birth does not match one’s ongoing gender identity



Non-binary

One’s sex and gender (as well as sexuality) does not fit into the narrow definitions and binary framework of simply “masculine/male” or “feminine/female”



Questioning

Some people don't know their gender identity for sure, don't want to decide yet, or else simply refuse to be labelled by others

Q Do transgender people want to be the opposite sex?

A Although the reasons and feelings vary from person to person, in general, transgender people do not "want to be" a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth so much as realize that they "are" a gender other than that, and so want to (or actually do) live as that gender.



Q Do all transgender people change their sex?

A Although the reasons and feelings vary from person to person, in general, transgender people do not "want to be" a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth so much as realize that they "are" a gender other than that, and so want to (or actually do) live as There are a number of medical and other methods to bring about a medical gender transition (hormone therapy and gender

reassignment surgery) and legal gender transition (in Japan, this refers to the procedure for changing one's gender on the family register). However, not all individuals seeking to transition use these methods of gender transition or medically alter their bodies to change their physical or sexual characteristics. And even for those who want to pursue medical transition methods, there are many hurdles that get in the way of their realization. that gender.

Medical gender transition hurdles

- Very few medical institutions even offer this service, and it can be difficult to use insurance to cover expenses.
 - Without the support and understanding of one's family or workplace, emotional and practical barriers to following through on medical transition increase.
 - Some find medical transition procedures and medicines to be too invasive or burdensome for their physical health
- Etc.

Legal gender transition hurdles

- One must be an adult
 - One must be unmarried
 - One must not have any children who are still minors
- Etc.



Q Doesn't it actually cause unnecessary trouble to pay too much attention to gender identity?

A No, because there is nothing wrong with diverse gender and sexual identities. Keep in mind that some people repeat unfounded rumors such as "respecting gender identity means allowing transgender women with male genitalia to enter women's-only spaces" (①), or "even though someone invades a women's-only space intending to commit a sex crime, they can later be acquitted just by calling themselves 'transgender'" (②), or "transgender women should not use women's-only spaces because they cannot be distinguished from intruders" (③). But all these claims are unfounded, and based on prejudice and misunderstanding. Let's consider each in turn:

① In fact, transgender people carefully use different spaces according to their own gender transition stage. Moreover, most places such as public bathhouses that require undressing classify spaces based on physical characteristics, and transgender and gender non-conforming people do not object to this.

② Sexual crimes are punishable no matter who commits them, so claiming that you are transgender does not mean you can escape prosecution.

③ Now that you know the facts for ① and ② above, it is clear that there is no basis for making these kinds of claims either.

When it comes to taking the time and care to respect gender identity, it may seem at first that it is a "problem" created by transgender and gender non-conforming people themselves or that the "problem" is worsened by our talking too much about gender identity; however, closer scrutiny soon reveals that this way of thinking has

it all backward. In reality, society often scapegoats transgender and gender non-conforming people just as it has long done in other cases of discrimination or in its treatment of people who are different. Society as a whole must think about the problems it causes for those who are transgender and gender non-conforming (problems of mental well-being, sexual violence, discrimination, and so on).

Let's Be More Aware – And Actively Avoid – This Kind of Behavior

Outing

“Outing” refers to the act of disclosing a person's sexual orientation or transition status to a third party without the person's consent. Sexuality and gender identity entail extremely personal and sensitive information, and each individual's decision about when and how to “come out,” or disclose their sexuality or gender identity to others publicly, should be respected.

Even if it is necessary for administrative or other reasons to share information regarding the sexual orientation or gender identity of such a student, it is vital that the student's consent be obtained. It is unacceptable either to compel or restrict a student's sharing of this information.

Misgendering

“Misgendering” is what happens when a person is treated differently despite their openly expressed gender identity.

Examples of misgendering for transgender women include: calling them “he,” “him,” or “OO-kun” in class; compelling them to use men's only changing rooms and restrooms regardless of their gender transition stage; treating them as men when separating students into groups; and saying things like, “Your hands are the size of a man's, after all,” or “It's okay to be a man and still like skirts (pink, etc.).”



One cannot know which students are transgender just by their appearance, accessories, makeup, or dress.

Even if there are no students in your class who have publicly come out as transgender or gender non-conforming, please be aware of what you say and take issues of gender and sexuality into account.

Contact information

Schoonmaker Memorial Center for Gender Studies at Aoyama Gakuin University

150-8366

1st floor, Aoyama Gakuin University Junior College Research Building, 4-4-25 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku

Hours: Weekdays when classes are held (excluding Saturdays) 10:00-18:00

TEL : 03-3409-9554

MAIL : agu-smcgs@aoyamagakuin.jp

Issue Date: 02/26/2024