Understanding Trans Identity in the U.S.

PROJECT DETAILS:
The KFF/Washington Post Trans Survey is the most in-depth representative survey of transgender adults living in the U.S., from diverse backgrounds and with differing experiences, aimed at better understanding trans adult experiences in the U.S.

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED?
The survey interviewed 515 transgender adults. It also included interviews with 823 cisgender adults.

KEY TERMS:
Trans: “Trans” is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. This includes but is not limited to:
- Transgender men and women;
- Non-binary trans adults, or those whose gender identity isn’t a “man” or a “woman” but could involve both or neither; and
- Gender non-conforming trans adults, or those whose gender identity doesn’t conform with society’s gender norms.

Cisgender: “Cisgender” describes individuals whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

KEY FINDINGS:
• Most trans adults are young. The trans adult population is younger than the larger cisgender adult population, with the majority of trans adults younger than 35 years old.

• Most trans adults say transitioning helped them. Nearly 8 in 10 trans adults (78%) say that living as a gender different from the one assigned to them at birth has made them “more satisfied” with their life, including just under half (45%) who say they are “a lot more satisfied.” Likewise, trans adults who say they present as a different gender “all” or “most of the time” are three times more likely to say they are “a lot more satisfied” living as a gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth, compared to those who present as a different gender “some of the time” (62% v. 19%).

• Many trans adults don’t identify as a man or a woman. Six in ten trans adults do not identify as either a “trans man” or a “trans woman,” but instead say “trans, gender non-conforming” or “trans, nonbinary” are better ways of describing themselves.

• Pronoun preferences vary. About half of trans adults (48%) use they/them pronouns, and about one-third say they use a combination of they/them, she/her or he/him pronouns.

• Gender identity differs from sexual orientation. Seven in ten trans adults identify as lesbian, gay, queer, or bisexual.

• Most realized they were trans in childhood. Most trans adults (66%) say they began to understand that their gender was different from the sex they were assigned at birth before the age of 18, including a third (32%) who say they began to understand when they were ten years old or younger and another third (34%) who say they began between the ages of 11 and 17.