STUDENT TALK

The Social Pressures of Being Trans

“Very few people know about my identity and orientation. Sometimes I feel maybe people would respect me if I came out, but eventually I’ll hear some prejudiced remark and I’ll be knocked right back down again. Even today, I heard three separate people make a transphobic remark. I want to come out. I want to be able to live life how I want to, but I’m afraid of what might happen if I do.”
—First-year undergraduate, Wyoming

“I have a friend who is not gay and is attracted to females, but he also wishes that he was a female. He wears female clothing wherever he goes. There are many awkward and shameful stares, but he remains strong and courageous. I stand by my friend, accepting and encouraging his identity.”
—Fourth-year undergraduate, Ontario

“I came out as trans this past fall semester. Little did I know that could put a target on me in public places. I hear about trans people being raped and killed. It makes me fear for my life. [When I was] getting lunch on campus in the fall, someone started asking really personal questions. Don’t ask trans people about their genitals or anything that you wouldn’t like being asked.”
—First-year undergraduate, Texas

“I witnessed the harassment of a transgender student in my first year of college. She lived in my dorm, and I watched her fight an uphill battle every day just to be able to do basic things [and use the] restrooms and showers, which could only accommodate one person at a time anyway.”
—Second-year student, New York

“I really like how my college has changed the way students can be referred to by their preferred name or gender pronoun; it is very progressive.”
—Third-year undergraduate, California

How can we prevent sexual assault in the LGBTQ student community?
How can students support their LGBTQ+ peers?
See Student Health 101, June 2016.