

Transgender and Non-Binary Identities

Glossary of Terms

This glossary is designed to provide clear and inclusive definitions of terms commonly associated with transgender and non-binary identities. Its purpose is to foster understanding and respect among people of all genders.

A

Affirmed Gender: The gender a person identifies with and lives as, which may differ from the sex assigned to them at birth. Affirming someone's gender identity and gender expression will ensure trans and non-binary people are fully represented, included, and honored.

Agender: A person who identifies as having no gender or as gender-neutral.

Ally: A person who supports and advocates for the rights, dignity, and inclusion of marginalized communities, even if they do not personally belong to those groups. Being an ally involves actively listening, educating oneself, challenging discrimination, and using one's privilege to uplift and amplify the voices of those who face systemic oppression.

Asexual (ACE): Referring to individuals who experience little to no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality is a valid sexual orientation, and people who identify as asexual may still form romantic, emotional, or platonic relationships.

Assigned Sex at Birth (ASAB): The label of "male," "female," or "intersex" given to an individual at birth based on physical anatomy. You may also encounter AMAB (assigned male at birth) and AFAB (assigned female at birth).

B

Binding: The process of flattening the chest using compression garments or other methods to reduce the appearance of breasts.

Bigender: A gender identity in which a person identifies with two genders, either simultaneously or at different times. This can include binary genders (male and female), a combination of a binary and a non-binary gender, two non-binary genders.

Binary Gender: The classification of gender into two distinct, opposite, and disconnected categories of "male" and "female."

Bisexual: A sexual orientation describing a person who is attracted to more than one gender. This attraction can be romantic, emotional, or physical and may vary in intensity. Bisexuality exists on a spectrum and does not necessarily mean equal attraction to all genders.



C

Cisgender (Cis): A person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Coming Out: The process of recognizing, accepting, and/or sharing one's gender identity or sexual orientation with others.

D

Deadname: The name a transgender or non-binary person was given at birth but no longer uses. Using someone's deadname without their invitation is generally disrespectful and can be distressing.

Dysphoria (Gender Dysphoria): Distress or discomfort caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and their sex assigned at birth.

E

Enby: A term used as a shorthand for "nonbinary," describing a gender identity that is not exclusively male or female.

Estrogen: A hormone often associated with feminizing hormone therapy (HRT) for transgender women or transfeminine individuals.

Euphoria (Gender Euphoria): The positive feelings someone experiences when their gender identity is affirmed or aligned with their presentation or experiences.

Expression (Gender Expression): The external display of gender through clothing, hairstyle, behavior, or other outward traits.

F

Feminizing/Masculinizing Hormone Therapy: Medical treatment involving hormones to align a person's physical characteristics with their gender identity.

Fluidity: The concept that gender identity and/or sexual orientation are not fixed and may change over time. A person who experiences fluidity might identify differently at various points in their life. This can apply to gender (gender fluidity) or sexual orientation (sexual fluidity), recognizing that identity and attraction can be dynamic rather than static.



G

Gender: A complex construct encompassing identity, roles, and expectations typically associated with being male, female, both, or neither.

Gender-Affirming Care: Medical, psychological, and social support aimed at affirming and aligning an individual's lived experience with their gender identity.

Gender Expression: The external presentation of one's gender through clothing, behavior, hairstyle, and other means.

Gender Identity: A person's deeply felt sense of being male, female, a blend of both, neither, or another gender.

Genderqueer: A gender identity outside of the traditional binary of male and female. Often used interchangeably with non-binary.

H

Hormone Therapy (Feminizing/Masculinizing): Medical treatment involving hormones to align a person's physical characteristics with their gender identity.

I

Intersex: A term for people whose reproductive organs, chromosomes, and/or sexual anatomy are different from what is typically considered male or female. It's a natural variation and not a disease or condition.

L

LGBTQIA+: An inclusive acronym representing a diverse community of individuals with different sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Asexual, with the "+" acknowledging other identities and experiences within the spectrum of gender and sexuality.

N

Non-Binary: A term describing gender identities that are not exclusively male or female.



P

Pansexual: Refers to a sexual orientation in which a person is attracted to others regardless of their gender or gender identity. Pansexual individuals are often described as being attracted to people based on who they are as a person, rather than their gender.

Pronouns: Words used to refer to someone in place of their name, such as he/him, she/her, or they/them. Some people use neopronouns (e.g., ze/zir).

Passing: Being perceived by others as the gender with which one identifies. GLAAD advises against its use because it implies that a transgender person is being deceptive or that their gender is not authentic. Instead, GLAAD suggests focusing on affirming language that respects a transgender person's identity without framing it in terms of "passing" as something else. This approach centers the conversation on acceptance and respect, rather than judgment based on societal standards of appearance or conformity.

Q

Queer: An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQ people to describe themselves. However, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBTQ community, so use caution when using it outside of describing the way someone self-identifies or in a direct quote. When Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it typically means queer. In a setting for support, particularly for youth, it may mean questioning. Ask people how they describe themselves before labeling their sexual orientation.

S

Sex Change: An antiquated term used to describe the medical treatment of trans people. GLAAD advises against using the term as it is considered outdated and can be misleading or offensive. Instead, they recommend using phrases such as "gender confirmation surgery", "gender-affirming surgery", or "transition", depending on the context.

Sexual Orientation: A person's physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate concepts.

Stealth: When a transgender person chooses not to disclose their transgender status in certain or all aspects of their life.



T

Transgender (Trans): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transsexual: According to GLAAD, the term "transsexual" is considered outdated and is generally not preferred. While some individuals may still self-identify as transsexual, the term has largely been replaced by "transgender," which is more inclusive and widely accepted.

Transition: The process a person undergoes to live as their affirmed gender. This can involve social, medical, and/or legal changes.

Transphobia: Discrimination, prejudice, or hostility directed at transgender or non-binary people.

Transvestite: GLAAD strongly discourages the use of the term "transvestite" as it is outdated, potentially offensive, and carries a history of stigmatization. The term was historically used to describe individuals who wear clothing traditionally associated with a gender different from their assigned gender, but it is now considered inappropriate and insensitive. Instead, GLAAD recommends using "cross-dresser" to describe someone who wears clothing associated with another gender. It is also important to note that cross-dressing is not inherently linked to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Always use language that reflects the terms individuals use to describe themselves.

Two-Spirit: A term used by some Indigenous North American communities to describe a person who embodies both masculine and feminine spirits. This term is culturally specific and not interchangeable with non-binary or transgender.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Language evolves, and people may define their identities differently. It is essential to respect how someone identifies and the terms they use.
- Always ask for and use a person's correct name and pronouns. (Example: When meeting someone, you can ask "What are your pronouns?" or "What pronouns do you use?")
- This glossary is a starting point. To deepen your understanding, engage with resources and voices from transgender and non-binary communities.

