

Simply put, being trans means to have a gender that doesn't correspond with the one assigned at birth - for example, someone can be assigned male at birth but be, in fact, a woman. 'Trans' is an adjective and used as such - for example, 'trans person' or 'trans liberation'. For the purpose of this exhibit, 'transgender' also encompasses non-binary identities, although note that some nonbinary people prefer not to use that word to self-describe. Being transgender is distinct from one's sexuality - transgender people can be gay, lesbian, pansexual, bisexual, asexual, etc. just like everyone else.

The transgender flag. Designed in 1999 by Monica Helms, the flag represent men, women, and non-binary people with the white stripe in the middle. Photo by Sharon McCutcheon on Unsplash.



Trans History

around the world throughout the ages, with potential records of trans individuals person'). dating back to prehistory (Talalay, 2005).

In particular, current rigid Western notions of gender were not the norm there is a rich history of far more fluid gender identities in many different societies, from Hijras on the Indian subcontinent (Iyer, 2009) to sex and gender fluidity during Igbo history in Africa (Azuah, 2014) to Fa'afafine in Samoa (Taulapapa McMullin, 2011) to a wealth of gender diverse identities in Indigenous North American communities, when, after a series of court trials often grouped under the term 'Two-Spirit' involving trans people in the aristocracy, (although note that this term is contested legal rights for trans people were blocked - many Indigenous tribes have their own, more accurate terms) (Estrada, 2011). These are only a few examples - there are numerous more from throughout history. White settler colonialism usually throughout the struggle for LGBT+ destroyed these identities, instead liberation. This is most famously during importing and enforcing stricter gender roles, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Equally, the use of singular 'they' as pronoun is far older than our modern times, with the first written record recorded in 1375 (OED Online, 2022) and one of the first recorded trans women in England was Eleanor Rykener who worked as embroiderer and sex worker in London and Oxford during the late 14th century (Henningsen, 2019). The term



"In my youth, I had always been rather shy, uncomfortable around people and in social situations. When I discovered my trans identity towards the end of high school back home, I started to understand myself a lot more. I started taking HRT so that my body would match my identity and be something I can be satisfied with."

Anonymous

Being trans is not a modern phenomenon 'transgender' itself was first used in 1965 - transgender people have always existed and often gets abbreviated to 'trans' now (it is used as an adjective, e.g., 'trans

> In 1919, the first Western institute which dedicated part of its resources to researching trans health and helping with transition was founded in Berlin, Germany as the Institute for Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sex Research). In 1933, the institute and its entire library were destroyed by the Nazis. In the UK, trans people were able to receive medical care and correct their birth certificates if wished with little problem until 1970, (Playdon, 2021).

Trans people, in particular trans people of colour, have been instrumental the Stonewall Riots in 1969, where trans activists such as Marsha P. Johnson, Miss Major and Sylvia Rivera led the struggle. Today's goals for trans liberation focus around trying to achieve equity in all facets of life, such as housing, health care, employment, education and legal recognition without the need of medical requirements. These goals go hand in hand with racial justice (in particular Black liberation), disability justice, as well as the fight for sex workers' rights - freedom and justice can never be for only a select few.

"[Since coming out] I feel more comfortable in my skin, but treated worse by society."

Eleanor, Bartlett School of Architecture

"I've learned a lot about this world [since coming out], as I now meet people I wouldn't have otherwise. It's often confusing and scary, but I'm still exploring and learning a lot, which is fantastic. Although, it's also constant worries of how people perceive me, whether I pass enough, whether I'm allowed certain things. It's a game of "tug-ofwar", in a sense."

Anonymous

"Nothing much has changed [since coming out]. Whether that is good or bad on the part of society I still have not yet decided."

Anonymous

"Growing up trans was a struggle everyday but once I was able to access medical care and eventually, finally, live as myself - life became easier. I'm not exactly open about being trans (because of the transphobia I experienced growing up) and I am now able to live a relatively stealth life. Still, I usually feel invisible. Feeling like you have to live your life in hiding is difficult - I wish the world was different and transphobia wasn't so pervasive."

Aleks, UCL Alumnus

"I'm proud to be trans and have the opportunity to help fight for LGBTQ+ rights."

