



Transgender 101 – Module Glossary

Agender: A person who describes themselves as not having a gender. Some agender people describe it as being genderless or having a lack of gender, while others describe themselves as being gender neutral. Agender people fall under the “non-binary” umbrella and the “trans” umbrella.

Cisgender: People whose gender identity corresponds to the expectations based on their sex assigned at birth. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and whose sex assigned at birth is female is a cisgender woman. Similarly, a person who identifies as a man and whose sex assigned at birth is male is a cisgender man. Cisgender is a term that describes a person’s gender identity, not their sexual or romantic attractions (for example, people who identify as cisgender may or may not be heterosexual). This term is often abbreviated as “cis”.

The gender binary: The idea that there are two distinct genders, man and woman, and that they have opposite and separate roles, interests, and characteristics. The gender binary is a social and cultural belief system influenced by mainstream media, religion, education, and politics. This binary model imposes expectations on an individual’s outward appearance, behavior, sexual orientation, and other qualities. These expectations may also reinforce negative judgement and discrimination towards people who exhibit nonconformity to the gender binary.

Gender expression: External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's mannerisms, clothing, hairstyle, behavior, speech, and/or physical appearance. Society identifies these features as indications of masculine or feminine, although what may be considered masculine or feminine can fluctuate over time and vary between cultures. A person’s gender identity cannot be determined or assumed based on gender expression (or by how we perceive someone’s gender expression).

Genderfluid: a person whose gender identity is not fixed. Their gender identity may be dynamic and have a changing nature that is dependent upon many factors and circumstances. This fluidity may influence a person’s expressions, mannerisms, clothing, pronouns, and more. Changes in identity or expression may shift over long or short periods of time, and can also depend on how that person feels in the moment.

Gender identity: A person's deeply held sense of gender. For transgender people, the gender identity does not match the expectations based on their sex assigned at birth. Many people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl); others have gender identities that do not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender pronouns: Words used to refer to each other instead of names. We usually associate pronouns with gender. Some of the most common pronouns are she/her, he/him, they/them. In addition to they/them, there are many other gender-neutral pronouns.



Genderqueer: People who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside or beyond the categories of man and woman. They may not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions and their gender identity cannot be categorized as solely man or woman (may have a combination of gender identities, blurred lines, or fluidity in gender identity). It can be used to describe people within the LGBTQ+ community who have a non-normative gender identity.

Inequities: Unjust and preventable circumstances or lack of justice/fairness that disproportionately impact people or groups who are marginalized in our societies. Inequities have severe implications on a person's access to employment, positive health outcomes, education, housing, among other systems. These unbalanced societal conditions are caused by discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, and oppressions placed upon groups of people.

Intersecting identities: The concept that a person's identity consists of several/intersecting factors, which include but are not limited to racial identity, ethnicity, religion, privilege, socioeconomic status, education level, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, etc.

Intersex: An umbrella term describing a wide range of natural body characteristics that do not fit neatly into the conventional binary categories of male or female. Intersex characteristics may include, and are not limited to, variations in genitalia, hormones, chromosomes, and/or reproductive organs. Some intersex traits may be visible at birth, sometimes they appear during puberty or adulthood, and sometimes they are not physically apparent at all. Being intersex is not synonymous to being transgender.

Misgendering: Incorrectly referring to a person's gender by assuming their gender identity or by using incorrect pronouns. Misgendering can be done intentionally or unintentionally, but regardless of a person's intent, it can cause long-lasting harm.

No gender: A person who describes themselves as not having a gender, similar to someone who calls themselves *agender*.

Non-binary: People whose gender identity and/or gender expression fall outside or beyond the categories of man and woman. Non-binary people may define their gender as being somewhere in between man and woman, as a combination of masculinity and femininity, or as beyond the concepts of woman and man. Some non-binary people identify as trans, and some do not.

Person of trans experience: Describes people that have or have had a trans experience, and view this as just another factor of their history and life experience, without being central to their identity.



Sex assigned at birth: The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, newborns are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of the baby's anatomy (for example, what is written on a birth certificate). This assignment and classification can also be based on a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs. Generally, we are expected to identify with the gender identity and gender expectations that are associated with our sex assigned at birth. The term "sex **assigned** at birth" vs "sex" highlights that we are all *assigned* a sex at birth that we do not choose.

Sexual orientation: A person's physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same (for example, transgender people may also identify as straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, etc.).

Trans: Used as shorthand to mean *transgender* and is inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is associated with their sex assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including transgender or trans.

Trans feminine: An umbrella term that refers to people who identify with femininity or a feminine identity and were assigned male at birth. Often abbreviated as "transfemme."

Trans man: Individuals who are trans and identify as men and/or masculine. For example, someone who identifies as a man and was assigned female at birth.

Trans masculine: An umbrella term that refers to people who identify with masculinity or a masculine identity and were assigned female at birth. Often abbreviated as "transmasc."

Trans woman: Individuals who are trans and identify as women and/or femme. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned male at birth.

Transition: The process of changing one's social and/or physical characteristics in order to become more congruent with one's gender identity. Transition is a very private, personal, and individual process. The social and medical steps a person may take to transition are unique to each person. There are also internal and external factors that can influence a person's transition. While some trans people use hormonal therapy and/or surgeries to feel affirmed in their gender identity, not all trans people can or will take those steps. The transition process can be ongoing or take place over a short period of time. A trans person's identity is valid regardless of their access and desire to transition.