



Transgender students at the TU/e

What they go through and how to help.

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Agenda



TERMINOLOGY

4

WHAT DOES BEING TRANSGENDER MEAN
TO THE INDIVIDUAL?

5

NUMBERS

6

COMMON PARTS OF TRANSITIONING

7

CHALLENGES

10

WHERE DO YOU GO WITH QUESTIONS?

11

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

13

Introduction

As Academic Advisor I am, together with Claartje Boskman, connected to Compass the LGBTQIA+ foundation within TU/e.

During this training I will try to give you more information about the steps transgender people within our university go through or have been through.

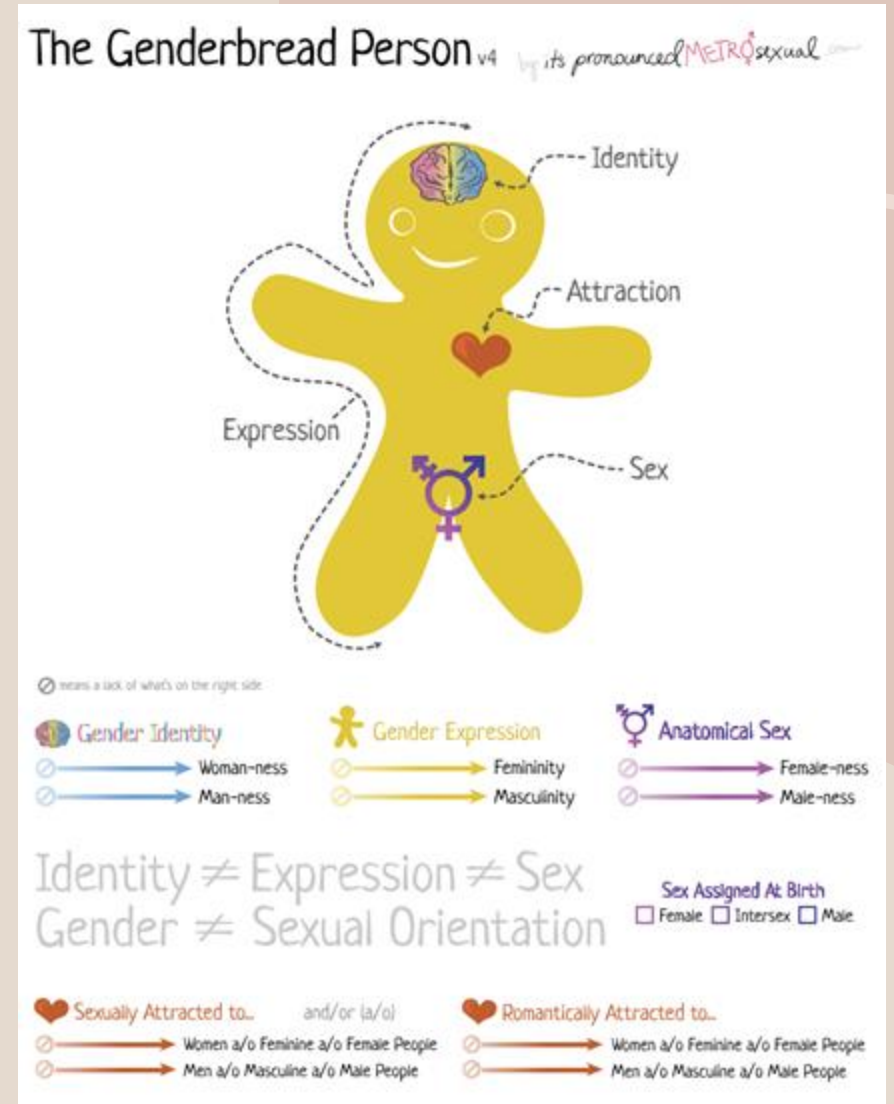
I do not claim to have all knowledge or answers. The goal of this training is to raise awareness

I hope you will leave this training with new insights and knowledge



Terminology

- “Transgender people,” NOT “transgenders”
- “Cisgender” is the term used to describe non-transgender people.
- It is okay to use the abbreviations "trans" and "cis" for the two terms.
- Non-binary people also exist, and using gender-neutral language is important for their inclusion.
- Intersex (not ‘hermaphrodites’) is an umbrella term that describes bodies that fall outside the strict male/female binary.



What does being transgender mean to the individual?

It varies!

- People explore their identity in different ways
- People interpret their identity in different ways
- Being trans isn't just "switching gender"!
- Not all transgender people seek medical transition

NUMBERS

1000 to 5000 trans students at universities throughout the Netherlands

25% of trans students experience negative reactions at school or work

18% of trans students feel discriminated by staff at school or university

Waiting lists can be upwards of 2-3 years (150 weeks).



Common parts of transitioning

(experiences vary)

MEDICAL

(in the Netherlands)

- GP referral to gender psychologists
- Diagnosis from the gender clinic.
- Start hormone therapy,
- Desired surgeries: top/bottom surgeries, aesthetic surgeries

Generally, fully covered by insurance. But not always!
(private clinics)

SOCIAL

- Coming out to friends, family, work, everyone
- Coming out is a continuous process: do I tell this new person?
- Voice training (possibly with a speech therapist)

LEGAL

(in the Netherlands)

- Expert statement by psychologist (price: 60-280)
- Submit change document request at city hall where you are born
- After a few weeks, new ID/passport at place of residence

For internationals: can change legal name in NL at the Hague through the same process!

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

- Students can experience depression and anxiety. The role of academic advisors is to refer the student to the student psychologists and introduce other ways of seeking support (such as the student support group at Compass)
- The biggest step is the social transition: coming out in the open.
- Known problems are anxiety, self-mutilation, suicidal thoughts. Also a (very) big frustration towards the length and duration of the trajectory is very common.
- Every step of the (medical) transition process is dependent on having a good supportive medical professional to guide the student. This is not always the case and can cause a lot of distress.
- Mental health issues can impede a student's academic performance. While academic guidance can help, it is crucial to realise that a student cannot distance themselves from their gender dysphoria and it will continue to impact their performance unless the underlying issue is solved.
- Self-medication: Our experience is that students will have investigated thoroughly what the right dose is, but it is not without risk. Ask the student to ask their GP for guidance/monitoring.

Being trans can be a beautiful thing

Trans people go through a lot but:

- Gender euphoria
- Self understanding
- A positive community
- Tangible improvement

It's just as important to focus on the positive emotions that come with a transition!



Where do you go with your questions?



STUDENT
PSYCHOLOGIST



COMPASS
Buddy and transgender
group



CLAARTJE BOSKMAN
AA BMT



DÉSY VERKUILEN
AA BDS



Want to know more?

- Transvisie: <https://www.transvisie.nl/> this site is made by and for transgender people and everybody else to rise awareness
- COC Eindhoven organizes awareness activities in education(from primary school to HBO) and organizes several activities.
- Compass is a TU/e organisation here to answer any questions and provide a supportive community to students: <https://compasstue.com>
- Advising Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer College Students ISBN-13 978-1642671773



Thank you!

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