Cake, Institute of Education

"I identify as non-binary trans, so my presentation as both of these terms isn't always determinable to society. I am often read as a woman, even though this isn't the image I have of myself. When someone uses my preferred pronouns or uses descriptors like 'handsome' I feel affirmed. But mostly 'coming out' has coincided with my own self-acceptance and understanding, of permission to be myself, whatever that may be."

Anonymous

"I've been out since I was 12. It's been difficult to have people look at me like I have two heads when I say I'm non-binary or I'm trans. Especially back then, I had to 'find myself' on the internet, and I felt I only actually blossomed when I came to University and now worked."

Jayne, Student Union Professional Services

"I'm still slowly coming out. In some ways I feel a sense of liberation, but in others I feel like I have to be more on my guard now, particularly when meeting new people."

Anonymous

Here to Stay: Trans Lives at UCL and Beyond "Initially I felt quite pressured to look a certain way as a nonbinary person that was AFAB (assigned female at birth). I've mostly let go of that now, though it does rear its head sometimes. As I've come out more and more as nonbinary, I've gotten more confident about asserting my pronouns to people. And I've seen it become less and less of a big deal (in some ways!) as awareness of nonbinary identities becomes more common. It's been really cool to see how many nonbinary people I know! It's also been a process for me to identify as trans -- as an AFAB person who is mostly read as a woman, I know that I have an awful lot of privilege in that respect, so it seemed a little outrageous to identify myself as trans. But, as demographic surveys tend to say, my gender identity isn't the same as the gender identity I was assigned at birth, so..."

Johanna, UCL Engineering

"Life became worth living once I found me. It was the hardest decision of my life, fear of not being accepted or understood was on my mind for months, until I could no longer pretend to be who I was not. To my surprise, everyone was supportive, although confused, but for almost 4 years, my life has been amazing- for the lack of better words."

Isaac, UCL Student Accommodation Services

"[Being trans] is not a disease or a mental health condition. It may lead to mental health problems because of isolation and lack of support. Coming out as trans doesn't automatically make you a different person. You are still you at the core. There's no age limit for discovering your gender identity, and those who had all figured out from their early childhood are as valid as those who didn't suspect anything until well into being adults"

Anonymous

"[Being trans is] as normal as everything else that's normal."

"There isn't 'one size fits all', no one's experience of being trans is identical. We experience sameness, sure, but we all have different language, different thoughts, different feelings about what being trans means. This is expanded further when we think about what being trans means globally, not just in the global north."

Jayne, Student Union Professional Services

"Being trans is NOT a choice, it's who we are. Yes, many make the "choice" to medically transition, however, this is more of a life or death situation, so it's not really a choice is it?!"

Isaac, UCL Student Accommodation Services

"The medical processes of transition [is a struggle]:

- The absurdly long wait times to become part of a gender clinic if someone wishes to pursue a medically supervised transition - The insanely expensive cost of turning towards private healthcare,

making the option impossible for most trans people

- The fact that even when turning towards private healthcare, the wait times for any surgery end up incredibly long, and [it is] disorientating figuring out where to go or who to talk to"

"Medical transition is not mandatory and is not the thing that makes someone trans." Eleanor, Bartlett School of Architecture

"Being trans is not a fetish!"

Anonymous

"I wish people would understand that being trans isn't up for debate and that the vast majority of 'trans issues' presented in centrist and event leftist press (looking at you, the Guardian) is deeply belittling and hurtful. These 'issues' are rarely about trans experiences or social and economic barriers, they are forums for journalists who take issue with trans people."

Anonymous

"I wish cis people would understand that there isn't a 'surgery' which makes you your gender, and how they are probably very wrong when they think they can 'always tell.' Here's a hint: hormone replacement therapy is very slow magic and multiple cis people have confided in me that they've just 'never met a trans person,' unknowing of my status."

Franz, Department of Philosophy

Anonymous

"Trans people have always been around and fighting - just erased by those privileged few documenting history at the time, just like any other marginalised group."

