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Myth #2: Sexual orientation is linked to gender identity

By German Lopez | @germanlopez | german.lopez@vox.com | Updated Nov 14, 2018, 4:09pm EST

Part of **Transgender people: 10 common myths**

Equal rights battles and advocacy efforts have brought together gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and genderqueer people over the past several decades. But that doesn't mean that the basis for these identities is the same — in fact, sexual orientation and gender identity are very different.

Sexual orientation is who someone is sexually attracted to. Gender identity is who someone

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is. They are, as trans woman and former Olympian athlete Caitlyn Jenner explained to **ABC News's Diane Sawyer**, "apples and oranges."

Still, this remains a very common misconception. But a transgender person can identify as a woman, even though she was assigned male at birth, and be gay (attracted to other women), straight (attracted to men), bisexual, asexual (sexually attracted to no one), or attracted to a traditionally undefined gender. Trans men, gender nonconforming people, and genderqueer people can also be sexually attracted to men, women, both, no one, or another preference.

Mara Keisling, a trans woman and executive director of the **National Center for Transgender Equality**, **acknowledged** that this concept can be difficult to explain. "If somebody was living as a man dating women, and now they're living as a woman dating women, what does that mean? They were straight; now they're gay," Keisling said. "But did their sexual orientation change, or were they always attracted to women?"

This infographic, put together by **Trans Student Educational Resources**, helps break through some of that confusion by showing how a person's gender identity and

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expression fall outside characteristics like sexual orientation and sex assigned at birth:

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: **TSER**
Trans Student Educational Resources

The diagram features a purple unicorn on the left with a rainbow horn, a thought bubble containing a rainbow, and a DNA helix on its chest. To the right, five categories are listed with corresponding colored arrows and icons:

- Gender Identity** (Rainbow icon): Female/Woman/Girl, Male/Man/Boy, Other Gender(s)
- Gender Expression/Presentation** (Green icon): Feminine, Masculine, Other
- Sex Assigned at Birth** (DNA icon): Female (orange dot), Male (teal dot), Other/Intersex (purple dot)
- Sexually Attracted To** (Orange heart icon): Women, Men, Other Gender(s)
- Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To** (Red heart icon): Women, Men, Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan

Trans Student Educational Resources

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Transgender people: 10 common myths

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Myth #3: Letting trans people use the bathroom or locker room matching their gender identity is dangerous

Myth #4: Transitioning is as simple as one surgery

Myth #5: All trans people medically transition

Myth #6: Transgender-inclusive health care is expensive

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