



GLOSSARY

As a terminology guide focused on trans lives, these descriptions may be variously used, contested, contextualised and ultimately transformed. In this way, the guide reflects the work of the Museum of Transology, as it centres on the changing lives and experiences of trans people in all our complexity. Trans people have always existed, even as the colonial project of gender has denied the many possibilities of the lives of Indigenous and colonised people. It has sought to lock people into a body trap, but we have escaped. Our lives have often been defined by words and language that harmed and hurt, but we have also used our own terms that we choose. We recognise that no single guide can include all the terms that hold meaning for their constituent groups, but it can continue to expand to be more inclusive. For this reason, a living terminology guide matters, language matters, and all of our contributions as trans people, matter.

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CIS OR CISGENDER

People whose gender identify aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth.

FTM or MTF

These acronyms stand for 'female-to-male' and 'male to female', respectively, to indicate people assigned female at birth who transition to be a man, and vice versa. Many trans people still use these terms to describe themselves, although these terms have also been criticised for implying that trans people 'change' from one sex into another.

GENDER

Traditionally refers to a social and cultural construct of being a man or a woman. Gender exists independent from sex, and an individual's gender does not always correspond with the sex assigned at birth.

GENDER EUPHORIA

The feeling of joy and satisfaction caused by an alignment between a person's gender identity and gender expression. It is a term used to counteract negative associations the term 'gender dysphoria' has brought to what some people think being trans means, i.e. that it is defined by being in constant discomfort or distress with one's gender identity and expression.

GENDER EXPRESSION

The external manifestations of gender, expressed through a variety of externally perceptible indicators, such as a person's name, pronouns, clothing, behaviour, etc.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

A term for the experience of discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics). Gender dysphoria, though often linked to being trans, is not a requirement to be trans (see: Gender euphoria).

GENDER IDENTITY

A person's inner sense of their gender. It is personal, internal and cultural, and, unlike gender expression, not necessarily physically visible to others.

GENDERQUEER

The term gender queer has been reclaimed by people who identify beyond traditional gender categories and heteronormative social norms. To queer gender means taking a visual and political stance against gender conformity and/or the cisgender binary.

HRT

Stands for Hormone Replacement Therapy. Often used by trans people as part of their medical transition in order to more closely align their gender expression with their gender identity. HRT for trans people may often include puberty blockers for trans young people, anti-androgens and estrogen for trans women and transfeminine people, and testosterone for trans men and transmasculine people.

INTERSEX

An umbrella term that refers to people born with physical sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit typical definitions for male or female bodies. These characteristics may be internal or external, may be apparent at birth or emerge from puberty, or not be physically apparent at all. There exists a broad and diverse spectrum of sex characteristics among intersex people, with more than 40 such variations documented. (Sourced from Free & Equal, United Nations).

MISGENDER

The act of gendering someone incorrectly. This often involves using gendered words that are inappropriate or the wrong pronouns. Understood to mean someone's identity has not been recognised.

NONBINARY

An umbrella term for those who do not fit neatly or exclusively into one of the binary gender categories. A non-binary person may have: a single fixed gender position other than male or female, no gender, a combination of male and female or other genders, or move between male, female and other genders – or they might not identify or agree with the concept of gender entirely. Be aware that Indigenous communities and communities of colour have other words to describe gender variance.

QTIBIPOC

QTIBIPOC stands for Queer, Trans, and/or Intersex, Black, Indigenous Person of Colour. This term refers to individuals who identify as queer, trans, intersex, or are questioning their sexuality/gender and also are a Person of Colour (POC). The term QTIBIPOC highlights the intersectional experiences of individuals facing multiple forms of oppression based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors

PERISEX

A term for people who are not intersex. It is used to avoid terms that stigmatise intersex people.

PUBERTY BLOCKERS

A medicine that delays the effects of puberty. They can be prescribed for young trans people, or young people who are questioning their gender, to delay the development of secondary sex characteristics associated with sex hormones.

SEX

The classification of people as male or female. At birth infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. However a person's sex, as defined by biology, is a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

TERF

Stands for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism, a person or group of people who generally focuses on removing transgender rights, legal protections, healthcare access, and supportive social environments. They work under the foundational framework of biological essentialism – the idea that biology supersedes culture and all other influences.

TRANS

An umbrella term used to indicate a wide variety of people whose gender identities are not aligned with their biological sex or gender assigned at birth. This can include, among many others, transsexual and transgender people, nonbinary people, agender, multigender, genderqueer people, intersex, and gender diverse people who relate to or identify as any of the above.

TRANSCESTRY

Evidence of trans, non-binary and intersex lives lived before us.

THEIRSTORY

The study of past events beyond the cisgender binary.

TRANSFEMME

Or transfeminine, is a term that often refers to trans women and nonbinary trans people who have a more feminine gender than the one they were assigned at birth. This term, although inclusive of trans women, is not interchangeable with trans women.

TRANSITION

The social, legal, and/or medical process of changing one's gender performance and/or presentation. This can (but does not always) include changing one's name and pronouns; altering dress, speech, and mannerisms; updating documents and legal registries; and seeking medical treatment to change physical characteristics. To come out as trans can be a part of, but is not the same as, transitioning.

TRANSMASC

Or transmasculine, is a term that often refers to trans men and nonbinary trans people who have a more masculine gender than the one they were assigned at birth. This term, although inclusive of trans men, is not interchangeable with trans men.

TRANSOLOGY

The practice of collecting objects and narratives relating to the lives and experiences of trans, non-binary and intersex people.

TRANSPHOBIA

A matrix of cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and aggressive behaviours based on prejudice, disgust, fear, and/or hatred directed against individuals or groups who do not conform to, or who transgress societal gender expectations and norms.

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