Anonymous

"People think we're too pushy with our pronouns a lot of the time. I've seen too many people (including teaching staff, police and medical professionals) roll their eyes after being corrected. I wish people knew a lot of trans people are actually really nervous to correct people - we're not a monolith - and that we deserve to be gendered correctly. I also wish people could understand trans people are very much a part of LGBT+ and there shouldn't be any efforts to change that. More people need to understand being trans isn't a horrific curse in and of itself, but rather it's hard to live as a trans person because of how the law and society treats us."

Anonymous

friendship or kinship."

"[Being trans] is not in conflict with feminism or with the rights of women. Trans people, as a category, still suffer from a lot of marginalisation, discrimination, and violence. Men who attack women in toilets are cis men -- they're not trans women. People probably know more trans people than they might think. Gender doesn't have to be tied to how your appearance is evaluated in this very gendered world."

"[Being trans] is not a new phenomenon and is backed by heaps of science."

Here to Stay:

Anonymous

Trans Lives at UCL and Beyond

"Rather than other people as the world as a whole, I wish that more of us would recognise that identity is as much what others see us as as it is what we see ourselves as. No man is an island."

Anonymous

"People think they meet trans folk halfway, while having no idea how many miles we've actually walked to that point."

Anonymous

"We need allies to help with the change [at this university] by supporting trans voices (not by speaking over us!)."

Anonymous

"Be mindful that many trans people go in and out of being out and being stealth for myriads of reasons." Anonymous

"It's not about gender when it comes to all kinds of relationships, be it

Cake, Institute of Education

Johanna, UCL Engineering

"There is no one way to 'look' trans! And we shouldn't be expected to be gender conforming just to have our identities recognised!"

Anonymous

"We're just people - you don't have to

understand trans people to respect them.

Trans people aren't a threat to cis people."

Sex - A combination of the hormones, genetics, and epigenetics which result in the expression of a particular combination of primary and secondary sex characteristics. Traditionally, people are classified binar as male or female based on these traits, though there exist ambiguous cases. These ambiguous cases are referred to as intersex. Many people will discuss their sex by describing their AGAB (assigned gender at birt

AGAB - Short for assigned gender at birth. AGAB is a general term, so individuals may use AMAB, assigned male at birth, or AFAB, assigned female at birth, to indicate the genders they were assigned. In many cases, this terminology is preferred to "born as a girl" or "born as a boy."

Gender - Gender refers to a person's internal experience of society through the lens of socially imposed norms, traditions, and roles. Traditionally in western cultures, gender was decided based on sex. Some cultures had more genders which played different roles in their society. Today, gender is determined through selfreflection and examining one's own experiences with the social construct of gender.

Gender can also be used to describe the system of socially constructed categories of individuals.

Gender Expression - The combination of physical and behavioural methods which convey a particular gender Gender expression includes the way a person dresses, their hairstyle, their mannerisms, and so on. A person's gender expression may align with their gender or may not. One example of the gender expression not matching their gender expression can be found in tomboys: a tomboy is a cisgender woman who has a masculine or androgynous gender expression. Another example is a transgender man who has a feminine gender expression. Having a certain gender expression does not invalidate their gender.

"Some people have an irrational hatred of us, not many, but they're VERY vocal. Making someone go through the "wrong" puberty is violence. Young trans people should have more protection. The work of charities like Mermaids is vital. We only occur at a rate of 1:100 and 1:200 of the population. Not everyone comes out, and not everyone has surgery. Trans people need to be afforded the opportunity to be themselves. Using the correct pronouns is not an attack on your rights. Cis isn't a slur. No matter how curious, DO NOT ASK ABOUT OUR GENITALS. It's pretty rude! [...] Diversity is brilliant. Embrace the difference in people, learn from others. Never write people off because they are different from you and your family or community. Become an ally. Go to a protest. Show support. No one will ever mind cis/het people attending!" Holly, Information Services Division

> "[If you] think that enforcing the basic human rights of a marginalised group of people is somehow infringing your freedom of speech, then you need to have a long hard think about what

> > Anonymous

you've been talking about."



Non-binary – In the context of gender, non-binary refe to any gender which rejects classification as male or female. A few examples of nonbinary genders include agender, bigender, androgyne, genderqueer, and genderfluid.

