

Facts About SEX & GENDER

- Aren't sex & gender the same thing?
- Isn't transgender a new concept?
- But there are only two human sexes, right?
- So what does all this mean?

Aren't sex & gender the same thing??

What is SEX?

In this context, "sex" refers to the physical characteristics of a person's body. I.e. the parts that are used to assign genders at birth or genetic information.

What is GENDER?

"Gender," on the other hand, is a set of socially constructed behaviors and/or characteristics that are expected to go with a person's sex, although they do not always align.

Sex and gender

do interact with each other, but they are not the same thing (1).



What is INTERSEX?

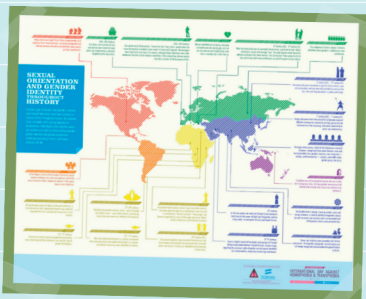
According to Hans Lindahl, intersex activist and educator, intersex can be defined as a difference in sex traits that happens on its own and is noticeable enough to cause stigma for breaking an anatomical expectation" (6)

Intersex conditions can also be referred to as DSDs, or differences/disorders in sexual development. (5)

Basically, DSDs are just different ways the body forms and/or operates that falls outside of the typical binary. Sometimes these differences are obvious at birth, other times people may live their whole lives without knowing.

There are so many variables in human sexes. Intersex conditions can be chromosomal, hormonal, or they can have to do with the sry gene, which usually instructs to form testes. (5)

Isn't transgender a new concept?



scan to go to the map



This map by UN Free & Equal shows many of the cultures across the world which have recognized different sexual orientations and gender identities throughout history. (3)

PLEASE REMEMBER

that definitions *can* help us to communicate more clearly

BUT people are more important than dictionary definitions

AND as languages evolve, so does our understanding of words and their definitions!

SO these definitions may be new to you and that's ok!

turn page





Busting MYTHS about being intersex



Myth: it's rare

It is estimated that as many as 2% of humans may be intersex. That's the same percentage of humans who are redheads! (4)

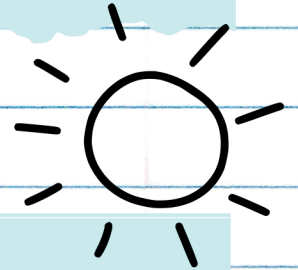
Myth: it needs to be corrected

Most of the time it does not. Surgeries performed on children and infants can cause lifelong problems including infertility, pain, incontinence, and more. (4)

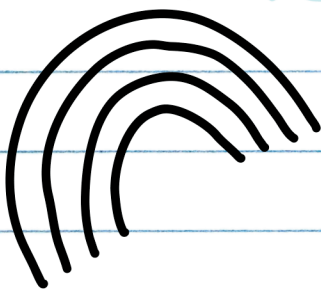
Myth: intersex folx are trans

Intersex folx can be trans, cis, or nonbinary. DSDs refer specifically to physiological traits, while being transgender refers to one's inner understanding of their own gender. (4)

So what does all this mean?



- Being transgender is not new. The concept varies by culture, but there is precedent going back to ancient times that three or more genders have been recognized and respected.
- Humans come in more than two sexes, too. Our culture has pathologized different presentations, but there is nothing inherently wrong or dangerous about intersex bodies.
- Therefore, as a culture, now that we know better, we must do better. Change policies and make space for people who don't fit within binaries. Recognize the validity of human experiences that lie physically and/or internally outside the binary.
- Diversity is beautiful and...
- All bodies are good bodies!



Sources

REMEMBER...

NEVER ask someone about their genitals!
That is personal information, and it is
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

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2. "History of Transgender People in the United States." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 14 Dec. 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_transgender_people_in_the_United_States.
3. "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Throughout History." UN Free & Equal, UNFE.org, https://www.unfe.org/system/unfe-74-SEXUAL_ORIENTATION_AND_GENDER_IDENTITY_ARE_NOTHING_NEW_PDF.pdf.
4. "Its Intersex Awareness Day - Here Are 5 Myths We Need to Shatter." Amnesty International, Amnesty International, 11 Oct. 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/its-intersex-awareness-day-here-are-5-myths-we-need-to-shatter/>
5. Ainsworth, Claire. "Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic." Scientific American, Scientific American, 22 Oct. 2018, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sex-redefined-the-idea-of-2-sexes-is-overly-simplistic/>
6. Lindahl, Hans. "Is PCOS Intersex?" Hi, Hello, Hans, YouTube, 20 Nov. 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-jN13Cw7XU>. Accessed 5 Jan. 2022.

