

Transgender Glossary

AFAB/FAAB: Assigned female at birth and female assigned at birth respectively. These terms refer to what gender you were assigned at birth (in this case female, thus you are expected to be a girl/woman), and are important because many trans people use them as a way to talk about their gender identity without being pinned down to more essentialist narratives about their “sex” or what gender they “used to be”.

Agender: Some agender people would define their identity as being neither a man nor a woman while others would define agender as not having any gender.

AMAB/MAAB: Assigned male at birth and male assigned at birth respectively. These terms refer to what gender you were assigned at birth (in this case male, thus you are expected to be a boy/man), and are important because many trans people use them as a way to talk about their gender identity without being pinned down to more essentialist narratives about their “sex” or what gender they “used to be”.

Androgynous: Having neither a clearly masculine or feminine appearance or blending masculine and feminine. Androgynes may define their identity in a variety of ways, feeling as if they are between man and woman or a totally separate identity.

Binarism: Erasing, ignoring or expressing hate towards people who identify outside of the gender binary. Also supporting the incorrect idea that the only legitimate genders are man and woman, and ignoring all others.

Butch: A masculine gender expression which can be used to describe people of any gender. Butch can also be a gender identity to some.

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth, someone who is not trans. The Latin prefix cis means “on the same side of.” Cisgender is often shortened to cis. The prefix ‘Cis’ is of Latin origin, meaning “on the same side as or of” therefore someone who is cisgender has a conception of their gender concept /gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender. “Cisgender” is preferred to terms like “biological”, “genetic”, or “real” male or female.

Cisgender Privilege: The privileges cisgender people have because their gender identities match their assigned gender and because they are considered “normal”. For example, cis people don’t have to worry about violence and institutionalized discrimination simply due to the fact they are cis.

Dysphoria: Unhappiness or sadness with all or some gendered aspects of one’s body, or in response to social misgendering. Some trans people experience dysphoria, some don’t.

Femme: A feminine gender expression which can be used to describe people of any gender. Femme is also be a gender identity to some.

FTM/F2M/female to male: A term usually synonymous with trans man but also occasionally used by other AFAB trans people. This term is problematic to some AFAB trans people as they feel they were never female and because X to Y terms can put too much focus on traditional means of physical transition.

Gender: A complex combination of roles, expressions, identities, performances, and more that are assigned gendered meaning by a society. Gender is both self-defined and society-defined. How gender is embodied and defined varies from culture to culture and from person to person. Gender is a spectrum rather a binary.

Gender assignment: The gender we are assigned at birth, usually based on genitals alone. It is assumed that our identities should and will match this assignment but this isn’t the case for most trans people.

Gender binary: The pervasive social system that tells us there can only be masculine cis men and feminine cis women, and there can be no alternatives in terms of gender identity or expression.

Gender expression: How one expresses their gender outwardly and/or the facets of a person's expression which have gendered connotations in our culture. There is no right or wrong way to express your gender.

Gender identity: An individual's internal sense of what gender they are. One's gender identity may or may not align with their assigned gender, and one's gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender nonconforming (GNC): Not fully conforming to gendered social expectations, whether that be in terms of expression, roles, or performance.

Genderfluid: This term can be used as a specific identity or as a way of articulating the changing nature of one's gender identity or expression. People who are genderfluid may feel that their gender identity or expression is constantly changing, or that it switches back and forth.

Genderqueer: This term can be used as an umbrella term for all people who queer gender, as a somewhat similar term to gender nonconforming, or as a specific non-binary gender identity. As an umbrella term it can include gender nonconforming people, non-binary people, and much more. As a specific identity it can generally be understood as a gender that is neither man nor woman, possible in between the two or seen as a totally separate gender altogether.

Intersex: A person born with any manner of supposed "ambiguity" in terms of gendered physical characteristics. This can include reproductive organs, genitals, hormones, chromosomes, or any combination thereof.

LGBT: A common acronym which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender/trans.

Misgender: The act of attributing a person to a gender they do not identify as. If you were to call someone a man but they were in fact non-binary, you would have misgendered them. You can cut down on misgendering people by trying to not practice gender attribution, and by asking people their preferred pronouns and terms when appropriate.

MTF/M2F/male to female: A term usually synonymous with trans woman but also occasionally used by other AMAB trans people. This term is problematic to some AMAB trans people as they feel they were never male and because X to Y terms can put too much focus on traditional means of physical transition.

Neutrois: This is an identity generally having to do with feeling one does not have a gender, a gender identity, or a defined gender. Some people who identify as neutrois also identify as agender or genderless, and some neutrois people desire to minimize their physical gender markers and to have a more gender-neutral appearance.

Non-binary: Non-binary people are those who identify as a gender that is neither man nor woman or who are not men or women exclusively. Non-binary can refer to a specific gender identity or it can function as an umbrella term which can include (though not always) people who are genderqueer, agender, bigender, neutrois, and others.

Outing: To out oneself is to share an identity that was previously unknown to people, usually referring to sexual orientation or gender identity. You should never out someone without their consent.

Passing: When used by trans people it can either mean that one is being read as the gender they identify as or that one is being read as cisgender. For example, a trans man who people read as a man, most likely a cis man.

Sex: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. A binary system (man/woman) set by the medical establishment, usually based on genitals and sometimes chromosomes. Because this is usually divided into 'male' and 'female' this category ignores the existence of intersex bodies. See intersex.

Third Gender: In some cultures third (and fourth and so on) genders may be commonly accepted alongside man and woman. Some people in western cultures may identify as third gender as well, however it's important not to erase the multitudes of genders present in the world.

Trans: This term has a similar meaning to transgender but the asterisk is meant to show a more inclusive attitude towards the multitude of people under the transgender umbrella.

- **Trans man:** A man who was assigned female at birth.
- **Trans woman:** A woman who was assigned male at birth.

Transsexual: This term often refers to binary trans people (trans men and trans women), or to trans people who physically transition in any way. While still a preferred term for many, some people dislike the term because of its connection to the medicalization of trans people and the focus it can put on physical transition.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. "Transgender" can include transsexuals, cross dressers, drag kings/queens, masculine women, feminine men, and all those who defy what society tells them their "gender" should be.

Transition: To transition can mean a lot of things but a broad definition is the process trans people may go through to become comfortable in terms of their gender. Transitioning may include social, physical, mental, and emotional components and may not fit into the narrative we are used to seeing. Transition may or may not include things like changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, changing legal documents to reflect one's gender identity, coming out to loved ones, dressing as one chooses, and accepting oneself among many other things. Transition is an individual process.

Transmisogyny: Originally coined by the author Julia Serano, this term highlights the intersectionality of misogyny and transphobia and how they are often experienced as a dual form of oppression by trans women and some other AMAB trans people.

Transphobia: The fear or hatred of trans people or those perceived as such.

Two spirit: A term specific to Native/First Nations cultures and people which some lesbian, gay, queer, pansexual, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and gender non-conforming people identify as. This term should not be used by non-Native/First Nations people.

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