



# PFLAG *Southwest Washington Chapter*

## November 2017 Newsletter

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🌐 Web: <https://sites.google.com/site/pflagsouthwestwa> 🌐 WSC Web: [www.pflagwsc.org](http://www.pflagwsc.org)



## November is Transgender Awareness Month

**Join us at the Transgender Day of Remembrance Ceremony, Monday, Nov 20, 630-8pm at the Clark County YWCA, 3609 Main Street, Vancouver**

### Join us:

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the Children’s Home Society, 1112 Columbia Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

### Next Education and Support Meeting: November 14, 7pm

- Our guest speaker is Jessie Spinney, a Sexual Assault Prevention Specialist for the Clark County YWCA.
- Our regular support session will follow.

### Dates to remember:

- November 21, 5pm, Triple Point Harvest Pride Thanksgiving Dinner at the YWCA. Please bring a desert, salad, or vegetable to share
- December 12, 7pm, PFLAG SWWA meeting Join us in creating Christmas goodie bags for the Triple Point youth



### Letter to the Editor

PFLAG SWWA Treasurer Dale Clukey authored the following letter which was published in The Columbian on September 15, 2017.

### Letter: Fear of differences is misplaced

By Dale Clukey, WOODLAND  
Published: September 15, 2017, 6:00 AM

When I joined the Air Force I didn’t fathom the positive influence it would have on my life. I’d grown up in Eastern Washington, attending schools nearly 100 percent Caucasian. I didn’t know the two black students at school, nor any Hispanic people. My negative views of those groups came through comments I heard from others.

But one of my first Air Force roommates was Hispanic, a religious and devoted family man. My first NCOIC was black. He was friendly and competent, with military bearing. I soon realized that what I’d heard was false. In 1998, my son came out as gay. The negative comments I’d heard for years about gay people didn’t fit my son. He did not choose to be gay any more than someone chooses their race.

Now I see opposition to the rights of transgender people, including a presidential decree banning them from the military. Prejudices against people who are transgender are based on misunderstandings, lies, and misplaced fears. Acts and words of the fearful, ignorant, or hateful won’t change the reality that transgender people exist, nor that they have rights.

Most Americans agree that all citizens, including the LGBTQ community, have an inherent right to the blessings of equality and justice, including the right to openly serve in the military.

**See pages 2 and 3 for an informative *Transgender 101* article and page 5 for the *Myths of Trans Regrets*.**



## TRANSGENDER 101

Adapted from a Tacoma PFLAG Chapter pamphlet

### Who Is Transgender

According to the Williams Institute roughly 0.3% or 3 out of 1000 of the adults in the US are transgender (trans). The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) estimates that between 0.25% and 1% of the population is transgender. Even very young children often know that the gender which they actually are is opposite that which was assumed they are at birth, based on their genitals. It is not at all uncommon for older adults to finally figure out that what has been bothering them for so many years is that they are trans or more specifically, transsexual. Many people say that they have never met anyone who is trans before. Most likely this perception is incorrect as trans people are just like everyone else, coming in all ages, sizes, shapes, colors, and religious beliefs.

### What Does it Mean to be Transgender

Transgender (Trans) is an umbrella term which includes trans men and trans women whose binary gender identity is the opposite of their assigned sex and who are sometimes specifically termed transsexual if they desire medical assistance to transition. Trans also includes crossdressers, drag kings and queens, and gender queer people, people whose identities are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Trans also includes third-gender people such as genderqueer people who may identify as bi gender, pan gender, or gender.

Trans people experience a mismatch between their gender identity or gender expression and their assumed gender based their assigned sex at birth. NOTE: Gender, sex, and sexuality are all very different. A simple way to look at these terms is that a person's sex is determined by their genitals while gender is how a person perceives themselves in their own mind. Sexuality refers to who we are attracted to. Being transgender is independent of sexual orientation. Trans people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, etc. or may consider conventional sexual orientation labels as inadequate or inapplicable.

Many trans people experience a period of identity development that includes gaining a better understanding of their self-image, self-reflection, and self-expression. This process may take months, years, or even decades. The degree to which individuals feel genuine, authentic, and comfortable with their external appearance and accept their genuine identity is referred to as transgender congruence.

