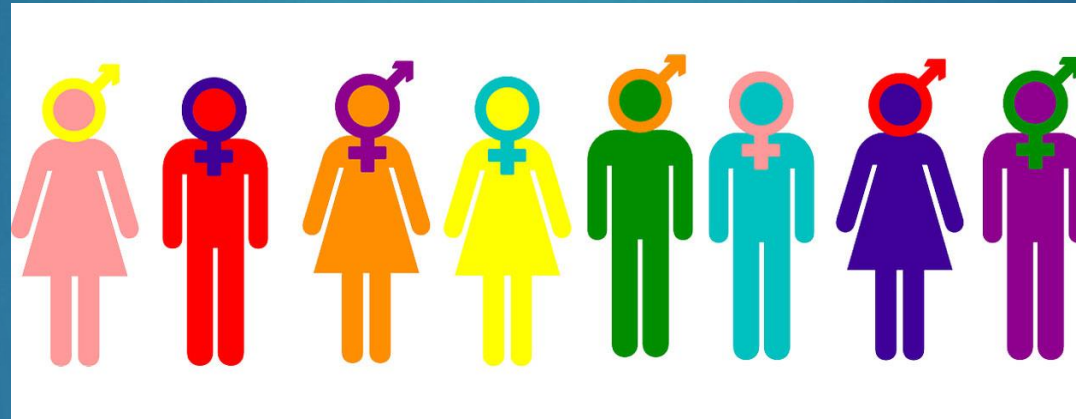


Occupational Therapy and Transgender Populations: Perspectives and Recommendations



Mariana D'Amico, Ed.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Elizabeth Schuster, OTD, OTR/L

Nova Southeastern University, Tampa

Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program



Objectives

Recognize the unique occupational needs and perspectives of the transgender population

Become familiar with transgender related terminology

Gain perspectives of practicing OTs

Identify ways to provide quality care

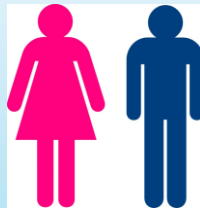
Background: Terminology

Gender identity

A person's intrinsic sense of being male, female, or an alternative gender.

Gender role or expression

Characteristics in personality, behavior, and appearance



Determined by society's standards

Gender dysphoria

Describes as the **distress** caused by the discrepancy between a person's gender identity and the person's sex assigned at birth.

