

# Trans Ally 101:

Supporting Change for Student Success

## Gender

*Transgender*, or *trans* for short, is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression does not match their birth assigned sex/gender. However, some who may identify with a label that has been placed under this umbrella term may not themselves identify under the label of transgender.

*Cisgender* refers to someone whose gender identity matches the sex/gender they were assigned at birth.

## Pronouns

One should always use the name and pronouns (e.g., she, he, they, ze) that a trans person uses for themselves even when referring to the trans person's past prior to the adoption of the name and pronouns.

## Transition

*Transition* is the complex process through which many trans people affirm their gender identities. This may include physical/medical transition in which one takes hormones and/or has surgery. It may include *social transition* in which any or all of the following may take place: changing one's name legally or socially, changing one's pronouns, dress to reflect one's gender identity, changing legal documents to reflect one's gender, and coming out to others. However, not all transgender people transition or desire to do so.

## Words Matter

The word transgender is an adjective. It is considered improper to use the term as a verb, most often seen with an -ed ending. The objection to this is that it gives the impression that an action has taken place in which a person had not previously been transgender and then somehow is, often with the implication that they choose to be transgender and can therefore choose otherwise or be swayed from that choice. The word should also never be used as a noun. One is a transgender person, not "a transgender."



**TRANS ALLY  
101**

Discussing Transgender & Gender Non-Confirming Identity & Issues: Suggestion and [Resources for K-12 Teachers](http://www.adl.org/). <http://www.adl.org/>

Why Should We Teach Children About Transgender People and Issues? [GLSEN](http://www.glsen.org/learn/research/national). <http://www.glsen.org/learn/research/national>

[Trans\\*Form Education](http://trans-form-education.weebly.com). Reading Lists, Resources, Videos, & Information about Trans Topics & Trans\*Affirming Environments. <http://trans-form-education.weebly.com>

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Improve the school climate for transgender students by becoming an ally. Learn about gender identities, trans etiquette, trans ethics, and creating an environment that promotes self-esteem and student success. Panel, Performance, & Q & A.