

Glossary

This glossary of terms may be useful in developing good communication with LGBT people. A few of the more common terms include:

Assigned sex at birth (noun) – The sex (male or female) assigned a child at birth, based on the child’s anatomy. Also referred to as birth sex, natal sex, biological sex, or sex.

Cisgender (adj.) – A person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth correspond (i.e., a person who is not transgender).

Coming Out (verb) – The process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexual orientation or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). Also the process by which one shares one’s sexual orientation or gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.).

Cross-sex hormone therapy (noun) – The administration of hormone therapy in order to match a person’s physical characteristics to their gender identity.

Gender affirmation process (Transition) (noun) – For transgender people, this refers to the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes, such as changing their clothing, name, sex designation, and using medical interventions.

Gender affirming surgery (GAS) (noun) – Surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity. Also referred to as sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or gender confirming surgery (GCS).

Gender binary (noun) – The idea that there are only two genders, male and female, and that a person must strictly fit into one category or the other.

Gender dysphoria (noun) – Distress experienced by some individuals whose gender identity does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. Manifests itself as clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) includes gender dysphoria as a diagnosis.

Gender expression (noun) – The way a person acts, dresses, speaks, and behaves (i.e., feminine, masculine, androgynous). Gender expression does not necessarily correspond to assigned sex at birth or gender identity.

Gender fluid (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more one gender some days, and another gender other days.

Gender identity (noun) – A person’s internal sense of being a man/male, woman/female, both, neither, or another gender.

Gender non-conforming (adj.) – Describes a gender expression that differs from a given society’s norms for males and females.

Genderqueer (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional **gender** binary. Other terms for people whose gender identity falls outside the gender binary include gender variant, gender expansive, etc.

Queer (adj.) – An umbrella term used by some to describe people who think of their sexual orientation or gender identity as outside of societal norms. Some people view the term queer as more fluid and inclusive than traditional categories for sexual orientation and gender identity. Due to its history as a derogatory term, the term queer is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBT community.

Sexual orientation (noun) – How a person characterizes their sexual and emotional attraction to others. Common sexual orientations include, but are not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and straight.

Transgender (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond. Also used as an umbrella term to include gender identities outside of male and female. Sometimes abbreviated as trans.

Transmasculine (adj.) – describes people who were assigned female at birth but identify with masculinity more than femininity. Transmasculine people may try to appear stereotypically masculine to induce social recognition of their masculinity but may not identify as male; they exist outside of the gender binary.

Transfeminine (adj.) – describes people who were assigned male at birth but identify with femininity more so than masculinity. They may try to appear stereotypically feminine to induce social recognition of their femininity but may not identify as female; they exist outside of the gender binary.

Women Loving Women (WLW) - Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of women to women.

Zie & Hir - The most common spelling for gender neutral pronouns. Zie is subjective (replaces he or she) and Hir is possessive and objective (replaces his or her).