

# Non-Binary Identities

## What is the gender binary?

In Western cultures, gender is often seen as being an either/or choice, also known as a binary. In this way of seeing gender, a person can either be a man or a woman, nothing else. This binary is a way of putting everyone into two (often quite limiting) boxes. The gender binary is restrictive and is something which also perpetuates traditionalist ideologies such as women cannot be leaders, that men cannot be caregivers, that girls only like pink toys, and that only boys like football. This way of seeing gender is simplistic and does not represent the full spectrum of human experience.

## What is Non-Binary?

Non-binary people do not identify with either of the binary gender categories of male / female or man / woman, or may only feel they fit these categories some of the time. Non-binary identities are not a new concept. Genders other than male or female have existed for thousands of years.

## Gender around the world

In the Americas prior to European colonisation, as well as in some contemporary cultures, some North American Indigenous cultures traditionally recognise third gender or multi-gender roles, such as the Navajo 'nádlee' gender spectrum or the Zuni 'lhamana'. In further examples, Judaism recognises no fewer than six distinct gender categories in its classical texts and tradition. In Oaxaca, Mexico, the third gender 'muxe' dates back to the pre-Columbian era. The South Sulawesi Bugis people recognise five genders, which have been crucial to their society for at least 600 years. In Ghana, the Dagaaba people did not assign gender at birth; they based gender on the energy of the person as they grew. In the Navajo community, the Siberian Chukchi tribe, Maori cultures, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and even in Egyptian hieroglyphics as far back as 2000BC, there are many examples of non-binary identities existing and being celebrated.

At the time of writing, non-binary is the most common term used, but people may use a different word such as agender, genderfluid, genderqueer, or a word specific to their culture or language.

## Flags that represent gender identities



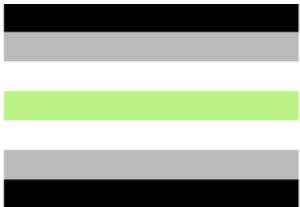
Non-Binary flag



Genderfluid flag



Genderqueer flag



Agender flag

### Useful websites

What Does It Mean to Be Non-Binary or to have Non-Binary Gender?

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-non-binary-or-have-non-binary-gender-4172702>

9 Things People Get Wrong about Being Non-Binary

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/9-things-people-get-wrong-about-being-non-binary>

Understanding Non-Binary People: How to Be Respectful and Supportive

<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>

### Videos

BBC Three – What Not To Say To A Non-Binary Person

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8b4MZjMVgdk>

This is What Non-Binary Looks Like

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1FN3wKmERQ&vl=en-GB>

Living as a non-binary in a binary world | Graysen Hall | TEDxUniversityofKent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pvLDHFCEWk>

Toilets, bowties, gender and me | Audrey Mason-Hyde | TEDxAdelaide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCLoNwVJA-0>

### Radio

BBC Radio 1 Stories – Being Non-Binary

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05vyc4k>

### Resources:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/being-non-binary-uk-today>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/lgbtq-pride-flags>