

Gender and Sexuality

A Note on Inclusion

First and foremost, the Richmond Rapids fully support acts of inclusion for all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. This team is a place of support for youth within the context of sport. Nothing is more important than providing a safe, positive, and welcoming environment for as many people as possible.

Any action to the contrary, via hate speech, exclusion, use of slurs, violence, or microaggression, is in violation of the Rapids Code of Ethics and subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Gender

In the culture at large, and especially in sports, we emphasize a dichotomy of gender. This means that a person is either male *or* female, and those adjectives are based on physical characteristics present at birth (i.e., “cisgender”). In sports, gender categories are intended to make competition as fair as possible based on other physical attributes associated with genetic sex.

However, these categories don’t work for everyone.

To understand why, it is important to separate *gender* from *sex*.

Sex generally connotes the category of genitals a person has at birth. For most people, it’s one of two things, but it can present in a wide range of physical attributes. *Sex may* be the same as a person’s gender, and it may also not be.

Gender is how a person identifies. This could be male, female, transgender, non-binary, non-conforming, gender fluid (meaning gender identity may change), or any other arrangement that works for a person. Gender is as diverse as any other aspect of a person, like height, skin color, or tolerance for lactose.

As youth work to understand their identity, they may start to develop their sense of gender. Consider someone who’s gender and sex are both male. Even for a cisgender person, he will want to figure out if they identify as more *alpha*, *nurturing*, *dominant*, *quiet*, or *macho*. Within “male” alone is multitudes! The same is true of the entire range from “ultra-male” to “ultra-female.”

How do you talk to a trans, non-binary, or any other non-traditional gendered person? *Just like anyone else!* With respect, curiosity, and kindness. If you want to know more about their gender, ask yourself, “Would I ask this question of a cisgender person?”

Just like with anyone, it's not polite (at best) to ask about their genitals.

Sexuality

Like gender, society tends to recognize traditional arrangements for a wide variety of reasons. The most important fact is that, like gender, the traditional arrangement does not work for everyone.

Adolescence is a time where all people learn about and develop their sexual orientation. This orientation exists on a wide spectrum of possibilities, none of which have specific requirements or prerequisites.

A person's sexuality and gender are *self-defined*. It is not something to be diagnosed by anyone else, but rather something that is *expressed* as the person chooses.

The most important part of gender and sexuality development is that youth grow up knowing they are safe and have support from people they trust.

Gender and sexuality may relate, but again, they don't have to. For more on how gender and sexuality can interact, check out Trans Student Educational Resources (transstudent.org). You can even fill out your own Gender Unicorn! (transstudent.org/gender/).

Here are a list of definitions from the website:

Definitions:

Gender Identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same. Female, woman, and girl and male, man, and boy are also not necessarily linked to each other but are just six common gender identities.

Gender Expression/Presentation: The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes. It is important we don't simply use "sex" because of the vagueness of the definition of sex and its place in transphobia. Chromosomes are frequently used to determine sex from prenatal karyotyping (although not as often as genitalia). Chromosomes do not always determine genitalia, sex, or gender.

Physically Attracted To: Sexual orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

Emotionally Attracted To: Romantic/emotional orientation. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth. There are other types of

attraction related to gender such as aesthetical or platonic. These are simply two common forms of attraction.