Cisgender - Refers to someone whose gender is the same as or aligned with their sex. Sometimes this term is shortened to "cis." For example, you might describe someone as a cis male or a cis female person.

Transgender - Refers to someone whose gender is different than their sex. This includes individuals that identify as non-binary. Sometimes this term is shortened to "trans." In binary cases you might describe someone as a trans man or a trans woman. In a nonbinary case, you might describle them as transmasculine, transfeminine, or simply trans.

> **FTM** - Shorthand to describe a transgender man Stands for female to male.

MTF - Shorthand to describe a transgender woman. Stands for male to female.

Gender Dysphoria - A clinical diagnosis used by medical practitioners to describe individuals who experience difficulties in their day to day life due to the incongruity of their sex and their gender as described in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). In many countries, a diagnosis of gender dysphoria is required to undergo medical and legal transition, even though the classification of gender dysphoria as a mental disorder is outdated and harmful. Receiving a diagnosis is long, complicated and often very invasive. More recently, gender incongruence as also been used to describe individuals who feel a marked disconnect between their sex and their gender, though doesn't experience the extreme distress as described by gender dysphoria.

Gender Euphoria - A feeling of happiness, pleasure, and/or excitement from experiencing your gender. Some causes of gender euphoria include being called the right pronouns, dressing in a gender affirming way, or being addressed in a gender-affirming way.

GRC - Gender Recognition Certificate. This is officially required in the UK to change one's gender marker on all official records and get a new birth certificate. It requires an official gender dysphoria diagnosis and 'sufficient evidence' that you have lived in your 'acquired gender' for two years and will do so for the rest of your life - these diagnoses and evaluations are often incredibly invasive and there is no option for non-binary people.

Transitioning - This refers to changing one's life in order to align better with one's gender. This can include medical transitioning (talked about on the next board) and social transitioning, which includes changing names and pronouns, dressing differently, etc. Each trans person is different and the extent to which they can and want to transition is a highly individual and personal decision. A concept that is often invoked and should always be looked at critically is 'passing' i.e., being able to pass as a member of one's gender.

Pronouns - Words used in speech which are used in place of nouns to designate people or things. In English, the most common pronouns used to refer to people are he/him, she/her, and they/them. We usually don't say 'preferred pronouns' - our pronouns are our pronouns, they are not a preference like one's favourite item of food.

Neopronouns - Describes pronouns developed in the recent past, which some nonbinary individuals prefer over they/them. Examples include xe/xem, ey/eir, and ve/ver.

"The excruciatingly long waiting lists for medical transition. As a scientist – a number of conferences and fieldwork sites now being permanently inaccessible to me. Feeling like a traitor to women in science after realising I am not one."

Seb, Department of Earth Sciences

"Being told (indirectly) that being non-binary and the fluidity of gender is silly; lack of acceptance and continuous invalidation."

Franz, Department of Philosophy

"Dysphoria is my main struggle, I sometimes experience very intense dysphoria that induces anxiety and depressive episodes, mentally crippling me. However, my struggle is also material, I am getting ready to spend a lot of money on an upcoming surgery, and finding the clinic and contacting them in the first place has been a very lengthy, disorientating, and lonely process as someone who is not part of a gender clinic. The surgery is also sure to affect me for a long while, having to recover in the hospital for a long period of time, which may prove difficult to time with my studies. Until I receive this surgery, sex is a very hard thing to approach for me. I enjoy hookups and going on dates with people but as I live my life "stealth" (without people knowing that I am trans), sexual encounters are a very difficult thing to deal with."

Anonymous

"Gender Dysphoria, social anxiety, verbal abuse, use of public facilities separated by gender, accessing healthcare, discrimination from university staff, bullying from peers."

Anonymous

is also blatantly transphobic and discriminatory as well."

"As a non-binary person, it sometimes feel like my trans identity isn't valid." Anonymous

"Enforcing my pronouns or correct spelling of my name. It's exhausting to constantly correct people or having to out yourself again just to be respected."

Jayne, Student Union Professional Services

Here to Stay: Trans Lives at UCL and Beyond "Mental health professionals suddenly feel the need to bring my gender into the conversation, like there is something wrong with me. Being misgendered, lack of representation, my gender not being legally recognised. Cannot legally marry my wife as my gender does not legally exist. Long waiting lists for medical help. Being denied a tubal ligation for no good reason."

