

Terminology Glossary

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Terms and definitions

Labels are often very important to people in the TGD community, and words that fit right for one person may not be right for another. Some people may even find particular terms offensive. It's important to make sure you ask someone which words are the right ones for them and don't assume anyone's gender or pronouns. That said, please exercise sensitivity when asking – if you are in an environment where it might be unsafe for someone to be outed as transgender or gender diverse, follow their cues or the cues of others to ensure everyone's safety.

It's ok to make mistakes! We are all always learning, and language around TGD identity is constantly changing. If you make a mistake with someone's name, pronoun, or gender label, apologise and move on. If you feel that you need more support in understanding how to use gender labels and pronouns correctly, there are some great resources available online, or you may talk to the Volunteer Manager or a TGV staff or committee member.

This is not an exhaustive list of terms! There are many, many other terms that people use to describe their genders, but this should give you a good place to start from.

Trans and gender diverse (TGD)

An umbrella term used to describe anyone whose gender identity or expression is different from that which was assigned at birth or is expected of them by society. This includes those who identify as: trans; transgender; transsexual; genderqueer; non-binary; cross-dressers; Sistergirls, Brotherboys, and other culturally-specific identities; as well as a variety of other gender labels. TGD people may or may not access services to medically transition – this is different for everyone, and there is no requirement for medical transition in order to be transgender and/or gender diverse.

Transgender

Transgender people have gender identities and expressions that differ from their assigned sex at birth (for example, someone who was assigned

male at birth and is transgender may be female, genderqueer, non-binary, agender, or any other gender that is not male). Transgender is often used as an umbrella term, but may also be used as a gender in and of itself.

Transsexual

Like transgender people, transsexual people have gender identities and expressions that differ from their assigned sex at birth. Transsexual is an older term originally coined by the medical profession, and commonly refers to someone who has accessed services to medically transition through the use of hormones and surgery. Transsexual people may more often identify with a binary gender of male or female. This is a term that some people now find offensive, but for others, it is an important identity label.

AMAB

Assigned Male At Birth.

AFAB

Assigned Female At Birth.

Trans woman

A trans woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth. Some trans women prefer to simply be referred to as women, whereas others feel being trans is an important part of their gender label. Some trans women use terminology such as MTF/M2F (male-to-female/male-2-female), but for others these terms place too much emphasis on birth assigned sex and are considered offensive.

Transfeminine

A transfeminine person is someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as male. Being transfeminine usually also means identifying with femininity in some way, but for some people may simply indicate a move away from their birth assigned gender. Someone who is transfeminine may be a trans woman, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, a Sistergirl, or many other gender labels.

Trans man

A trans man is a man who was assigned female at birth. Some trans men prefer to simply be referred to as men, whereas others feel being trans is an important part of their gender label. Some trans men use terminology such as FTM/F2M (female-to-male/female-2-male), but for others these terms place too much emphasis on birth assigned sex and are considered offensive.

Transmasculine

A transmasculine person is someone who was assigned female at birth, but does not identify as female. Being transmasculine usually also means identifying with masculinity in some way, but for some people may simply indicate a move away from their birth assigned gender. Someone who is transmasculine may be a trans man, non-binary, genderqueer, agender, a Brotherboy, or many other gender labels.

Genderqueer

A gender that falls outside of male and female categories. Genderqueer people may describe themselves as masculine, feminine, androgynous, non-binary, bi-gender, multi-gender/pan-gender, agender, transgender, another gender label, or simply as genderqueer.

Non-binary

Non-binary refers to any gender that falls outside of the categories of male and female. It is usually a descriptive term added to gender labels such as transgender/trans and genderqueer, but some people simply use non-binary to describe their genders. Some non-binary people may partially identify with a binary gender, and self-describe as a “non-binary woman” or “non-binary man”.

Androgyne/androgynous

Someone who is androgynous, or an androgyne, is neither male nor female but instead has a gender that often combines traits traditionally labelled as masculine and feminine. Androgynes may identify as “in-between” male and female, or as a separate gender altogether.

Agender

An agender person is someone who has no gender. Agender people may also be transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, or another gender label.

Bi-gender/multi-gender

Bi-gender and multi-gender people are people who have multiple genders (bi-gender people have two genders, multi-gender many/more than two different genders). Bi-gender and multi-gender people may experience different genders from day to day, and may use different names, pronouns, gender labels, and ways of presenting (clothes, jewellery, etc) to express this.

Genderfluid

Genderfluid people are people who shift between different genders, or expressions of gender. Some genderfluid people may also be bi-gender or multi-gender, but others may not have two or more established genders which they move between, and instead may experience many different genders that change in a more fluid fashion.

Cross-dresser

A cross-dresser is someone who dresses in clothes typically assigned to the “opposite” gender, but does not necessarily live full-time as that gender. Instead, cross-dressing is often a part-time way of exploring gender. For some people, cross-dressing is a beginning step to transitioning, but for others it is an important way to honour feelings about their gender without requiring transition.

Sistergirl

Sistergirls are Aboriginal transgender women (assigned male at birth) who have a distinct cultural identity and often take on female roles within the community, including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds. Their cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs are pivotal to their lives and identities. (from Sisters and Brothers NT website, <http://sistersandbrothersnt.com/sistergirl/>)

Brotherboy

Brotherboys are Indigenous transgender people with a male spirit, whose bodies were considered female at birth. Brotherboys choose to live their lives as male, regardless of which stage/path medically they choose.

Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity. (from Sisters and Brothers NT website, <http://sistersandbrothersnt.com/brotherboy/>)

Cisgender

A cisgender person is someone who identifies with the gender that was assigned to them at birth. For example, a cisgender (or cis) woman is someone who was assigned female at birth and currently identifies as female.

Pronouns

Pronouns are the words we use to refer to someone when not using their name. Common pronouns are she/her/hers, and he/him/his. TGD people may use either or both of these, or other pronouns. Some common alternate pronouns include:

They/them/their

Ey/em/eirs

Ze/zir/zirs

Sie/hir/hirs

There are many other pronouns that people use, and it's important to ask before assuming. Some people may use different pronouns depending on their gender that day, or the environment they're in, or who they're with. It's important to follow people's lead.