

ENDING ISOLATION AND SHAME: BASIC TRANSGENDER RESOURCES

BOOKS:

Counseling in Genderland: A Guide for You and Your Transgendered Client, by Neila Miller, Different Path Press, 1997

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us, by Kate Bornstein, Routledge Press, 1994

My Gender Workbook, by Kate Bornstein, Routledge Press, 1998

Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Rupaul, by Leslie Feinberg, Beacon Press, 1996

Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink and Blue, by Leslie Feinberg, Beacon Press, 1998

A Persistent Desire: A Fem-Butch Reader, edited by Joan Nestle, Alyson Books, 1992

True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism for Families, Friends, Coworkers and Helping Professionals, by Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsely, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996

Body Alchemy: Transexual Portraits, by Loren Cameron, Cleis Press, 1996

Gender Shock: Exploding the Myths of Male and Female, by Phyllis Burke, Anchor Books, 1996

Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism, by Pat Califia, Cleis Press, 1997

TRANS 101

So just what is this trans thing anyway?

You're likely to get as many answers to that question as there are people to ask.

Anyone who has spent time thinking about gender has her own way of defining gender and transgender. Most people begin with what we all learn growing up in America.

Most Americans are taught to view sex, gender, and sexual orientation as a rigid system of opposing categories, with no in-betweens and little variation.

This traditional model says that each person is one of two distinct biological sexes, characterized by certain physical traits, all of which go together as a single package and exclude any traits from the opposing package.

Thus, a male has penis and testicles, xy chromosomes, and testosterone as dominant hormone. He will grow facial hair, develop a deep voice, and be muscular.

A female has vagina, uterus, and ovaries, xx chromosomes, and estrogen as dominant hormone, and will develop breasts, retain a high voice, not grow facial hair, and be physically weak.

Each of these two sexes are further characterized by certain social expressions, called gender. Male individuals are masculine; female individuals are feminine. Channels of gender expression include clothing, toys, jobs, academic interests, sports and hobbies, social roles, speech patterns, and body language.

Finally, each of the sexes is sexually attracted exclusively to individuals of the opposing sex: males are attracted to females, and vice versa. Further, the model says that all of these things are natural, in-born, morally imperative fixed sets, changeable only by trauma or moral failing of some kind.

To be a "real" man or a "real" woman in this model, there can be no variation from the most rigid definitions of any of the above categories.

It dictates that man with any one of the following would not be a "real" man: a high voice, a vocation in quilting, or an attraction to other men. For women, facial hair, construction work, or attraction to other women makes them suspect.

For gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, there is no question that, at the very least, the final category of the model, orientation, is not true. Often, GLB folks are able to question the second category, gender expression, as well.

Much less often do we question the first category, sex, or the implicit relationship between gender and orientation, or explore the infinite variations among and between all three.

This is where the "T" comes in.

What is transgender?

The simplest, and broadest answer is any person or type of expression that challenges or does not fit into the rigid traditional model of sex and gender: that which is transgressively gendered.

To some, this includes gay, lesbian, and bisexual people who challenge the orientation part of the traditional model.

To many, orientation is not part of the newer sex/gender models, because who

Some Specific New England Transgender Resources:

Transgender Community Center
351 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116
617-536-7050

Hello! We are A Slice of Rice, a queer Asian youth (under age 25) group, a peer-run and peer-led social and support network. Meets every Monday evening from 7 to 8pm at Boston GLASS (Gay Lesb. Adolescent Social Serv.) located at 93 Mass Ave. Buzzer #4, Floor #3 at the Hynes T stop. To be put on the email list, email: sungyun@chickmail.com

'GenderTalk' Boston's world wide radio show that talks about transgenderism in the first person. With hosts Nancy Nangeroni and Gordene Mackenzie. And "the Twisted Nasty News" with Hal Fuller (aka Ashely And). Mondays from 6:30pm to 8:30pm on WMBR 88.1 FM. Check out the Web site at www.gendertalk.com

COMPASS: A New England area female-to-male (FTM) trans support, information, and social group for people assigned female at birth who feel that is not an accurate or complete description of their gender. Compass meets every month. To find out more about Compass, call IFGE at 781-899-2212, or email ftm@ifge.com In Rhode Island, or if the above email address is not working, contact CompassRI@aol.com

The East Coast Female-to-Male Group (ECFTMG) Meets in Northampton, Massachusetts every month. All FTMs and SOFAs are welcome, of all sexual orientations and whether non-op, pre-op, post-op, crossdressers, or questioning. The group is a free peer support group meeting regularly since 1992. To receive a list of ongoing meeting dates and discussion topics, write to: ECFTMG, P.O. Box 60585, Florence, MA 01062.

The FTM Center The voice of the Transsexual Man in the arts, sciences, literature and professional arena. The FTM Center is proud to feature The Lion Heart Group. Boston area. Contact Ernie at ftmcenter@mail-city.com

TransAction An inclusive transgendered support group run by trans identified youth (13-25) who's focus is to advocate education, peer support, community involvement and the integration of gender equity in local legislative and social programs. Open to all LGBTQ, friends, family and significant (13-25). Meets at Boston GLASS. Contact GLASS for more info.

Post Transition Association Designed for transsexuals who have transitioned and dealing with issues such as relationships, families, and living our lives. For more information contact IFGE at 781-899-2212. The group is open to FtMs & MtFs.

Yankee Boyz - Maine's first and only FTM Transgender support group. A social/support group for those born female and which "woman" as an identity does not fit. Female-to-Male Transsexuals, Transgenderists, Crossdressers, TG Butches, Stonebutches and otherwise very masculine identified female "guys" of all sexual orientations are welcome. A place to share ideas and experiences in an atmosphere where we do not have to fight for validation. Topics picked for each meeting. Video viewing, books, transition options, non-transition options and more. For further information email: yankeeboyz@hotmail.com

You Are Not Alone

An informal support group welcoming TG/TS women and men. E-mail TiffanyClub@tcne.org

SUGGESTED WEB SITES:

Transgender Education Network,
Justice Resource Institute, Boston
www.jri.org/ten.html

This site has a New England Transgender Resource Guide

IFGE—International Foundation of Gender
Education, Waltham, MA
www.ifge.org

American Boyz
www.netgsi.com/~listwrangler/

Leading Transgender Organizations
www.gendertalk.com

It's Time, America!

www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7979/

Intersexed Society of North America
www.isna.org/

PFLAG's Transgender Support Network
www.critpath.org/pflag-talk/

Transgender Splendor/Transgender Outreach Project
www.prairienet.org/tsplendor/top

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League, SMYAL
smyal.org