Eleanor, Bartlett School of Architecture

"In order to transition, there is a lot of bureaucratic red tape involved on the part of the NHS, as well as the nature of NHS itself. This delayed response drove me to seek self-transition."

"I often struggle with social dysphoria as a non-binary trans person. I also struggle with communicating my identity to my family who are quite conservative."

"People very much ignore the pronouns that don't fit their interpretation of my gender, even when I make it very clear that I use she/they/he. Just because I am wearing a skirt does not mean that the 'he' doesn't apply."

Anonymous

"Dating- is definitely the hardest thing that I have to deal with. I never know if people date me because I am different or because they actually like me. It's a confusing world for me that I am trying to navigate on a daily basis. I will not go into dysphoria as that is a different ball game and people that do not have dysphoria would not understand it! But, the one thing I will say, is that UCL is a great place to work and allows people time off to have the needed procedures that will alleviate such dysphoria." Isaac, UCL Student Accommodation Services

"Living in a binary world; the sheer impossibility of opting out of gendered appearance; having to deal with other people's flusteredness and discomfort when they misgender me." Johanna, UCL Engineering

"It does suck how few stalls there are in men's toilets on campus, it's so awkward to wait while everyone is pissing in the urinal right next to you."

"At first, I found it really hard to deal with being misgendered constantly, and I knew very few trans people. I've has to spend way longer working out which bathroom to use."

"I struggle with uni teaching staff and other qualified professors still referring to us as transsexual. I struggle with cis people thinking I should be explaining to them everything about being trans and trans rights - people think they're entitled to our time when they're not. Being trans makes it nigh impossible to get help from the police, and my gender (non-binary) still isn't legally recognised. It's also a struggle to see so many people fawn over the works of modern transphobes, and excuse their actions. I struggle with the concept of 'separating the art from the artist' when the so-called art

Anonymous

"No real access to treatment options - wait list is years long, and private treatment is freakishly expensive. Not everyone has resources or can wait an indefinite amount of time for getting help, and that kills me."

Anonymous

How we perceive someone's gender is usually tied to how we see them performing repeatedly in society. This 'performance' can encompass multiple different things - from the way we dress, to how we act and speak, for example. All of these often conform to some preconceived notions we hold about how gender performs and is enacted by the people around us.

A lot of trans people experiment with these preconceived notions and the ways in which we act in and interact with society, including the ways in which we choose to express our gender. Everyone's experience and comfort with how they want others to perceive them is different - some deliberately try to eschew traditional gender norms, others prefer to adhere to them more closely. These things are compounded by other, intersectional factors such as race, disability and neurodivergence, for example, which often already influence how people are seen.

In many cases, concerns for safety play a big role in the way that trans people choose to perform and express their gender. Traditional gender roles can be limiting and damaging - gender expressions not explicitly belonging to traditional binary roles are often met with confusion and lack of understanding. AMAB (assigned male at birth) non-binary and trans-masculine people often struggle with the expectations of toxic masculinity they have been brought up with and the pressure to conform to expectations of being 'real men', in the latter case without being seen like one. Similarly, trans-feminine people are often victims of transmisogyny (where transphobia and misogyny are intersecting). This frequently leads to a lot of violence directed at trans people.

Nonetheless, performing and expressing gender in a way that's congruent with one's own identity and being referred to as such is a very happy and freeing experience for many trans people, often referred to as 'gender euphoria'. Whilst we face many challenges, the trans community is incredibly beautiful and resilient and full of joy.



Indya Moore as Angel in Pose (2018-2021). Image from Vanity Fair.

Unfortunately, this joy isn't very often portrayed in the media. Early portraits in film and television in particular usually featured trans stories only as tragedies, or spectacles for others to look at from the outside, with more positive stories few and far between if they existed at all. In addition, most transgender characters were usually played by cisgender actors whilst trans actors rarely received any roles to play.

