

What is Female to Male (F.T.M.)?

Courtesy the American Boyz

Reviewed July 1st 2008

What does "F.T.M." mean?

"F.T.M." is an abbreviation for "female-to-male" transsexual, in other words, women who undergo the medical and legal procedures necessary to become men. "F2M" refers to people who are female by birth but who have male or masculine identities or appearances, which can include tomboys, butches, drag kings, gender benders, transsexuals, transgenderists, intersexuals, and other forms of gender expression.

Why do they do that?

There are as many reasons as there are people doing it. "Intersexuals" are born with conditions that give them a combination male and female physical traits; "transsexuals" seek to alter their bodies to conform to their internal concept of self; "drag kings" perform gender bending roles as a profession or hobby; "butches" are masculine-appearing women, usually perceived as lesbians, though that is not necessarily the case; "gender variant" people have spiritual, political, cultural, social or personal reasons they feel compelled to live or dress differently than conventionally expected by society. These people are often referred to by the umbrella term "transgendered", especially in a political context, e.g. "the transgendered civil rights movement."

Is it a form of mental illness?

Conventional medical diagnosis recognizes several kinds of psychiatric disorders relating to gender, such as "gender identity disorder", "Gender Dysphoria", "Transsexualism", and so forth. However any gender variant people believe very strongly that the right to identify their gender and act accordingly is not a pathology; but is instead the sign of a mature, thoughtful, and intelligent adult.

Aren't F.T.M.s just lesbians who can't deal with the homophobia in our society and pretend to be men in order to avoid being lesbian-baited?

F.T.M. transgenderism cuts across all orientations, all races, all cultures, all economic classes, and all walks of life. Some F.T.M. people prefer female partners, some prefer male partners, some prefer transgendered partners, some prefer partners who are not transgendered. Some change their preference after transition. Some do not. There is no correlation between sexual orientation and gender identity.

Who would want to partner with somebody like that?

Many men, women and transgendered people are specifically attracted to transgendered people because of their unique personal qualities and have satisfying, fulfilling relationships. But for someone who has just discovered that their partner is transgendered it can be upsetting and stressful to work through the issues necessary to regain balance in their relationship.

Is it really possible to turn a woman into a man?

A combination of male hormones, surgery and masculine apparel can remake a very feminine appearing person into a very masculine appearing person. Documentation can also be successfully changed to reflect the new name and gender.

Is it possible for F.T.M. transsexuals to have children?

Some F.T.M. transsexuals have children before undergoing sex reassignment surgery (S.R.S.). Some F.T.M.'s adopt children or their wives become pregnant through artificial insemination. F.T.M. transsexuals are infertile after S.R.S.

This information provided courtesy of The American Boyz, a national support and social group for people who were assigned female gender at birth but who feel that is not an adequate or complete description of who they are along with their significant others, friends, families, and allies.

Gender Centre publications provide neither medical nor legal advice. The content of Gender Centre publications, including text, graphics, images, information obtained from other sources, and any material ("Content") contained within these publications are intended for informational and educational purposes only. The Content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or legal advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding your medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you've read. Always seek professional legal advice on matters concerning the law. Do not rely on unqualified advice nor informational literature.

The Gender Centre Inc. 7 Bent Street (P.O. Box 266) Petersham N.S.W. 2049 Ph: (02) 9569 2366 Fax: (02) 9569 1176

Web: www.gendercentre.org.au Email: reception@gendercentre.org.au