

Abstract

Clothing has a complex and important impact on people's experiences and expressions of gender. Clothing is often constructed in a way that reifies gender norms. For instance, women's clothing is often constructed smaller, which reinforces the notion that women are (and should be) smaller than men. As a result, transgender, nonbinary, and gender-variant (TNG) people often have a difficult time finding gender-affirming clothing that fits. Being unable to find clothing that fits one's body can have a significant impact on TNG people's mental health and quality of life. In this project, I hosted a clothing alterations workshop for TNG people in Durham, North Carolina. The project was intended to be educational, as well as a social/community building event. Participants learned basic clothing construction, sewing fundamentals, how to open a seam, and how to add a panel. Participants reported that the workshop did not do much for them in terms of community-building, but it succeeded in teaching fundamental sewing skills and helping participants feel empowered and euphoric about their clothing.