

# Gender Terminology Guide

This is not an exhaustive list of terms related to gender. Each of these terms could be defined differently depending on the person.

**Agender:** A person who does not experience and/or identify with a gender.

**Androgyne:** A person who has a gender that is simultaneously masculine and feminine, but not necessarily in equal parts.

**Bigender:** A person who identifies with two genders either simultaneously, fluctuating, or alternating.

**Demiboy:** A person who identifies partially as a boy and partially as another gender.

**Demigirl:** A person who identifies partially as a girl and partially as another gender.

**Genderfluid:** A person whose gender identity and/or expression fluctuates between multiple genders.

**Genderflux:** A person whose gender identity fluctuates in intensity.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** A person whose gender identity or expression does not fit into the gender binary. Not everyone who is gender non-conforming is transgender; however, some transgender people do identify their genders as gender non-conforming.

**Genderqueer:** A person whose gender is outside the gender binary. Genderqueer is also sometimes used as an umbrella term for all non-binary genders, including genderfluid, bigender, and gender-nonconforming.

**Neutrois:** A person whose gender is neutral, similar to agender.

**Non-Binary:** A term often used to encompass all gender identities that are not either man or woman. It is also sometimes used to describe a particular gender. Also sometimes called “enbys” (NB).

**Questioning:** A person who is unsure of or exploring their gender.

**Transfeminine:** A person who was assigned male at birth who identifies more with cultural norms around femininity or with a female identity.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term describing a person who experiences their gender differently from the gender generally assigned to their assigned sex. This includes people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, etc. Gender and sexual orientation are unrelated. A transgender person can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi, asexual, etc.

**Transman:** A term typically used to describe a person who was assigned female at birth who identifies as/is a man/male. Transmen often simply identify as men. Transmen may or may not want, need, or be able to access medical care to affirm their genders. This does not make them any more or less male.

**Transmasculine:** A term used to describe a person who was assigned female at birth who identifies more with cultural norms around masculinity or with a male identity.

**Transsexual:** An older, out-of-use term sometimes used to describe a person who is planning on or has undergone gender-affirmation treatment(s) to match their sex to their gender; this may include hormone treatment and/or surgery/surgeries.

**Transwoman:** A term typically used to describe a person who was assigned male at birth who identifies as/is a woman/female. Transwomen often simply identify as women. Transwomen may or may not want, need, or be able to access medical care to affirm their genders. This does not make them any more or less female.

**Two-Spirit:** A term used in some Native American cultures to describe a person who may not identify with the gender generally assigned to their assigned sex. Historically, Two-Spirit individuals were often ambassadors or held other honored positions within a tribe. Many Two-Spirit people do not identify as transgender.

**Words to avoid:** Transgendered, a transgender, a trans, transgenders, transgenderism, tranny, it, that, he-she, she-male, shim, “real” name/gender, etc.

## **Other Terms to Know:**

**Assigned Sex:** Sex is assigned at birth based on the appearance of external genitalia, from which internal reproductive organs and chromosomes are inferred.

**Cisgender:** A term used to describe people who identify with the gender generally assigned to their sex.

**Cissexism:** The legal, social, and institutional systems set up in our society that disenfranchise and oppress people who are not cisgender and/or who do not fit into the gender binary. Cissexism is also the belief in the absoluteness of the gender binary. Cissexism is everywhere: as boxes you check on forms, as bathroom options, as grammatically correct pronouns, as sports teams options, etc.

**Closeted:** A person who has not come out to themselves and/or others about their gender identity.

**Coming Out:** The process of self-acceptance as well as telling others about one's gender identity.

**Dead-Naming:** A term sometimes used in the trans community referring to the use of someone's name given at birth to refer to them.

**Dysphoria:** The feeling of disease or discomfort with one's own body in relation to sex characteristics or perceived gender.

**Gender Binary:** Juxtaposition of male/female, man/woman, boy/girl as the only two gender/sex options and as opposites.

**Gender Dysphoria:** The DSM-IV diagnosis for folks who feel as though the gender others generally identify them as and the gender they identify as are different.

**Gender Expression:** How we display or don't display the gender we identify with. Gender can be expressed in clothing, body language, word usage, hairstyles, etc.

**Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of their own gender. Man, woman, a combination of the two, no gender, another gender entirely, multiple genders simultaneously, and/or a fluctuating or fluid experience of gender are all valid gender identities. An individual's understanding of their gender identity may or may not be tied to their body, or cultural understandings of gender.

**Gender Pronouns:** The words we use to refer to another person when we are not using their name. Examples are he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, xi/xer/xers, and zie/hir/hirs. Gender pronouns should always be self-determined.

**Gender Roles:** Gender roles are the social expectations and behaviors attached to the binary genders within our society. While gender is universal, gender roles are social constructs and change from culture to culture.

**Misgendering:** When someone intentionally or unintentionally uses the wrong pronouns or gendered language (ex. king/queen) to refer to a transgender person. When done intentionally, or after repeated reminders of correct pronouns, misgendering is considered a form of violence.

**Outing:** When someone reveals a person's sexual orientation or gender identity to a person or a group of people without the person's consent.

**Passing:** A term used to describe trans people who are generally perceived to be cisgender. This term is often considered as a form of violence or erasure. A better term might be "recognized."

**Stealth:** A term used to describe a transgender person who lives as and is fully recognized as cisgender in one or more settings, and does not wish to come out about their history.

**Trans\*:** Often used to indicate all identities under the transgender umbrella including non-binary identities.

**Transitioning:** A term to describe a trans person who is taking steps to affirm their gender identity. This can be done through social, legal, and/or medical means.

**Transphobia:** The fear, intolerance, resentment, or discomfort with people who are trans. This can also be fear, disgust, or dislike of being attracted to a trans person. This can be expressed in body language (e.g. disgusted looks), in verbal attacks (e.g. misgendering), and/or physical assaults.