



Transgender Service in the U.S. Military *“The Basics”*

Transgender Service in the U.S. Military

The Basics

In July 2015, the Secretary of Defense directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to identify the practical issues related to transgender Americans serving openly in the military and to develop an implementation plan that addresses those issues consistent with military readiness.





“Our mission is to defend this country, and we don’t want barriers unrelated to a person’s qualification to serve preventing us from recruiting or retaining the Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine who can best accomplish the mission. We have to have access to 100 percent of America’s population for our all-volunteer force to be able to recruit from among them the most highly qualified—and to retain them...Starting today: Otherwise qualified Service members can no longer be involuntarily separated, discharged, or denied reenlistment or continuation of service just for being transgender.” —Prior Secretary of Defense Ash Carter

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On June 30, 2016, a new policy allowing open service of transgender Service members and outlined three reasons for this policy change.

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1. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard need to avail themselves of all available talent in order to remain the finest fighting force the world has ever known. The mission to defend this country requires that the Services do not have barriers unrelated to a person's qualification to serve or preventing the Department of Defense (DoD) from recruiting or retaining Service members.

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2. There are transgender Service members in uniform today. DoD has a responsibility to them and their commanders to provide clearer and more consistent guidance.

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3. Individuals who want to serve and can meet the Department's standards should be afforded the opportunity to compete to do so.

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This presentation is designed to provide a basic understanding of the new policies enabling the open service of transgender Service members. It is an excerpt of the U.S. Department of Defense Implementation Handbook titled “*Transgender Service In The U.S. Military*” dated 30 Sept 2016.

https://deomi.org/CommDirectorInfo/documents/DoDTGHandbook_093016.pdf

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The cornerstone of DoD values is treating every Service member with dignity and respect. Anyone who wants to serve their country, upholds our values, and can meet our standards, should be given the opportunity to compete to do so.



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What does transgender mean?

Transgender is a term used to describe people whose sex at birth is different from their sense of being male or female. A transgender male is someone who was born female but identifies as male, and a transgender female is someone who was born male but identifies as female.

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What is gender identity?

Gender identity is one's internal sense of being male or female.



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What is gender dysphoria?

Gender dysphoria is a medical diagnosis that refers to distress that some transgender individuals experience due to a mismatch between their gender and their sex assigned at birth.



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Is being a transgender person the same as being a transvestite or a cross-dresser?

No. “Transvestite” is an outdated term that is considered derogatory. A “cross-dresser” is a person who wears clothing of the opposite sex for reasons other than gender identity. A transgender person who dresses according to their gender identity is not “cross-dressing.”

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What is the relationship between sexual orientation and gender identity?

There is no relationship between sexual orientation and gender identity.



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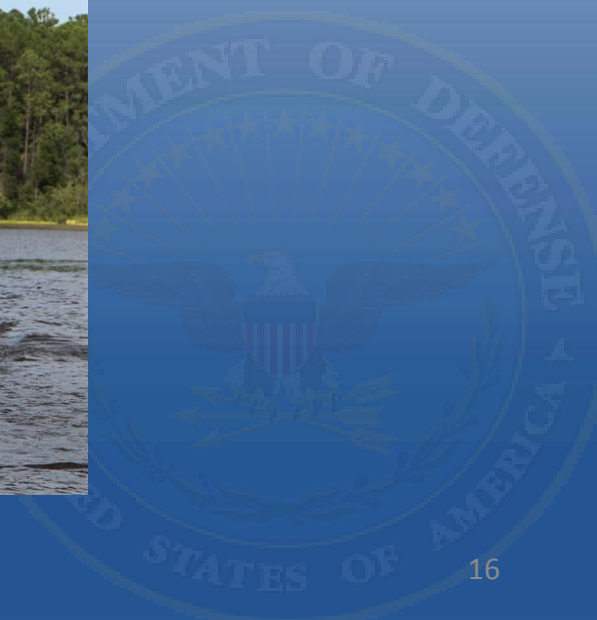
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What pronouns should I use with transgender Service members?

This will vary by individual and unit. Transgender Service members should work with their unit leadership to establish correct pronoun usage. If there is ever any question about pronoun usage, do not hesitate to ask the Service member how they wish to be addressed.

Summary

Your social interactions and developing friendships with peers contribute to a positive work environment. Do not make assumptions about an individual's gender or sexual orientation.



Summary

Let others volunteer personal information. Try to ensure planned social activities are inclusive of Service members and their families who may not fit into your perception of what is typical.



Summary

If you notice colleagues or peers are expressing opinions that may alienate others, speak up regarding how their statements may impact others.



Often people may be unaware of how their statements, questions, and activities may alienate and offend their coworkers, team members, or staff.

Summary

You should be sensitive to the use of pronouns when addressing others. This will vary by individual and unit. If there is ever any question about pronoun usage, do not hesitate to ask the Service member how they wish to be addressed.

If you have questions or concerns, you are encouraged to talk with your chain of command.

Maintaining dignity and respect for all is important.