Thankfully, this has slowly begun to change in recent times, with shows such as Pose featuring trans characters in prominent roles played by trans people and series like Star Trek: Discovery having trans characters who simply happen to be trans without it being the main storyline that is told. This increase in visibility has made a positive difference and will hopefully provide a positive point of reference and representations inspiring many young trans people.

This positive shift in representation hasn't reached all media yet, however. Many mainstream news outlets continue to perpetuate harmful and outdated stereotypes and facts about trans people, stoking a fear where there is nothing to be feared and rarely reporting on positive events in the trans community.

At the end of the day, we would simply like to live our lives same as everybody else, free to be who we are.

"Dealing with my GP/NHS in general. Being misgendered **People feeling the need to tell me they don't understand my** transness. Intrusive/personal questions about my medical transition/surgery plans." Bo

"My dad won't accept the fact that I'm trans. Some of my female friends also treat me like a guy instead of treating me like they did before I came out."

"I struggle a lot with accessing medical care - I have been on the NHS waiting list for a couple of years now. Though I was able to access hormonal therapy otherwise, I wish I had the opportunity to consult a trusted and experienced medical professional about my transition. Unfortunately, most doctors continue to be misinformed about trans topics and I honestly don't feel comfortable when I try to access any type of healthcare anywhere."

Aleks, UCL Alumnus



Blu del Barrio as Adira Tal and Ian Alexander as Gray Tal in Star Trek: Discovery (2017 - present). Image from Den of Geek

PERFORMING A IVING GENDER

Cake, Institute of Education

"The fact that I don't pass. Gender Critical people. Hate. Finding nice shoes or clothes that fit well. I'm lonely, in an intimate sense. My partner of five years, who knew I was trans, split up with me due to her close bond with her bigoted father. I'm paid less. It took nine months to find a job. I've never had that problem. Recruiters couldn't understand why I couldn't get an interview from looking at my CV. I am very much out on social media. I was advised to remove my pronouns from my name on LinkedIn as that is seen as a barrier too. I worry that I'll get battered for being me whilst walking through Liverpool at night-we have a big hate crime problem that is growing."

Holly, Information Services Division

Futher reading:

"[I struggle with getting] people to get my pronouns correct and having my identity taken seriously."

Anonymous

Here to Stay: Trans Lives at UCL and Beyond

There is a lot of myth and misinformation about trans health around. The following will hopefully help to clear up some of these myths! Talking about trans health can broadly be divided into two different topic areas - gender-affirming care (for example, medical transitioning) and general health care for trans people (not every single health issue we have is related to being trans!).

Gender-affirming care

Changing the way our body looks and behaves can help trans people deal with the ysphoria they experience and is, in those cases, critical to our happiness and wellbeing. to prescribe hormones or blood tests. Note that not every trans person experiences dysphoria and indeed not every trans person wants to or can transition - finances, health conditions, personal safety and support etc all play a big role. Medical transition also isn't tied to age - it can be just a successful for someone in their 70s as it is for someone in their 20s. There are a lot of myths surrounding gender-affirming care. This is what actually happens when you decide you would like to transition medically, no matter if you are under or over 18:

1) You speak to your GP. Your GP then refers you to one of the NHS' specialist Gender Identity Clinics (GICs).

2) The GIC offers you appointments where you are assessed by a specialist gender therapist (usually two). They will formally diagnose 'gender dysphoria' and,

if they believe it is the right choice, give referrals to surgeons or to endocrinologists, e.g., for hormone therapy. Under 16s do not get offered hormones (and under 18s no surgeries), but prescribed hormone blockers instead which are generally reversible and halt the effects of puberty, giving young trans people time to decide about their lives and what they want. Hormones and blockers are usually prescribed via GPs.

) Your GP/endocrinologist/surgeon suggests and carries out the necessary care.

The broken system in the UK

Unfortunately, the trans healthcare system in the UK is currently undergoing a crisis. As being transgender is becoming more accepted and widely visible in society, more people realise they are trans and are being referred to GICs. This leads to incredibly long waiting lists - the one of the adult GIC in London is currently 4 years and three months which means they are currently seeing people referred to in November 2017 for their first appointment.1 As this waiting time is increasing fast (it was less than 2 years in 2018), it means that if you are referred now, you might not be seen for eight or more years - a time that for many trans people is simply unbearable.

