

Caitlyn Jenner and Being Transgender

Table Talk: Family Conversations About Current Events



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Topic Summary

Caitlyn Jenner has been in the news recently because she recently came out as transgender. More than 16.8 million people tuned in to hear her story when she was interviewed on ABC's 20/20. Caitlyn Jenner's fame spans several generations: she was an Olympic athlete in the 1970s where she won the decathlon and Jenner has been in several television programs including the reality show *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* and is currently in a documentary series called *I am Cait*, which chronicles her life after her transition. Now that Caitlyn Jenner has told her story, she has become the most famous openly transgender person in the United States.

Over the past several years, there has been a dramatic increase in the visibility of transgender people and understanding of transgender issues. Polls show that most Americans believe they know what being transgender means and overwhelmingly feel that our laws should protect transgender people. At the same time, transgender and gender non-conforming people face injustice in every aspect of their lives: at home, in schools, in workplaces, in doctors' offices and emergency rooms and in public places like grocery stores, restaurants and hotels. For example, research reveals that:

- 78% of transgender and gender non-conforming K-12 students reported harassment (78%) and for 15% of students it was so severe that they left school.
- 47% of transgender people said they experienced a negative job outcome such as being fired, not hired or denied a promotion because of being transgender or gender non-conforming.
- 19% of transgender people reported having been refused a home or apartment and 11% reported being evicted because of their gender identity.
- 53% of transgender people reported being verbally harassed or disrespected in a public accommodation including hotels, restaurants, buses, airports and government agencies

For a list of relevant terms and definitions, see ADL's [Terminology Related to Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Identity](#).

Age

12 and up

Questions to Start the Conversation

- How did you feel when you first heard about Caitlyn Jenner?
- Why do you think it was so meaningful that Caitlyn Jenner came out as transgender?

- Do you think it was difficult for her to share her story with the world?
- What do you think are some of challenges transgender and gender non-conforming youth face at school?
- What would you do if you saw a transgender person not treated well, bullied or harassed?

Questions to Dig Deeper

- Do you think your school is safe and respectful for students who are transgender and gender non-conforming? Why or why not?
- What ideas do you have for making schools safer and more inclusive for transgender and gender non-conforming students?
- In what ways can parents be supportive of their children who are transgender?

Ideas for Taking Action

Ask: What can we do to help? What actions might make a difference?

- Be an ally to someone who is transgender. There are many ways to [be an ally](#).
- Find out if your school has policies or guidelines for supporting and ensuring fair treatment of transgender students. If your school doesn't, talk with a school staff person about organizing a committee to develop a policy.
- Learn more about the [injustices](#) faced by transgender people and do something about it (write a letter, share information on social media, tell your friends, etc.).

Additional Resources

- [Children's and Young Adult Books About Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming People](#) (ADL Books Matter)

- 2013 Climate National Climate School Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools (GLSEN)

(see>