

Glossary of Gender Identifying Terms and Definitions

Assigned/Designated Sex at Birth:

Frequently a binary designation of “male” or “female”

Assigned at birth typically by a medical professional (e.g. sex listed on birth certificate)

Based on the person’s internal and/or external anatomy at birth

May or may not correspond to one’s gender identity or expression

Cis-Gender:

Refers to a non-transgender person

The prefix “cis” means “matches”

Thus, this means that one’s sex assigned at birth “matches” one’s gender identity

Gender Identity:

Internal or innate sense of being male, female, or another gender

May or may not correspond to assigned sex at birth

May not be visible based on outward appearance

Gender Expression:

External expression of gender identity

Exhibited through: behavior, clothing, hairstyle, body language, voice

Does not always correspond to one’s gender identity

May change over time or even day-to-day

Sexual Orientation:

Physical or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite sex

Distinct from one’s gender expression or identity

Gender Non-Conforming:

Someone who does not conform to traditional gender roles or stereotypes (by way of gender identity and/or expression)

Traditional roles and stereotypes vary based on different cultural and societal ideals

Individuals may be perceived as having a different gender based on outward appearances (behavior, clothing, hairstyle, body language, voice).

Non-Binary Person:

A person who does not identify as male or female (male and female are the two ends of the gender spectrum)

Gender-Neutral/Inclusive:

Language used to describe all gender or unisex spaces, (i.e. gender neutral bathrooms), relationships (spouse or partner, instead of wife/husband or boyfriend/girlfriend), etc.

Transitioning (Gender Transition):

Process that some (but not all) transgender people go through to begin living as the gender with which they identify, rather than the sex assigned to them at birth.

Transitioning can be the social aspect: going by a new name, pronoun, and changing one's outer appearance so that other people see the person as the gender they identify as.

For some, this process may include medical treatments, like hormones or surgery.

Transgender/Transsexual:

Umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression is different from their assigned sex.

Occasionally, an individual may determine they no longer identify as transgender after they transition.

Trans Woman:

Assigned male at birth, but now identifies and lives as a female

May or may not have undergone medical treatments or surgeries

Sometimes referred to as "Male-to-Female" or "MTF," this may not be preferred as it can over-emphasize that the person was born male rather than her current identity.

Trans Man:

Assigned female at birth, but now identifies and lives as a man

May or may not have undergone medical treatments or surgeries

Sometimes referred to as "Female-to-Male" or "FTM," this may not be preferred as it can over-emphasize that the person was born female rather than his current identity.