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What is transphobia?

KEY WORDS

rejection | hate | discrimination | transgender

Transphobia is the **rejection, ridicule, discrimination, or even hatred or other forms of violence**, towards trans people (those people that do not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth), and sometimes also towards those that don't conform to the gender assigned to them at birth (like drag queen and drag kings, who dress up as the opposite sex to perform for shows).

What is the difference between a transsexual and a transgender person?

"Transgender" is a broader and more commonly accepted term. It refers to people whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. "Transsexual" was used in the past to specifically describe people who undergo or would like to undergo medical interventions, such as hormone therapy or surgery, to match their physical characteristics with their gender identity.

However, this term is now considered outdated due to the fact that not all transgender people pursue medical interventions and would prefer not to be defined based on this choice.

In discussions about this issue today, the term '**trans**' person is used to be as **inclusive and respectful** as possible towards the situations of all people who do not conform to the sex they were assigned at birth, since it doesn't specify whether someone is in the middle of transitioning, taking hormones, or undergoing surgery. Being trans is a human condition in which the person experiences a difference between their gender identity (what gender they identify with) and the gender that has been socially assigned to them at birth related to their sex. It is different from sexual orientation (heterosexual or homosexual, bisexual…).

The term 'trans' is often related to a critique of the male-female binary system. On the other hand, when someone's gender corresponds to the sex assigned at birth, they are called '**cis-gender**'.

How can you recognise transphobia?

Let's talk about how transphobia shows up. It can be as obvious as name-calling, bullying, or **denying equal rights to trans people**, through discriminatory laws. But sometimes transphobia is more subtle. Subtle discrimination is called a '**microaggression**', and it can look like:

- refusing to use someone's preferred pronouns (refer to a transgender man as 'she', for example),
- deadnaming them (using the name they were given at birth instead of the name they chose for themselves after coming out as trans)
- making insensitive comments about their identity (by claiming that being transgenderism is a mental illness).

The impact of transphobia is wide-reaching. It can lead to mental health struggles, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and a higher risk of violence against trans individuals, especially trans women of colour. Transphobia can lead to a lack of access to essential resources like mental health support or gender-affirming healthcare (such as when insurance policies exclude coverage for hormone therapy and surgical procedures).

When society turns a blind eye to transphobia, it creates an environment where these people may feel excluded, misunderstood, and even afraid for their safety. This is why the first step towards a more inclusive society starts with understanding and addressing recognising that **everyone, regardless of their gender identity, deserves respect, dignity, and the freedom to live authentically.**

Let's break down barriers and create a world where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued!

INCLUSION AND STAYING SAFE

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