

# Discussing Trans and Gender-Diverse People

## Media Tip Sheet

This guide will help you cover stories about trans and gender-diverse people respectfully and accurately.

## Guiding Principles

- 1 Reflect the language that people use to talk about their own lived experiences.
- 2 Use the right name and pronouns. This applies to reporting on any time period in a person's life—past or present.
- 3 When it comes to names and pronouns, avoid characterizing them as preferred—they just are.
- 4 Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate. One doesn't tell us anything about the other.
- 5 Every transition is unique and there is no single, linear or "correct" way to transition. So, avoid qualifying transitions with adjectives like a "full" or "complete" transition.
- 6 Take care to not characterize trans people as having a mental disorder, or implying that all trans people experience discomfort with their bodies.
- 7 Define terms that your readers or listeners may not understand. Please see The 519's Glossary of Terms: <http://www.the519.org/education-training/glossary>
- 8 Don't make any assumptions.

## ? Ask Yourself

Is a person's gender identity and/or sex assigned at birth relevant to your story?

Why are you asking each question in your interview?

Do you need to know?  
Do you need to ask?

Would you ask someone who isn't trans this question?

## ✗ Don't describe someone as\*

tranny  
MTF/FTM  
she-male  
transgendered  
transvestite  
pre-op/post-op  
transgenderism  
transgenderist

\* unless someone uses these or other terms to describe themselves

## Recommended



Do use a **trans person** or a **transgender person** (as an adjective)  
Do use a **person is transitioning**  
Do use they were **assigned female** or **male at birth**  
Do use **cis** or **cisgender woman** or **man**  
Do respect someone's self-declared pronouns; consider setting an example by introducing yourself and your pronouns  
Do use and respect the name someone gives you  
Do use photos you were provided  
Do use **transition-related surgeries**, plural where possible, noting that some people use **gender-confirming**, **gender-affirming surgeries** or other terms

## Offensive



Don't use a **trans** or a **transgender** (as a noun)  
Don't use a **person is transgendering**  
Don't use they are **biologically female** or **male**  
Don't use **non-trans** or **real woman** or **man**  
Don't assume someone's pronouns  
Don't imply someone's birth name is their "real" name  
Don't use photos without someone's consent  
Don't use **sex change**, **sex-reassignment surgery (SRS)** or **gender-reassignment surgery (GRS)**



## For more resources

[The519.org/education-training](http://The519.org/education-training)  
[RainbowHealthOntario.ca/resources](http://RainbowHealthOntario.ca/resources)



Rainbow Health Ontario