Research has shown that receiving gender-affirming care significantly improves the mental health of trans people (e.g., Ainsworth & Spiegel, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018), and the long waiting times, together with societal stigma and pressure have a significant impact on trans people's health - almost half of trans people have attempted suicide (Virupaksha et al., 2016).

Many resort to private pathways instead, but private hormones and surgery are expensive and waiting times are getting longer, too. For a lot of people, this is therefore not an option. In addition, many GPs refuse to cooperate and don't want

"Putting on a t-shirt for the first time after top surgery. Making some awesome new friends through a trans support group. Changing my name to one that feels like home.I'm much more in touch with my feelings. I'm more confident. I feel like I can finally recognise and celebrate myself."

> "Going on testosterone and my voice breaking. Being called son by my parents."

> > Anonymous

'Detransitioning'

A common fear, especially for parents of younger trans children is that it is 'just a phase' and someone might 'change their mind'. As no treatment before the age of 16 is permanent, there is plenty of time for children to figure themselves out - each process and journey are unique and different and, ultimately, valid, even if a child decides they are cisgender after all. Whilst more people are realising they are trans now (likely due to increased visibility and acceptance, as well as a lot of time for contemplation during Covid19), the feared 'rapid onset gender dysphoria' is not supported by clinical data (Bauer et al., 2021).

'Detransitioning' describes the process by which someone stops or reverses medical transition. In general, only about 3% of trans people experience some form of regret with transitioning, fewer of which will detransition. The most common cause for detransitioning is social, such as lack of support at home, problems in the workplace, discrimination & harassment, and lack of financial support. Only 0.4% of all trans people detransitioned because they realised that they did not want to transition at all (Herman et al, 2016).

Trans health care and the 'trans broken arm'

A common problem that many trans people who undergo gender-affirming care run into is that all other health issues quickly get related to being trans and, for example, taking hormones. This is often referred to as the 'trans broken arm syndrome', i.e., the idea that you turn up to A&E with a broken arm and are being turned away to talk to a gender specialist because they don't know how to deal with trans patients, or all of your problems get blamed on HRT.

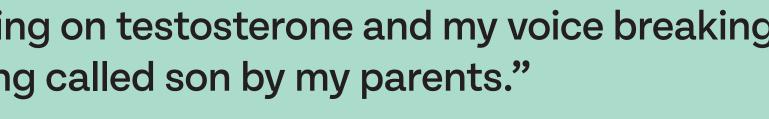
These problems can often be compounded by other factors that mean you are taken less seriously by the health system, such as disability, race or body weight.

A final point

If you are not trans, please remember that it is very invasive to ask trans people about how or when they are planning to transition or whether they've had 'the surgery' yet. You are not entitled to any of our medical details just because we are trans and you are curious, just as we aren't entitled to your medical details.

> "Since I've started transitioning, for the first time in 30 years I feel like I'm actually actively being alive instead of just existing. Getting on testosterone and having top surgery finally making me feel confident enough in my skin to wear femme clothing again. My dad going out of his way to call me a 'handsome young man' every time I send him a selfie."





DEMYSTIFYING TRANS HEALTH

Futher reading:



Seb, Department of Earth Sciences

"I can buy male clothes without being objected to by my parents. The LGBTQ+ community." Cake. Institute of Educatio

"Acceptance from closest friends. I guess it just proves they really ARE my friends. I pass okay, and when other people take me for a cis person of opposite AGAB, that makes me cosmically euphoric."

Anonymous

"I'm really proud and pleased to be trans, because it's given me so many friends. Through events at this uni and going to protests, I've met such a wonderful community, and I wouldn't have met most of these people if I wasn't trans."

"Being able to exist completely mundanely is the most positive moment of all, getting to be a person who is fully myself."

Anonymous

"I came out many many years ago at this point, and my life has only changed for the better. Yes, it's been harder in some ways eg. exposed to more active discrimination, medical gatekeeping, misgendering, but before I came out, I am unsure I even existed."

"Being able to talk freely about gender dysphoria to people who understand it. Knowing that I have allies."

