

Glossary

Terms and language regarding transgender people and transgender issues are evolving rapidly and many terms may mean different things to different people. The definitions given here are common, but not universal, understandings of these terms. For further guidance you might like to visit [Stonewall's glossary](#).

Agender

A term used by people who don't see themselves as fitting anywhere on the gender spectrum. Agender people often use 'without gender', or 'genderless' to also describe what being agender means to them.

Acquired gender

The law uses the phrase 'acquired gender' to refer to the gender in which a transgender person lives and presents to the world. This is not the gender that they were assigned at birth, but it is the gender in which they should be treated.

Assigned Sex/ Sex

The sex you were distinguished as when you were born based on one's genitals, chromosomes etc. Sex is often used interchangeably with gender in law.

Cisgender

A person whose assigned sex and gender identity match up. A person who is not transgender.

Coming out

Processes by which a trans person will tell people in their life how they identify themselves in terms of their gender or that they feel that they are trans. The term is also used in regards to the wider LGBT community.

Cross-dresser

Someone who wears the clothes usually expected to be worn by someone of the 'opposite' gender. Other terms include 'transvestite' (now becoming a dated term and disliked by some) and 'dual role'. A cross-dresser is unlikely to have a full-time identity as a member of their cross-dressed gender and typically does not seek medical intervention. Cross Dressing is not the same as being trans.

Deed Poll/Statutory Declaration

The document used to legally change a person's name.

FTM/ trans man/ a transgender man

Someone assigned female at birth and identifies as male.

Gender binary

A binary system allows only two things or states – for example, on/off. In terms of gender, it refers to the either/or categories of male/female that do not allow for, or recognise, other experiences of gender.

Gender Dysphoria

Transgender people who seek medical intervention are typically diagnosed with 'gender dysphoria' as a first step. Gender dysphoria describes the sense of a strong, persistent

discomfort or distress caused by the dissonance between a person's self-identified gender and the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression

Gender expression is the way in which an individual expresses their gender identity, both in terms of self identity, and how others perceive them. This can be through the clothes they wear, or behaviour for example. A person's gender expression isn't always the same as their gender identity, and can change depending on things like situation, place, and time.

Gender Identity

How a person feels or experiences themselves in regards to their gender. E.g. male/ female/ neither/ both. A person's sense of self as a man, woman, non-binary person or other sense of gender. A person's gender identity is typically expected to follow directly from the sex they were assigned at birth (based on physical attributes), but this is not always the case.

Gender Fluid

A term used to describe a person who feels that their gender identity is not fixed and/or fluctuates or changes over time.

Genderqueer

A term sometimes used by people whose gender identity does not fit into the standard socially constructed ideals of male and female. This can include feeling like you are outside of the binary of male and female, or somewhere in between. Genderqueer as an identity is often very subjective and individual to the person using that word and as such can have a variety of different meanings attached to it.

Gender reassignment

The process of physically altering one's physical characteristics to fit more in line with their gender identity.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)

A certificate issued under the GRA18 which enables someone to be legally recognised in their acquired gender.

GIC

Gender Identity Clinic: a service which provides specialist medical care for trans people.

Intersex/ Intergender

An individual born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, sex hormones, or genitals, that are determined as neither exclusively male nor female, or which combine features of the male and female sexes.

MTF/ trans woman/ a transgender woman

Someone assigned male at birth and identifies as female. It is worth noting that 'trans woman' is preferred to 'transwoman'.

Misgendering

You misgender someone when you refer to them using a word, especially a pronoun or a form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

Non-binary person

Someone who does not subscribe to the customary binary approach to gender, and who may regard themselves as neither male nor female, or both male and female, or take another approach to gender entirely.

Oestrogen

The sex hormone often prescribed to trans women who wish to undergo medical transition.

Outing

Disclosing a person's sexuality or transgender identity to another person without their consent is known as 'outing'. Outing a person is a violation of their privacy, is upsetting, and in some cases can put someone at genuine risk of physical violence. If a person tells you that they are trans, remember that this is personal information that they have trusted you with - do not violate that trust. If you are worried about outing someone, it can be worth having a private conversation with them about who they are out to, so you can avoid putting them at risk.

Pronouns

The part of speech used in place of someone's name when referring to them in the third person - for example: He/ him, she/ her, they/ them, hir/ zi (gender neutral)

Sexual Orientation

Attraction to people of a certain gender i.e. gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual etc

Testosterone

The sex hormone often prescribed to trans men who wish to undergo medical transition.

To gender/ misgender

To presume someone else's gender identity/ to presume incorrectly.

Top surgery

A term that trans people may use when referring to surgeries designed to alter or remove someone's breasts.

Transition

The process of a person changing from their assigned sex to the gender they identify as. What constitutes as transitioning may be different for every trans person.

Social Transition

This refers specifically to the aspects of transition that are not related to a change in physicality. Examples of social transition are: a change of name/ pronoun, use of toilets or gendered facilities, wearing different clothes or make-up. Every trans person is different, so an individual may choose to make all or some of these changes at some point, but deciding not to make these changes does not invalidate a person's trans identity.

Medical Transition

This refers specifically to the aspects of transition that are specifically related to a change in a person's body/ physicality. Examples of medical transition are: hormone blockers, hormone treatment, surgery, voice therapy or laser hair removal. Every trans person is different, so an individual may choose to make all or some of these changes at some point, but deciding not to make these changes does not invalidate a person's trans identity.

Transgender (or trans) person

A broad, inclusive term referring to anyone whose personal experience of gender extends beyond the typical experiences of those of their assigned sex. Amongst others, transsexual people, non-binary people and cross-dressers may all consider themselves transgender people.

Transsexual person

This term is most closely associated with the legally protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment'. A transsexual person may be a person assigned female at birth who has transitioned or is transitioning to live as a man, or a person assigned male at birth who has transitioned or is transitioning to live as a woman. The law does not require a person to undergo a medical procedure to be recognised as a transsexual person. Once a transsexual person has acquired a GRC, they should generally be treated entirely as in their acquired gender.

Transgender man

A transgender man is a female-to-male transgender person who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity.

Transgender woman

A transgender woman is a male-to-female transgender person who was assigned male at birth but has a female gender identity.

Transition

The journey a transgender person takes from their assigned gender to the one they know themselves to be. This may refer to social transition (changing name, clothes etc), medical transition (hormones and/or surgery) or both.

Transphobia

The fear, discrimination, prejudice or bullying of a person because they are trans or perceived to be trans by others. Transphobia is considered a Hate Crime.