

Abridged Gender and Sexuality Glossary

This abridged glossary was adapted from UCLA¹ and The Transgender Training Institute². Last edited June 2019.

Affirming: The unequivocal support for a person's gender identity or expression; the systematic support to ensure that transgender people and communities are fully represented, included, valued, and honored.

Agender: Someone without gender or who does not identify strongly with gender.

Bisexual: To be emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to two genders.

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.

Gay: 1) Term used in some cultural settings to represent men who are attracted to men in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who have sex with men identify as gay (or bisexual). 2) An individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

Gender: A range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity; a social and legal status, and set of expectations from society, about behaviors, characteristics, and thoughts. Each culture has standards about the way that people should behave based on their gender.

Gender Binary: The idea that there are only two genders — man and woman.

Gender Affirming/Confirming Surgery: Medical surgeries used to modify one's body to be in greater congruence with one's gender identity.

Gender Expression: The way that someone communicates their gender to the world, often through clothing, hair, jewelry, makeup, or accessories.

Gender Identity: A person's sense of how they feel in their heart, mind, body, and soul about their gender.

Gender Non-Conforming/Variant/Expansive: A person whose gender expression does not conform to traditional stereotypes of gender (masculine/feminine).

Intersex: A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and/or genitals differs from the two expected patterns.

Lesbian: Term used to describe women who are attracted to some other women.

Nonbinary: A person whose gender identity falls along the continuum or spectrum of gender identities and expressions within/outside the gender binary.

¹ Adapted from the [UCLA Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Campus Resource Center](#).

² Adapted from the [Teaching Transgender Toolkit](#).

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Pansexual: A person who is sexually attracted to all or many genders.

Queer: 1) An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual orientations and gender identities. Queer includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, intersex people, and other identities. 2) An identity label used to indicate a non-heterosexual orientation and/or a non-cisgender identity. 3) A reclaimed word that is sometimes still used as a slur.

Same Gender Loving: A term sometimes used by members of the African-American / Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying on European terms.

Sex: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics, and hormonal balances. Babies are typically assigned as “male” or “female” at birth, regardless of the combination of sex characteristics, and intersex people may be coercively assigned a binary sex via surgery as infants or children.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The sex marker that was placed on someone’s birth certificate.

Sexual/Romantic Orientation: Who a person is physically, psychologically, romantically or sexually attracted to, or who someone wants to be in a relationship with.

Sexuality: A wide range of human experiences including family relationships, dating, sexual behavior, physical development, reproduction, gender, body image, and more.

Trans(gender): A term (adjective) used for people whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

Transition: The social, physical, legal, and/or other processes by which a person moves from one gender expression/identity to another.

Trans(gender) Man: An affirming way to refer to a person who is transgender and identifies as a man (or just man).

Transsexual: A term that is used less frequently as an identity term for transgender people, but may also be used to distinguish someone who has transitioned medically or surgically. While still used as an identity label by some, “transgender” has become the appropriate term.

Trans(gender) woman: An affirming way to refer to a person who is transgender and identifies as a woman (or just woman).

Two-Spirit: A term used by some Native and Indigenous people to describe someone who has both a masculine and a feminine spirit, to describe their sexual, gender, and/or spiritual identity. As an umbrella term it may encompass same-sex attraction and a wide variety of gender variance, including people who might be described in Western culture as LGBTQ.³

³ Adapted from [University of Toronto](#)