

SEX, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The Basics

Everyone has different parts that go into making us who we are, how we see ourselves, and how we want others to see us. Some examples of this can include teenager, artist, athlete, vegetarian, musician, cousin. Sometimes we don't even have to think about these things, they are just part of who we are. Everybody also has parts of themselves or their identity that relate to their physical sex, their gender and sexuality (who they are attracted to).

A person's **Physical Sex** is the make-up of their body including genetic, hormonal and physical characteristics. Many people think of male and female as the only way that these characteristics are expressed, but this isn't the whole story. Some people are Intersex, people born of intermediate sex, with genetic, hormonal and physical features that can be thought of as typical of both male and female at the same time. You can't tell someone's physical sex by looking at them alone because so much of our characteristics are on the inside of our bodies, such as hormones and chromosomes.

Gender is different from physical sex. It is a very personal sense of who we are, and how we see ourselves in terms of a girl, a boy, a combination of these or maybe neither. "Gender norms" are how our society expects men and women to behave and look in particular ways – most societies have pretty rigid ideas of what it means to be a man, woman, masculine, feminine.

Some girls are masculine, some boys are more feminine, some feel both at the same time, while others experience themselves as being outside gender norms altogether.

Gender Diversity is an umbrella term that includes all the different ways gender can be perceived. It can include people questioning their gender, those who identify as trans* or transgender, gender queer and many more labels. Gender diversity isn't a new thing, it can be found in all cultures and traced throughout all human history and also occurs naturally throughout the animal kingdom.

Sexuality is separate from a person's physical sex and their gender, sexuality refers to who a person is attracted to, who they want to go out with, and who they crush on. For lots of people sexuality isn't as simple as being straight or gay. A person's physical sex, gender and sexuality can be confusing and complicated at times for everybody, no matter how they identify.