"My partner has been amazing and has, on my behalf, spoken to friends and her family about my identity, when I haven't had the capacity to do that labour. Friends have also been very supportive."

"I'd say for me, being seen as a MAN without fear of being misgendered- regardless of facial hair. The support I received from family, friends, and coworkers. Most importantly- for me, the most positive moment was being able to look in the mirror and LOVE ME-love, and respect the person looking back at me in the mirror, something that I never thought would be possible."

"Having friends experiment with gendered terminology they use for me and finding what feels right and makes me happiest. Having a member of committee in a society correct herself to using gender neutral terminology even though it's technically a women's society."

Anonymous

"Meeting wonderful people, trans found family, gender euphoria."

Eleanor, Bartlett School of Architecture

Anonymous

Anonymous

"When I came to the UK to study at UCL, I gave life a fresh start. I was finally able to live as I wanted to. I now am thriving socially and do not feel the least bit shy or uncomfortable around people or in social situations. On the contrary, I found myself being loud, talkative, and am simply enjoying myself. Gender issues rarely plague me anymore, I am comfortable most of the time, and although I am still waiting for sexual reassignment surgery (SRS), which I am expecting soon, I am able to live fully, and the majority of people I interact with do not even know. I am trans. Life is better for me." Anonymous

"Being readily accepted by my friends and having them put in the effort to make me feel accepted."

Anonymous

"I've met wonderful people." Eleanor, Bartlett School of Architecture

Anonymous

"After my coming out, I was met with overwhelming positivity and acceptance from my grandparents - which I didn't expect. They have been supporting me in many ways since then, including financially, which I am really grateful for."

"Realising I was trans was difficult, and

being trans has caused struggles in my life,

but it does not make me miserable. It is a

beautiful thing, and li experience a lot of

joy because I am trans, not in spite of it."

Aleks, UCL Alumni

Anonymou

"Seeing more and more of my colleagues put their pronouns in their email signatures. When I first found another nonbinary staff person at UCL, after being here for years (and asking the Out@ UCL co-chairs at the time if they knew of any -they didn't). Getting Mx added as a title on UCL systems."

"People using "they/them" pronouns for me (my pronouns are he/they), especially a UCL staff member; exceptional support from friends; people asking me to help clarify specific concepts and terms. I've just felt so much more comfortable with who I am. It's helped me to see that there is a beautiful and greater complexity to everything when removing the binary (and the rigidity that comes with it) and embracing that. As an male-aligned enby, while I feel very comfortable in masc presentation, I don't feel at all bound by it. I also feel some euphoria in trying more feminine things, and again there isn't a part of that that I feel bound to. It's a very free experience and I love it."

"[Coming out] meant that I could finally begin my life feeling like myself. Before I felt like I was living as someone else, in an alien body I couldn't relate to. Now I have found and can build my sense of self."

Anonymous

"I do not consider being trans to be a positive experience in the least, although transitioning has been filled with positive moments for me. Transitioning has helped me in countless ways, and I just feel a lot better than I used to. I owe all the positive moments of my current life to my decision to transition."

"Meeting people and making friends in the trans community honestly saved me when I was struggling so much during the first term of my second year. Being able to find a circle of trans students and see their willingness to meet other people as well made me feel really at home. protesting and seeing a range of people in community is also a huge positive for me - uniting to verbalise how we've been wronged is a unique feeling, and seeing older and younger trans people gives me hope for my future, and for that of the community." Anonymous

"The stress in my head about me has been relieved. Waking up without worrying about what I will wear today to blend in with a gender of people I don't identify with. I can wear fab clothes, makeup, and generally be me. Which is awesome. I met my best friend at a reclaim pride protest. She's also trans, and we've become very close. Children just get it. You explain to them, and the response is something like, "Cool". They then never get it wrong. I have a trans cousin, and because of our shared experience we've become close and it's brought a lot of the family closer."

Holly, Information Services Division

Johanna, UCL Engineering

"I feel more like myself than ever, and am happy to be me. Finding joy in connecting with other Trans and Nonbinary people, finding clothing that wasn't just 'girl' or 'boy' clothes, they were MY clothes and expressed my gender (or lack thereof) that made me feel wonderful."

Jayne, Student Union Professional Services