

## 1.14 Community, Diversity, and Victim Services

### 1.14.4 Initial Contact with Transgender People

#### **Policy**

Part of the core values of the VPD are compassion and respect. Effectively serving diverse communities begins with understanding and respecting the sensitivities of individuals. With these values in mind, persons may identify, or present themselves, as a gender that is different to their perceived appearance or what is stated on their official identification. Although 'gender identity' and 'gender expression' are not included in BC's Human Rights Code, the courts have established that transgender people are protected from discrimination because they are covered by the ground of 'sex'. As such, members should make reasonable attempts to avoid labelling a person during interactions and when recording the name and gender of a person in police documentation and reports.

#### **Definitions**

The following definitions go beyond what is described in procedure but are listed in order to provide relevant, educational information that may be helpful when interacting with a transgender individual. The VPD encourages members to use non-judgmental language that will promote respect and equity towards the transgender community.

**Sex:** is the current anatomical classification of people as male, female or intersex, usually assigned at birth.

**Intersex:** people who possess or develop physical sex characteristics that do not fit into conventional medical definitions of male or female. This can include chromosomes, genitals, hormones and other sex attributes. Intersex people have been referred to in the past as "hermaphrodites"; however "Intersex" is the appropriate term.

**Transgender or Trans:** an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, trans women (male-to-female MTF), trans men (female-to-male FTM), transsexual, or gender non-conforming, gender variant, gender queer, or non-binary. The term "trans" is also appropriate; however, it is noteworthy that some transsexual people do not identify as transgender.

**Chosen name:** non-birth name that a transgender individual uses in self-reference (this may or may not be the individual's legal name). Many transgender people refer to their birth name as their "dead name" and it is very disrespectful to use their birth name in interactions after you have been informed of their chosen name.

**Gender expression:** is how a person expresses or presents their gender to others. This can include behavior and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are common ways of expressing gender and a person's gender expression may change from day to day. Others perceive a person's gender through these attributes.

**Gender identity:** is each person's internal and individual experience of their gender which may be the same as, or different from, their birth assigned sex. It is important to note that a person's gender identity does not have to match their gender expression.

**Gender binary:** is the concept that there are only two totally distinct, opposite and static genders (feminine and masculine) to identify with and express.

**Gender non-binary:** is the concept that gender identity and expression are comprised of degrees of femininity and masculinity, or neither as some trans people identify as non-binary, and do not see themselves as either men or women. These people often use 'they, them, their' pronouns for themselves.

### Procedure

1. Upon being informed that a person identifies as, or is, a gender other than what they may appear, or what their government issued identification indicates, members shall refer to the person's chosen name and gender descriptive pronoun associated to that gender identity. For example:
  - a) *She, her, hers* for feminine pronouns;
  - b) *He, him, his* for masculine pronouns;
  - c) *They, them, their* for a person who requests gender-neutral pronouns; and
  - d) Or other pronouns requested by the person.

If a member is uncertain of which pronoun to use then they are encouraged to discretely ask the person.

2. When entering the person into a general occurrence report (GO), or other official report as an "entity", they are to be entered by the name and gender indicated on their official government identification (e.g., Driver's license, Birth Certificate, BCID, etc.).
3. When completing the synopsis and narrative portions of the GO, members shall use the person's chosen name and appropriate pronoun. It is recommended that members use language such as "the complainant, John Doe, will be referred to by their chosen name – Jane Doe – in the remainder of this report" when preparing the synopsis and narrative.
4. If the transgender person is to be transported and lodged at the Vancouver Jail, the Jail NCO is to be contacted and informed of the person's chosen name and gender identity (which may differ from the person's entered name and gender).