

Welcoming Transgender Customers and Colleagues

Commonly Used Terms

The following are some definitions for gender identity and related terms. Keep in mind that language can evolve quickly and that different communities may use different words. Keep listening and learning!

Assigned Sex at Birth

The sex or gender assigned to a newborn by medical personnel often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping.

Cisgender/Cis

A term for someone who exclusively identifies as their sex assigned at birth. The term cisgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Gender Identity

One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s). Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity are not necessarily the same. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Expression

How a person represents or expresses one's self to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.

Gender Nonconforming

A term for people whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender. Someone with a gender nonconforming gender expression may or may not be transgender.

Genderqueer

An identity commonly used by people who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary. Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither male nor female, may see themselves as outside of or in between the binary gender boxes, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels. Many genderqueer people are cisgender and identify with it as an aesthetic. Not everyone who identifies as genderqueer identifies as trans or nonbinary.

Given Name/Dead Name

A name chosen for a child at birth, usually chosen to correspond with assigned sex at birth (sometimes referred to colloquially in trans communities as a "dead name"). Anyone may choose to select and go by a different first name that better aligns with their sense of self or gender identity. Do not ask a trans person what their name "used to be" or if it is their "real" name.

LGBTQIA

A collection of identities short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and agender. (Sometimes abbreviated as LGBT or LGBTQ+.)

Misgender

To incorrectly refer to someone using a word (often a pronoun or form of address) that does not reflect the gender that they are.

Nonbinary

Current preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary.

Sexual Orientation

A person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. In Western cultures, gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Trans people can be straight, bisexual, queer, etc. just like anyone else. For example, a trans woman who is exclusively attracted to other women would often identify as lesbian.

Transgender/Trans

An encompassing term of many gender identities of those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Trans Woman/Trans Man

Trans woman generally describes someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman. This individual may or may not actively identify as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and woman. The same concept applies to trans men. Often it is good just to use woman or man.

Two Spirit

An umbrella term indexing various indigenous gender identities in North America.

Definitions are from www.transequality.org and <http://www.transstudent.org/definitions>, with minor adaptations. Please visit these websites to find out more!