

# *Transgender Terminology*

**Agender Individuals:** People who identify as genderless or gender-neutral.

**Cisgender Individuals:** People who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth (i.e., people who are not transgender).

**Cisgender Privilege:** The set of conscious and unconscious advantages and/or immunities that people who are or who are perceived as gender conforming benefit from on a daily basis.

**Crossdressers:** Individuals who, regardless of motivation, wear clothing, makeup, etc. that are considered by the culture to be appropriate for another gender but not one's own (preferred term to "transvestites").

**Drag or In Drag:** Wearing clothing considered appropriate for someone of another gender.

**Drag Kings and Drag Queens:** Female-bodied crossdressers (typically lesbians) and male-bodied crossdressers (typically gay men), respectively, who present in public, often for entertainment purposes.

**FTM Individuals:** Female-to-male transsexual people, transsexual men, transmen, or transguys—individuals assigned female at birth who identify as male. Some transmen reject being seen as "FTM," arguing that they have always been male and are only making this identity visible to other people (instead, they may call themselves "MTM").

**Gender:** The beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that a specific culture attributes to individuals based on their perceived sex. It involves gender assignment (the gender designation of someone at birth), gender roles (the expectations imposed on someone based on their gender), gender attribution (how others perceive someone's gender), and gender identity (how someone defines their own gender).

**Gender Affirming Surgery:** Surgical procedures that change one's body to conform to one's gender identity. These procedures may include "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) and "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). For female-to-male transsexual individuals, surgeries involve a bilateral mastectomy (chest reconstruction), panhysterectomy (removal of the ovaries and uterus), and sometimes a phalloplasty (construction of a penis) and scrotoplasty (formation of a scrotum) or a metoidioplasty (restructuring the clitoris). For male-to-female transsexual individuals, surgeries consist of optional surgical breast implants and vaginoplasty (construction of a vagina). Additional surgeries might include a trachea shave (reducing the size of the Adam's apple), bone restructuring to feminize facial features, and hair transplants. Gender affirming surgery is sometimes referred to as "gender reassignment surgery" or "gender confirming surgery."

**Gender Dysphoria:** The classification for transsexuality in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th Edition, 2013). It is defined as "a marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender." Most transsexual people strongly object to being listed in the *DSM*, arguing that their inclusion serves to dehumanize and pathologize them.

**Gender Expression:** How one chooses to express one's gender identity through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, body characteristics, etc.

**Gender Identity:** An individual’s sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Gender Variant, Gender Diverse, or Gender Nonconforming:** General terms for individuals who do not fit into traditional “male” and “female” gender categories.

**Genderism:** The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege cisgender people and subordinate and disparage transgender and gender-nonconforming people.

**Genderqueer Individuals:** People who identify outside of a gender binary by seeing themselves as neither male nor female (but as a third gender or as gender fluid) as both, or as somewhere in between.

**Hir:** A non-gender specific pronoun used instead of “her” and “him.”

**Intersex:** Congenital variations in which development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex is atypical (preferred term to “hermaphrodite”). About one in 1,500-2,000 children are born with an intersex variation.

**MTF Individuals:** Male-to-female transsexual people, transsexual women, or transwomen—individuals assigned male at birth who identify as female. Some transwomen reject being seen as “MTF,” arguing that they have always been female and are only making this identity visible to other people (instead, they may call themselves “FTF”).

**Sie or Ze:** A non-gender specific pronoun used instead of “she” and “he.”

**Trans, Trans\*, or Transgender People:** Most commonly used as an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth. Trans people include individuals who are transsexual, genderqueer, agender, androgyne, demigender, genderfluid, individuals who cross-dress or dress androgynously, and other individuals who cross or go beyond traditional gender categories.

**Transitioning:** The period during which a person begins to live as their “true” gender. It may include changing one’s name, taking hormones, having surgery, and altering legal documents.

**Transsexual People:** Individuals whose gender identity is different from their assigned gender at birth. Transsexual people often undergo hormone treatments and gender affirming surgeries to align their anatomy with their core identity, but not all desire or are able to do so.

**Two Spirit People:** A Native American/First Nation term for people who blend the masculine and the feminine. It is commonly used to describe anatomical women who took on the roles and/or dress of men and anatomical men who took on the roles and/or dress of women in the past (preferred term to “berdache”). The term is also often used by contemporary LGBT Native American and First Nation people to describe themselves.