Background: Terminology

Transgender

People whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth

Gender Non-conforming

People whose gender identity or expression is different than the social norm

Cisgender

People who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth

Background: Terminology

Trans Woman

Male → female
Caitlyn Jenner

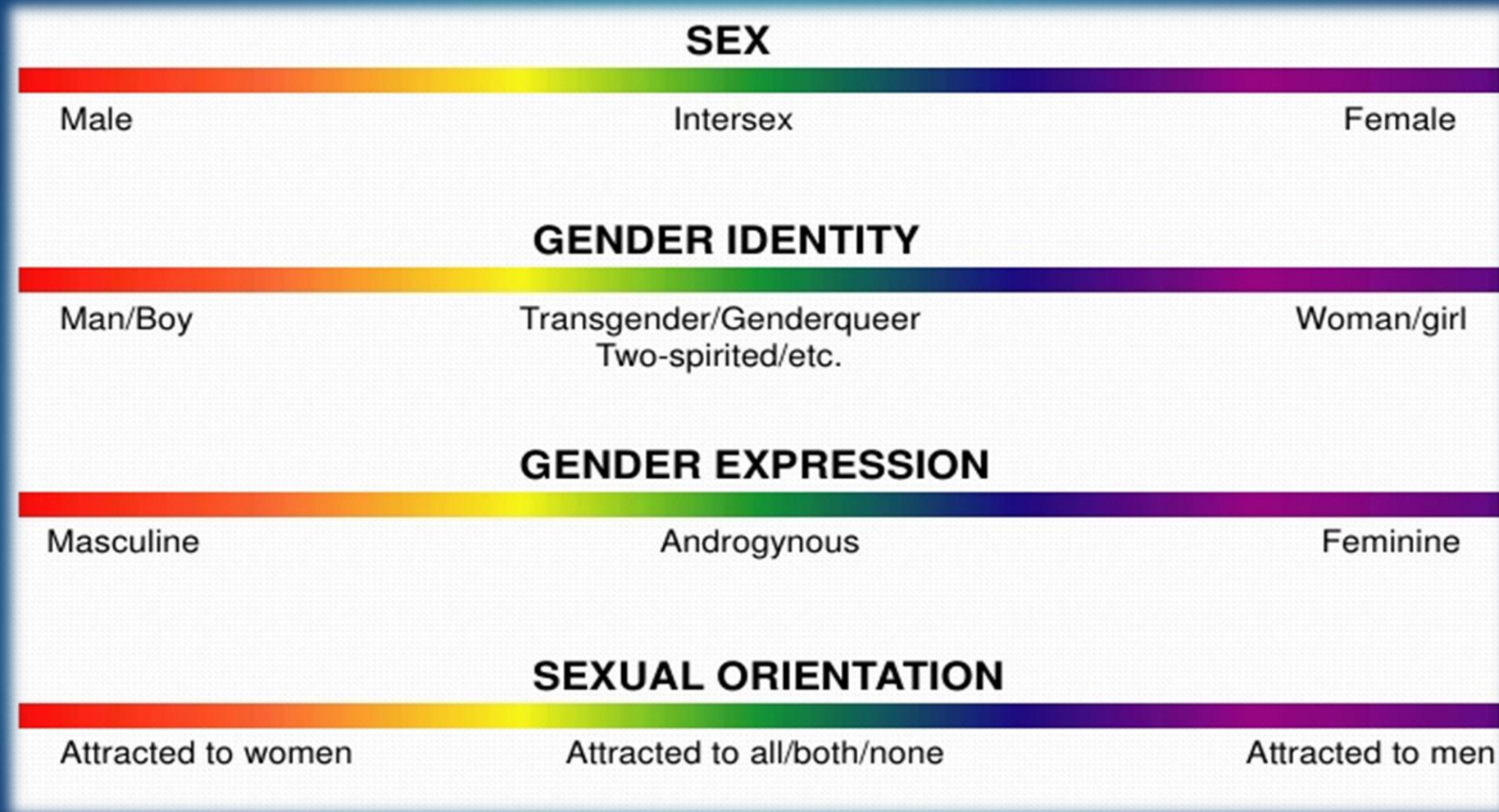
Trans Man

Female → male
Chaz Bono

Gender Queer

Cannot identify to
a specific gender
Miley Cyrus

Everything is on a spectrum



Background: Sexuality vs. gender

- ▶ Sexuality and preference is **COMPLEX** and varies for each person

- ▶ Gender and sexuality are **DIFFERENT**

- ▶ Sexuality=multidimensional

- ▶ includes things that direct sexual and romantic relationships
 - ▶ Desire, attraction, and behavior

- ▶ Transgender sexuality often falls **OUTSIDE** of traditional research framework (Galupo, 2017)

- ▶ suggests that a **new framework be developed**



Purpose of study

Exploring the occupational needs of the transgender population and occupational therapist's needs for providing services.

Research questions

What are the occupational needs and perspectives of individuals who identify as transgender?

What are the needs and perspectives of OT practitioners in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender?

How do the needs and perspectives compare?

What are suggestions and recommendations from the transgender and the OT focus groups for providing care to the transgender population?

Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative
- ▶ 2 Focus Groups: digitally recorded
 - ▶ Transgender group (Transwomen)
 - ▶ OT group
- ▶ Purposeful Sample
- ▶ Transcribed recordings
- ▶ Coded into themes

Results: Occupational **needs** of individuals who identify as transgender

- ▶ Becoming the identified gender: roles, relationships, make up, hygiene, toileting, dressing, safe sex
- ▶ Community integration: acceptance of identified gender, coping, bathroom access, employment, social participation, healthcare, gender markers and legal matters



Results: **Perspectives** of individuals who identify as transgender

“Victoria’s Secret is a whole new world”

- ▶ Assistance with ADL transitions related to grooming, hygiene, gestures, walking, dressing, shopping for lingerie, speaking
- ▶ Personhood: becoming the new me
- ▶ Coping
- ▶ Safe sex
- ▶ Employment & education opportunities
- ▶ Sensitivity training of others (community places, employers)



Results: **Needs** and perspectives of **OT practitioners** in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender

Knowledge and understanding

- ▶ Vocabulary, Transition Process, Unique ADLS of Tucking, Bonding, Gaff use, Processes for gender marker changes
- ▶ Dealing with hospital policy and gender specific situations
- ▶ Identifying and locating supportive resources



Results: **Perspectives** of OT practitioners in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender?

- ▶ **OT Process is a Good Match:** Client-centered, Occupation-based, Dignity, Respect, Psychosocial and Emotional Support, Advocacy
- ▶ Limited knowledge and Exposure
- ▶ **Increase training** & sensitivity
- ▶ Policy challenges (social, facility)
- ▶ Prevalence increasing: **“Younger therapists will be aware and more prepared”**



Results: Suggestions and Recommendations

Use the proper pronouns! of the person's identified gender

- ▶ Be respectful
- ▶ Ask relevant questions
- ▶ Be knowledgeable
- ▶ Be supportive
- ▶ Be accepting
- ▶ Give guidance
- ▶ Be holistic
- ▶ Advocate for dignity
- ▶ Increase educational opportunities for OTs and other HCPs
- ▶ Employability importance and choices
- ▶ Promote safe sex practices for transgender population

Limitations

- ▶ Small group
 - ▶ 2 trans individuals
 - ▶ 3 OTs
- ▶ Localized group
 - ▶ Tampa Bay area
- ▶ Trans women only
 - ▶ No trans men's perspectives
- ▶ Participants known to researchers
 - ▶ Potential bias



Recommendations: Implications for Practice

- ▶ Stay current
- ▶ **Increase knowledge and understanding**
- ▶ **More Research**
- ▶ **Function as consulting/ advocating roles**
 - ▶ Provide resources, programming, and referral to needed services
 - ▶ Community advocate
 - ▶ Promote occupational justice
 - ▶ Prevent occupational deprivation and barriers
 - ▶ Promote health and wellness

THANK YOU!



- ▶ Mariana D'Amico:
mdamico@nova.edu
- ▶ Elizabeth Schuster:
es1330@mynsu.nova.edu

Questions & Answers



Thoughts & Comments

References

- ▶ Belluck, P. (2016, July 26) W.H.O. weighs dropping transgender identity from list of mental disorders. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/27/health/who-transgender-medical-disorder.html?_r=0
- ▶ Coleman, E., Bockting, W., Botzer, M., Cohen-Kettenis, P., DeCuypere, G., Feldman, J., Zucker, K. (2012). Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people. *International Journal of Transgenderedism*. 13 (4), 165–232 .
- ▶ Galupo, M. P., Henise, S. B., & Mercer, N. L. (2016). “The labels don't work very well”: Transgender individuals' conceptualizations of sexual orientation and sexual identity. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 17(2), 93-104.
- ▶ Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Herman, J. L., Harrison, J., & Keisling, M. (2011). Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. *National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*. Washington, DC, 1-23. Retrieved from http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf