



Info on Trans Program Participants for Host Families

What does “trans” mean?

- Being trans (transgender, trans identifying, having a transidentity) is widely understood to mean that a person **doesn't feel like they belong to the gender that was assigned to them at birth**. For example, someone whose gender was assigned female at birth may identify as male or as outside the gender binary (genderqueer, non-binary, agender, genderfluid, etc.).
- The word “trans” is used as an adjective, stands for the various self-designations of trans people and points to the diversity of trans identities.
- The opposite of “trans” is “cis”. A cis person feels they belong to the gender they were assigned at birth. The assumption that people generally identify with the gender they were assigned at birth is called **cisnormativity**, and discrimination based on the assumption that someone is cisgender is called **cissexism**.
- A trans person may seek or have already taken medical (i.e., so-called transition or gender affirming measures) and/or legal steps (change of name and civil status). Medical measures can be, for example, taking opposite-sex hormones, puberty blockers, or undergoing gender affirming surgery. Not every trans person takes these steps – and that's fine. The identity counts, not the physical or legal status!
- In Germany and other countries, trans, intersex and non-binary people can change their name and/or the gender registered in their passport. Globally, however, this isn't possible in most countries. In Germany, you can also get the Supplementary ID Card issued by dgti e. V.
- Everyone should be addressed with their **chosen name** and **preferred pronouns** and accepted in their **true gender**.

Where does being trans become relevant?

- Your host child is an **expert on their own situation**. It's best to ask them what name and pronoun they would like to be referred to by and how they want to handle situations like going to the pool, room sharing at seminars, or locker rooms at sports.
- By now, many people know people who are trans. This has boosted tolerance. Nevertheless, most trans people experience **discrimination** on a daily basis, even though it's **prohibited by law** in many countries, and there's still a long way to go for social acceptance. Your host child should discuss harassment with you and/or the AFS office staff and also whether the police should be involved.



- Host children can be open about being trans if they want to, and many people (but unfortunately not all) will react positively. Nevertheless, you should talk openly with your host child about possible problems, risks, and dangers.
- Your host child may have **linguistic difficulties** explaining their situation or answering questions. In the beginning, bear with your host child if they don't find the right words right away.
- English has a long established, **genderneutral pronoun** (“they”), as do other languages. In other languages like German that have a binary gendered structure, some people who identify as neither male nor female, meaning non-binary, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or the like, use their name as a pronoun instead of “he” or “she,” or a **new pronoun** such as “xier,” “dey,” etc.
- In different cultures, problems are communicated more directly or indirectly. Therefore, your host child might take questions about transidentity or other details that are meant to be polite as invasive or rude. Please be sensitive here.
- In Germany, there's a **vast information and support network** for trans youth. We'll gladly assist you and your host child in finding offers wherever you are.
- Clarify with your host child who you may and may not tell about them being trans. Note that the local AFS office or seminar organisers may need to be informed.
- The legal name of your host child must appear on all official documents such as visa papers and airline tickets. However, on unofficial documents, as far as possible, the chosen name should be used.
- Your host child may need to take hormones. It's best to talk to them about what medications they need.
- If your host child is unwell, they should seek medical advice and be examined. Please also discuss this with the local AFS office. [Queermed Deutschland](#) lists doctors in Germany that are sensitised to the care of trans patients.

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