

Glossary of Terms

There is a rich vocabulary that people use to talk about themselves and their identity. This document is a glossary to aid health professionals working with gender diverse patients. Please note that this is not comprehensive. It was adapted from the Human Rights Campaign's "[glossary of terms](#)"

When working with gender diverse patients, please remember that there is no single "narrative" and that everyone's experience is different. Not everyone feels trapped in the wrong body, wants to medically transition, or move from one binary gender to the other. Be open to how your patients express their goals. Always listen for and respect the language that people use to self-identify.

Agender | A term to describe a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

Ally | A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community).

Biphobia | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to more than one gender.

Cisgender | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cisnormativity | the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities

Gender identity | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do.

Genderqueer | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

Gender binary | A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

Gender dysphoria | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender-expansive | A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender expression | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender-fluid | A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender normative / Gender straight | someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

Intersex | Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

LGBTQ+ | An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer" with a "+" sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities.

Mx. / "mix" or "schwa" | an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Smith is a great teacher

Non-binary | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

Queer | A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Questioning | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sex assigned at birth | The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

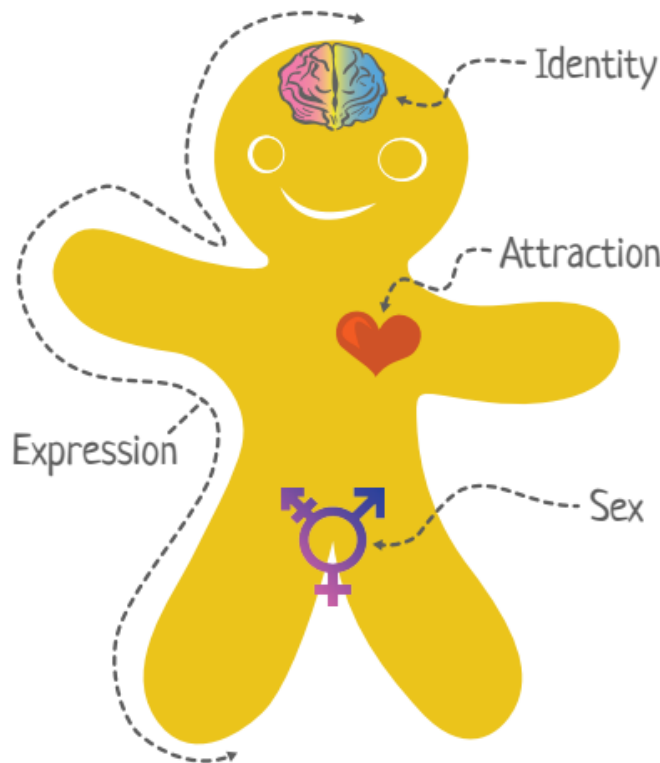
Transitioning | A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

Trans-masculine/trans-feminine | Terms to describe gender nonconforming or nonbinary persons, based on the directionality of their gender identity. A trans-masculine person has a masculine spectrum gender identity, with the sex of female listed on their original birth certificate. A trans-feminine person has a feminine spectrum gender identity, the sex of male listed on their original birth certificate.

Two-spirit | An umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.

Ze / zir / “zee”, “zerr”, or “zeer” | alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun

The Genderbread Person v4 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



⊖ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

-  Woman-ness
-  Man-ness

Gender Expression

-  Femininity
-  Masculinity



Anatomical Sex

-  Female-ness
-  Male-ness



Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
 Female Intersex Male

Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

-  Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
-  Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Romantically Attracted to...

-  Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
-  Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People