

Asking Questions

Why do I want to know this information?

Curiosity is important, and a legitimate reason to have questions. However, if you're only asking because you're curious, it may be a good idea to turn to Google or other resources such as our Video Introduction to Transgender People, our Transgender Basics, and our Frequently Asked Questions about Transgender People for information.

On the other hand, sometimes we need information to respectfully interact with people. Names and pronouns are a great example of this type of information—knowing someone's name and the pronouns they use (for example, she/her/hers, he/him/his, or they/their/theirs) allows you to call them what they ask to be called and treat them with respect.

Would I feel comfortable if someone asked these questions of me?

Take a moment to put yourself in the shoes of the person being asked a question. For example, what surgeries they have or haven't undergone or what their genitals look like can be very personal. How would you feel if someone asked to talk about your genitals, or share details about personal and intimate surgeries you've undergone? Even if you would be comfortable sharing that information, not everyone will feel the same way.

Would I ask this question of a non-transgender person in a similar situation?

If you just met someone at a cafe, you probably wouldn't ask questions about what their genitals look like, what surgeries they have or haven't undergone, or about intimate details of their childhood. Before you ask a transgender person similar question, stop and think whether you're treating them differently, and asking more personal or inappropriate questions simply because they're transgender.