Transgender Definitions
We realize that not everyone is familiar with the terms used in our series about transgender youth. This list is not inclusive of all terms used in the trans community, but we hope it will serve as an introduction and foundation for learning while you listen.

The entire series can be found at: MOHEC.org/trans.

**Bigender:** A person whose gender identity encompasses both male and female genders. Some may feel that one identity is stronger, but both are present.

**Birth Sex:** The sex (male or female) assigned a child at birth, based on a child’s genitalia.

**Cisgender:** Refers to congruence between the gender category assigned to an individual at birth and the gender identity experienced by that individual.

**Coming out process:** see transition/gender affirmation process.

**Endocrinology/Endocrinologist:** medical discipline/doctor dealing with regulation of body functions by hormones and other biochemicals and treatment of endocrine system imbalances.

**Female-to-Male (FTM) or Transgender Man:** A person born with female genitalia at birth who feels they are male/a man and lives as male/a man. Some will just use the term male.

**Gender Expression/Role:** The way a person acts, dresses, speaks and behaves in order to show their gender as feminine, masculine, both, or neither.

**Gender Identity:** A person’s internal sense of being a man, woman, both, or neither. Gender identity usually develops at a young age.

**Gender-marker:** designation of gender (male or female) on an official identification document such as a driver’s license or birth certificate.

**Gender Non-Conforming/gender-independent:** People who express their gender differently than what is culturally expected of them. A gender non-conforming person is not necessarily transgender (for example, a woman who dresses in a masculine style but who identifies as female; a boy who likes to play with girl dolls but identifies himself as a boy, etc.).

**Gendernormative:** based on gender binary – people are either male OR female.

**Genderqueer:** A relatively new term, genderqueer is used by some individuals who do not identify as either male or female; or identify as both male and female.

**LGBTQ:** acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer.

**Male-to-Female (MTF) or Transgender Woman:** A person born with male genitalia who feels they are female/a woman and lives as female/a woman. Some will just use the term female.

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual orientation is about how people identify their physical and emotional attraction to others. It is not related to gender identity. Transgender people can be any sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual, no label at all or some other self-described label).
Social transition: see transition/gender affirmation process.

Trans: Abbreviation for transgender.

Transgender: People whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transition/Gender Affirmation Process: For transgender people, this refers to the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes, such as changing their clothing, name, sex designation, and using medical interventions. This process is often called gender affirmation, because it allows people to affirm their gender identity by making outward changes. Gender affirmation/transition can greatly improve a transgender person’s mental health and general well-being.

Transsexual: A term used to describe a subset of transgender individuals who have transitioned to the opposite sex, often but not always through a combination of hormonal therapy and sexual reassignment surgery.

References for terms/definitions

