

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) or Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) or sometimes referred to as “Sex Change”

Refers to a group of surgeries to alter an individual’s gender. Hormone treatment is almost always given prior to or as follow up to SRS. This process is referred to as transitioning.

For male-to-female (MTF) – this usually involves the removal of the testicles and most of the penis. The penis skin is then inverted into the vagina. Some MTFs may opt for breast implants, tracheal shaves and labiaplasty. MTFs also often undergo electrolysis.

For female-to-male (FTM) – this usually involves a mastectomy (with nipple reconstruction) and hysterectomy. Some FTMs may opt for surgery to create a penis and scrotum.

Benjamin Standards

<http://www.hbigda.org/soc.html>

This is a set of medical standards set to guide therapists and surgeons in the process of MTFs (male-to-female) sexual reassignment. They are named after Dr. Harry Benjamin, who worked with Christine Jorgensen, the first American to receive sexual reassignment surgery. These standards do not necessarily apply to FTMs and are often modified by the medical profession to apply to the FTM.

These guidelines set therapeutic and hormonal pre-requisites to surgery. Per these guidelines, every gender client wishing to go on to sex reassignment surgery must live full time in the gender of choice for at least 12 months prior to SRS. Surgeons often require a letter of recommendation from a therapist, and may require a current letter from the endocrinologist, indicating the client’s health status.

On individual cases insurance companies have covered SRS when it is needed to fix a “birth defect”. If a teenage boy develops breasts, and this was seen as getting in the way of his life as male, insurance companies would cover the cost of a mastectomy and nipple reconstruction (a type of “top surgery” for FTMs).

Medical Profession’s Approach

The medical profession requires a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria (GD) or Gender Identity Disorder (GID) for hormone therapy and surgeries. This is a problematic term used by the medical and psychological community to define a condition or discomfort with assigned gender. These words are often used to pathologize the trans community, in that they are still considered “disorders”.

In general, there are two reasons in the medical profession to perform sex reassignment surgery. (Please note there is much controversy surrounding the medical profession’s treatment of both intersex and transgender individuals.)

- Babies born intersexed are treated by the medical community almost immediately, as the medical community is often distressed in not being able to define a child’s sex at birth.
- The medical community labels individuals born as male or female as transsexual, if the individual feels that their physical sex does not match their mental and emotional sex. This dissonance is so profound that SRS is often requested.

UCLGBTIA can help by working with UCOP HR to have insurance companies cover SRS.
<http://www.uclgbtia.org/>
A precedence was set when MediCal was court ordered to provide SRS.

Definitions

FTM: another term for a transmale/transman, a person who lives as a man but was not male according to his assigned birth sex. This person may or may not be interested in physically transitioning through hormones or surgery.

Gender versus Sex:

Gender: Divided by our society into the binary of masculine and feminine. The ways we dress, act, talk, and generally move through the world that are usually societally defined by assigned biological sex but don't have to be.

Sex: the "biological" equipment/plumbing that you have attached to you, complicated by intersex bodies.

Intersex: A person with chromosomal, hormonal, or biological characteristics of both sexes. People who are intersex are often assigned a sex without their consent.

MTF: another term for transfemale/transwoman, a person who lives as a woman but was not female according to her assigned birth sex. This person may or may not be interested in physically transitioning through hormones or surgery.

Passing: Assimilating, whether chosen or not, for survival or as part of one's identity. ("He's trans, but he passes for a bioman – biological man)

(going) Stealth: When a person chooses to be secret about their gender history in a public sphere, either after transitioning, or while successfully passing.

Trans or Transgender: An umbrella term used to classify FTMs, MTFs, and anyone who does not feel like their assigned sex represents their gender.

Transitioning: Used to describe a process of physical change, through hormones or surgery, from an assigned birth sex to a chosen sex.

Transsexual: Usually used to describe a person who wishes to or has somehow physically changed their sex from their assigned birth sex through surgery or hormones and live as a person of their chosen sex.

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Transgender Health Care at the University of California



For Staff and Faculty: hormone therapy and psychological counseling are covered through most insurance companies that the UC system offers.

At UC Santa Barbara: Undergrads voted to include Transgender benefits. (Grad students do not have this benefit.)

SRS is seen as cosmetic surgery and is not covered.