### Is A Transgender Person Mentally Ill?

No, transgender people are not mentally ill but this remains a common stereotype. Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) is listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Current Edition (DSM-V), a guide used by mental health professionals to diagnose psychological conditions. Gender dysphoria or gender identity disorder (GID) is the formal diagnosis used by

psychologists and physicians to describe people who experience significant dysphoria (discontent) between the sex and gender they were assigned at birth.

Evidence suggests that people who identify with a gender different from the one they were assumed to have at birth may do so not just due to psychological or behavioral causes, but also biological ones related to their genetics, the makeup of their brains, or prenatal exposure to hormones. Transgender identity is not a mental illness.

Transgender identity is not a mental illness that can be cured with treatment. Transgender people experience a persistent and authentic difference between their assigned sex and their understanding of their own gender. For some people, this leads to emotional distress.

This pain often can be relieved by freely expressing their own gender, wearing clothing they are comfortable in, assuming a societal role of the gender with which they identify, and, for some, making a physical transition, hormonal and/or genitally, from one gender to another. For those people who identify as transsexual, counseling alone, without medical treatment, hormones and/or genital corrective surgery, is often not effective. Trans people often experience discrimination and violence in their families, schools or in their communities. A lifetime of this can be very challenging and can sometimes cause anxiety disorders, depression and other psychological illnesses. These are **NOT** the root cause of their transgender identity;

## TRANSGENDER 101 (cont.)

rather, they are the side effects of society's intolerance of transgender people.

### How Should I Act and What Is a Normal Reaction

People's reactions upon learning that a friend, loved one, or stranger is transgender run the gamut from disgust and hatred to unqualified acceptance. There is no "normal" reaction. It is not unlikely to feel a combination of confusion, disbelief, a profound sense of loss, embarrassment, anxiety, shame, guilt for having caused or done something wrong which caused the person to be trans. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

### What Can I Do?

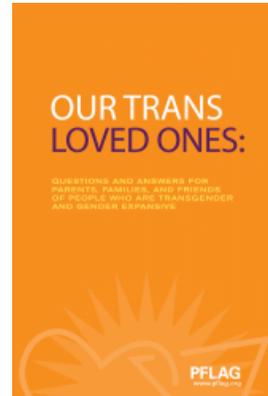
- What you can do is educate yourself. The resources listed in this pamphlet may be helpful
- Talk and listen respectfully to the person who has come out to you. Try your best to have an open mind
- Read: Understand what it means to be transgender - knowledge is power.
- See a counsellor or therapist who is specifically experienced with gender identity issues. Remember, there are no silly or stupid questions other than those unasked!
- Be kind to yourself; give yourself time to understand
- Join a support group such as a transgender support group.

## Resources

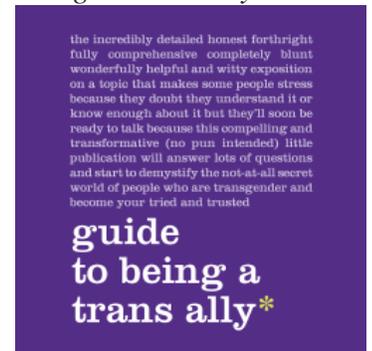
- <http://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-transgender-people-faq>
- <https://community.pflag.org/transgender>
- <http://transequality.org/issues/resources/ablueprint-for-equality-a-federal-agenda-for-transgender-people-2015>
- <http://www.translifeline.org>
- <https://community.pflag.org/document.doc?id=921&erid=8427515>
- <http://transequality.org/know-your-rights/schools>
- <https://transgenderequality.wordpress.com/>
- [2011/11/16/new-resource-glsen-and-nctemodell-district-policy-on-transgender-and-gender-nonconforming-students/](http://www.aclu-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Resources-for-Transgender-Youth-FINAL.pdf)
- <http://transstudent.org/downloads/ModelDistrictTransandGNCPolicyFINAL.pdf>
- <http://www.aclu-il.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Resources-for-Transgender-Youth-FINAL.pdf>
- <http://community.pflag.org/freepublications>
- <http://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Books-Transgender/zgbs/books/292220>
- <http://www.rainbowcntr.org>

## Resources (cont.)

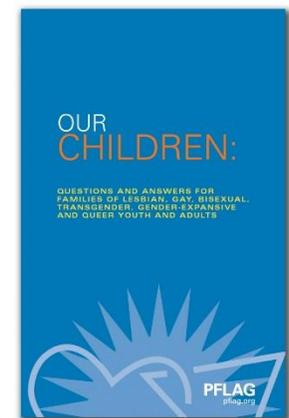
- PFLAG booklet *Our Trans Loved Ones*



- PFLAG booklet *Guide to Being a Trans Ally*



- PFLAG booklet *Our Children*



Resources: (cont.)

