



## Glossary of Terms Used in Speaking About Gender Identity

**transgender** - a person who, either fully or in part, does not identify with the gender they were designated at birth. Often used as an umbrella term for a wide range of gender identities. Often shortened to trans.

**trans man** - a person who was designated female at birth, but who identifies as a man.

**trans woman** - a person who was designated male at birth, but who identifies as a woman.

**cisgender** - a person who, for the most part, identifies as the gender they were designated at birth; not transgender. Often shortened to cis.

**non-binary genders** - gender identities that do not fit into the categories of man or woman.

**gender binary** - the idea that there are only two possible, opposing genders and that a person must identify as either a man or a woman.

**agender** - a person who feels that they do not have a gender identity or that their gender identity is neutral.

**bigender** - a person who identifies as two genders, either at the same time, or moving back and forth between them.

**genderqueer** - a person whose gender identity may not align with societal expectations. They may identify as both a man and a woman, move between genders, or reject the gender binary altogether. They may also identify as bigender, agender, transgender, non-binary, etc.

**two spirit** - a contemporary First Nations term for those whose spirits have a blend of masculine and feminine energies, reclaiming and honouring various cultural traditions that recognized more than two genders. May be used by LGBTQ Aboriginal individuals. Note that this term is specific to



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First Nations peoples and should not be used by those who are not Aboriginal to describe themselves.

**transphobia** - the fear and hatred of trans people.

**cissexism** - Prejudice and discrimination in favour of cisgender identities, including the belief that it is better to be cisgender than transgender.

**cisnormativity** - the societal idea that assumes all people are cisgender, and which privileges cisgender identities and underrepresents transgender and non-binary identities.

**heteronormativity** - the societal idea that assumes all people are heterosexual, and which privileges heterosexuality over other sexual orientations.

**heterosexism** - Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality, including the belief that heterosexuality is the best sexual orientation.

**intersectionality** - the understanding that every individual occupies many overlapping identity categories (race, gender, class, etc.) and that the combination of these categories shapes the way they experience the world and the privilege/marginalization that they encounter.

**intersex** - a person whose chromosomes, hormonal make-up or anatomy fall outside the categories of male or female.

**asexual** - a person who does not experience sexual attraction. An asexual person may or may not experience romantic attraction and enter into romantic relationships.

**bisexual** - a person who is sexually attracted to two or more genders. Similar to pansexual; the choice to identify as one over the other is usually based on personal preference.

**pansexual** - a person who experiences sexual attraction regardless of gender. Similar to bisexual; the choice to identify as one over the other is usually based on personal preference.



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**heterosexual/straight** - a person who is sexually attracted to the opposite gender on the gender binary.

**gay, lesbian** - a person who is sexually attracted to the same gender as themselves. Lesbian specifically refers to women who are attracted to other women.

**sex** - The biological characteristics associated with gender, often gender assigned at birth (e.g. male, female, intersex).

**sexual orientation** - indicates which gender(s) a person is attracted to.

**gender identity** - Each person's internal and individual experience of gender, their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere on the gender spectrum.

**gender expression** - The way a person presents or communicates their gender, through dress, hairstyle, body language, speech, emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics, mannerisms, etc.

**dmab/dfab** - designated male at birth/designated female at birth. Use these instead of things like "used to be a man" or "biologically female", which are both insensitive and incorrect.

**queer** - can be used as an umbrella term for LGBTQ+ individuals. Some people may also identify as queer in lieu of more rigid identity categories. Although many people have chosen to reclaim the word, it has historically been used as a slur and some individuals may be uncomfortable with it.