



The Non-Binary Spectrum

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The term nonbinary refers to gender identities that are neither male nor female and are identities that are outside the gender binary. The nonbinary identities fall under the nonbinary umbrella, which is under the transgender umbrella, although not all nonbinary individuals consider themselves transgender. Identities such as genderfluid, agender and demi gender fall under the nonbinary umbrella.

To comprehend the concept of gender, people need to realize the difference between gender and sex. Sex depends upon the biological attributes of an

individual, such as whether their chromosomes state whether they are male, female, or intersex. Gender, on the other hand, is a social construct and can be viewed as a spectrum. It comprises behavior and the way an individual presents themselves to society. Gender identity is also separate from sexual or romantic orientation. People outside of the gender spectrum have a variety of sexual orientations such as pansexual or asexual, just like cisgender people.

By age four, most children have a stable sense of their gender identity. Cisgender children are aware of their gender at a young age, so why do we only question when nonbinary or transgender children know how they identify at the same age? Children learn stereotypes about how boys and girls are supposed to dress and behave and how to imitate them from adults, along with society and product marketing and advertising. Nonbinary individuals don't relate to what society tells them to feel about these rules and they may experience distress or low self-esteem due to it.

Gender dysphoria refers to the discomfort some people experience due to a lack of connection between their gender and their sex. Nonbinary youth can undergo depression and anxiety as a result of the stigmatization they experience, along with not feeling connected to who they are or comfortable with the bodies they are in. Some non-binary people are medically treated for gender dysphoria with hormone medication or surgery. This means the individual would have characteristics from both sexes that may be expressed in regard to one's gender identity. Non-binary youth who are confident in their gender and have parental support have mental health profiles similar to cisgender individuals.

As non-binary people fall outside the gender spectrum, some prefer to use pronouns other than she/her and he/him. The most common gender-neutral pronouns are they/them. Neopronouns are a form of gender-neutral pronouns that are not officially recognized in the language they are used in, and are used in place of he, she, or them. Some examples include xe/xem/xyr, ze/hir/hirs, and ey/em/eir. It is vital to remember that a person's gender pronouns cannot be assumed from their appearance. One way of showing support is to avoid assumptions and ask what their preferred pronouns are. This should be practiced universally with everyone, rather than just people that seem like they do not identify with the sex they were presented with at birth.

Nonbinary identities can date back to 400 B.C to 200 A.D, but in the 21st-century people have felt more comfortable coming out as we are slowly making progress and creating safe spaces for this. Global support is increasing worldwide, especially on social media platforms. Recently, Instagram added a feature to put in preferred pronouns to normalize preferring a specific set of pronouns. We as a society need to continue working on inclusivity. This doesn't just apply to nonbinary people, but for citizens of all labels worldwide, so that people can finally feel comfortable with who they are.