An excellent resource is PFLAG National's *Straight for Equality* ([www.straightforequality.org/trans](http://www.straightforequality.org/trans))

The image is a screenshot of the Straight for Equality website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'about', 'contact', 'events', 'support', and a search box. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories: 'WORKPLACE', 'HEALTHCARE', 'FAITH', 'TRANS', and 'PFLAG'. The main content area features a large purple graphic on the left with the text 'straight FOR equality' and 'guide to being a trans ally\*'. To the right, a large blue banner reads 'START YOUR JOURNEY HERE. the guide to being a trans ally resources & tools'. Below the banner is a blue box with the text 'straight for equality: trans allies'. A green sidebar on the right contains a list of links: 'Straight for Equality: Trans Allies', 'Trans Allies Materials', 'Educational Programs', 'Personal Stories', 'Come Out as a Trans Ally', 'Additional Resources', and 'FAQ'. The main text area below the banner contains several paragraphs of text, including a mission statement and a welcome message to trans allies.

about contact events support search:

WORKPLACE HEALTHCARE FAITH TRANS PFLAG

straight FOR equality

START YOUR JOURNEY HERE.  
the guide to being a trans ally  
resources & tools

straight for equality: trans allies

Straight for Equality: Trans Allies  
Trans Allies Materials  
Educational Programs  
Personal Stories  
Come Out as a Trans Ally  
Additional Resources  
FAQ

When PFLAG National launched the Straight for Equality project in 2007, the mission was—if you'll excuse our *nearly* inexcusable pun—pretty straightforward. We wanted to create a resource and community for people who are not lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) to understand why their voices are critical to achieving equality for all, and provide them with the information and tools to effectively raise their voices. In other words, a way to take us straight for equality for all.

**Welcome to the newest step in the ally journey: becoming a trans ally.**

For many allies, familiarity with lesbian, gay, and bisexual people—and the issues that they face—is increasingly common. And yet, when we discuss inclusion of our transgender friends, that level of familiarity is very different. Continuing your ally journey to become an educated, out, and proud trans ally takes specific resources and support...and this is where you can start.

This newest installment in the Straight for Equality project aims to provide you with key learning tools, like the [guide to being a trans ally](#), opportunities to learn even more through the [great resources and organizations](#) doing this work, and [a chance to start coming out as a trans ally](#).

Allies have been changing the world and expanding inclusion in phenomenal ways. So whether you're a straight ally looking to expand your efforts, or you identify as someone from the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community and you want to send the message that equality means equality for everyone, we're thrilled that you're here.

# The Myth of Trans Regrets

Based on a 2011 study of 448 individuals performed by Gender Advocacy Training & Education

**Myth:** A number of transgender people are beginning to admit that choosing to transition ruined their lives.



**94%**

of trans people reported an improvement in their quality of life due to transitioning



**96%**

answered that their sense of wellbeing improved

**Myth:** Transitioning will make a person bitter and depressed.



**9 out of 10**

responded that their overall personality improved due to transition

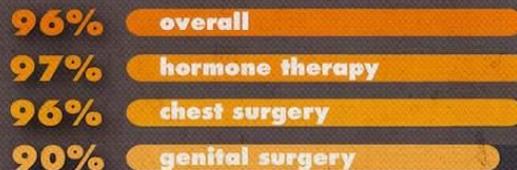
**85%**

described their emotional stability as "improved" (11% reported no change)



**Myth:** Transgender people don't really want to change their body, they just get pressured into it.

## Transition Satisfaction Rates



Close, Colin, *Affirming Gender, Affirming Lives: A Report of the 2011 Transition Survey*. Santa Rosa, CA: GATE, 2012.

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For more information, go to [transstudent.org/graphics](http://transstudent.org/graphics)

**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources