

# Gender Dysphoria DSM 5 Criteria

This handout can be used as a handout for patients to provide them with information about the criteria for Gender Dysphoria as outlined in the DSM-5, as well as important terminology related to the condition.

*This handout is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for professional consultation, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional regarding any concerns or questions you may have about gender dysphoria or any other mental health condition.*

## DSM 5 Diagnostic Criteria for Gender Dysphoria in Adolescents and Adults

1. A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least six months' duration, as manifested by at least two or more of the following:

- A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics (or in young adolescents, the anticipated secondary sex characteristics).
- A strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one's experienced/expressed gender (or in young adolescents, a desire to prevent the development of the anticipated secondary sex characteristics).
- A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender.
- A strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).
- A strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).
- A strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender).

2. The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

## DSM-5 criteria for Gender Dysphoria in Children

1. A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least six months' duration, as manifested by at least six of the following (one of which must be Criterion A1):

- A strong desire to be of the other gender or an insistence that one is the other gender.
- A strong preference for wearing clothes typical of the opposite gender.
- A strong preference for cross-gender roles in make-believe play or fantasy play.

- A strong preference for the toys, games, or activities stereotypically used or engaged in by the other gender.
- A strong preference for playmates of the other gender.
- A strong rejection of toys, games, and activities typical of one's assigned gender.
- A strong dislike of one's sexual anatomy.
- A strong desire for the physical sex characteristics that match one's experienced gender.

2. The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, school, or other important areas of functioning.

### Terminology

- **Cisgender:** Describes a person whose gender identity aligns in a traditional sense with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Gender diverse:** An umbrella term describing individuals with gender identities and/or expressions and includes people who identify as multiple genders or with no gender at all.
- **Gender dysphoria:** A concept designated in the DSM-5-TR as clinically significant distress or impairment related to gender incongruence, which may include desire to change primary and/or secondary sex characteristics. Not all transgender or gender diverse people experience gender dysphoria.
- **Gender expression:** The outward manifestation of a person's gender, which may or may not reflect their inner gender identity based on traditional expectations. Gender expression incorporates how a person carries themselves, their dress, accessories, grooming, voice/speech patterns and conversational mannerisms, and physical characteristics.
- **Gender identity:** A person's inner sense of being a girl/woman, boy/man, some combination of both, or something else, including having no gender at all. This may or may not correspond to one's sex assigned at birth.
- **Nonbinary:** A term used by some individuals whose gender identity is neither girl/woman nor boy/man.
- **Sex/gender assigned at birth:** Traditional designation of a person as "female," "male," or "intersex" based on anatomy (e.g., external genitalia and/ or internal reproductive organs) and/or other biological factors (e.g., sex chromosomes). "Sex" and "gender" are often used interchangeably, but they are distinct entities. It is best to distinguish between sex, gender identity, and gender expression and to avoid making assumptions about a person regarding one of these characteristics based on knowledge of the others. This is sometimes abbreviated as AFAB (assigned female at birth) or AMAB (assigned male at birth).
- **Sexual orientation:** Describes the types of individuals toward whom a person has emotional, physical, and/or romantic attraction.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term describing individuals whose gender identity does not align in a traditional sense with the gender they were assigned at birth. It may also be used to refer to a person whose gender identity is binary and not traditionally associated with that assigned at birth.

## Additional Notes

I'm glad you're exploring your identity and seeking information that resonates with you. Remember, it's okay to question and take your time to understand yourself better. Your feelings are valid, and I'm here to support you on this journey. If you have any questions or just need someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Take care,

Dr. Alex (They/them)

## Health Professional's Information and Contact Details

Name: Alex Summers

License Number: 123456

Phone Number: 555 123 4567

Email: a.johnson@email.co

Name of Practice: Inclusive Minds Therapy and Wellness

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[Psychiatry.org](https://www.psychiatry.org)

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