Georgia Tech | LGBTQIA
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,
Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual,
Ally Resource Center

Glossary

Agender
A term that describes the experience of not having or identifying with a gender; being genderless.

Bigender
A term to describe someone who identifies with more than one gender. For example, a bigender person may identify as a man and a woman or as a woman and non-binary.

Cisgender
A term used to describe someone whose gender identity *is* aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman is a cisgender woman.

Cross-Dresser
A term to describe someone who wears clothes that are associated with a gender different from the one they identify as. Most typically, it refers to cisgender men who dress in women's clothing for social or sexual reasons. While crossdressing is an act of gender non-conformity, crossdressers do not typically identify as transgender, although some may. The term transvestite is still used in other countries and cultures but has, for the most part, been replaced with crossdresser in the U.S.

Deadname
The practice of referring to a transgender person by a name they no longer use such as their legal name at birth. Deadnaming is a harmful practice that should be avoided.

Demi-man
A term to describe someone who identifies partially as a man regardless of sex assigned at birth.

Demi-woman
A term to describe someone who identifies partially as a woman regardless of sex assigned at birth.

Drag
The act of dressing up and delivering a particularly exaggerated performance of gender. Drag queens perform excessive femininity while drag kings perform excessive masculinity. Note that doing drag – putting on a costume for a performance – is not the same thing as being transgender (although some trans people may also like to perform in drag).

Gender Expression
A term to describe the ways an individual outwardly represents or expresses their gender identity to others through gender cues such as behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, mannerisms, accessories, etc.

Gender Identity
How an individual sees or feels about their own gender, and their understanding of their inner self as a man, woman, both, neither, or something else entirely. You cannot always tell a person's gender identity just by looking at them.

Gender Non-Conforming
A term to describe either an individual who or a behavior which challenges normative gender roles, expressions, and identities. For example, a man who wears make-up or a woman who likes to wear masculine clothing may be considered gender non-conforming. Note that not all transgender people are gender non-conforming and not all gender non-conforming people are transgender. For example, Caitlyn Jenner is a trans woman but she dresses in typically feminine ways, meaning that she conforms to gender norms. Prince was a cisgender man but his gender expression – which included make-up and frilly or sequined clothing - was often gender non-conforming.

Genderqueer
A term to describe a non-binary gender identity. For some people, it may have a political connotation if they feel that they are queering or resisting gender norms.

Intersex
An umbrella term that describes a range of conditions that affect a person's hormones, chromosomes, and/or reproductive organs that make it difficult to classify them as male or female. For example, a person who has a vagina but has internal testes instead of ovaries may be considered to have an intersex condition. A person who has a set of XXY chromosomes (instead of just XX or XY) may be considered to have an intersex condition.

Non Binary
A term to describe a gender identity that is outside of binary gender identities (man/trans man and woman/trans woman) in some way. There are many different kinds of non-binary identities including agender, bigender, genderqueer, demiman or demiwoman.

Privilege
An unearned, special advantage or right that a person is born into or acquires during their lifetime based on a personal quality or characteristic (race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, nationality, etc.) People who are cisgender experience privilege in numerous ways, including not having to undergo costly medical procedures to align their body with their identity, not dealing with the discomfort or fear of being misgendered, and knowing they can use a gender-specific bathroom without fear of harassment and violence.

Sex Assigned at Birth
A marker of male or female designated to an infant usually based on the appearance of their genitalia before or after birth.

Sex Change
An outdated and inaccurate term to describe the process of undergoing gender confirmation or gender affirmation surgery. This term should be avoided.

Transgender
A term used to describe someone whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transition
A term which refers to processes of changing primary and/or secondary sex characteristics, gender expression, and other attributes (name, pronoun) to be in alignment with one's gender identity. While any transgender person may choose to transition (including genderqueer/non-binary/agender individuals), transition is not necessary to be transgender. While some transgender people deeply desire transition, some may never seek to transition. Transition includes medical, legal, and social aspects.

Transsexual
A term used to describe someone who has one or multiple medical procedures (reassignment surgeries, hormone replacement therapies, etc.) focused on aligning their sex and gender identity. It can be used to create divisions within trans communities, separating people who have undergone medical transition from those who have not. For that reason, many trans people prefer to say trans or transgender instead. However, some people do identify as transsexual, and their right to use that label for themselves should be respected.

Trans Man
A term to describe a person who was not assigned male at birth but who identifies as a man. This is generally a safer term to use than FTM (female-to-male) which has fallen out of favor somewhat among some trans people.

Trans Woman
A term to describe a person who was not assigned female at birth, but who identifies as a woman. This is generally a safer term to use than MTF (male-to-female) which has fallen out of favor somewhat among some trans people.