



Massachusetts  
Transgender  
Political  
Coalition

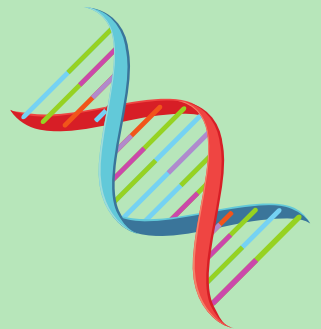
# The Language Guide - Terms & Definitions



**LGBT** is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender/trans. Other acronyms include LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer), LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual), LGBTQ+ (the plus encompasses a range of identities and communities), GLBT and others.



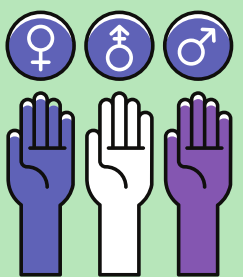
**Gender** is the cultural code of presentation, self-expression, behaviors, clothing, grooming, performance, actions and social roles assumed for women and men. Gender typically assigned based on sex assigned at (or before) birth.



**Sex** refers to the biological elements of being female, male or intersex. This includes chromosomes, hormonal profiles, reproductive anatomy and other characteristics.



**Intersex** is a general term used for a variety of factors in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy the does not seem to "fit" the medical community's textbook definitions of male or female.



**Sexual Orientation** describes a person's physical, romantic, sexual and/or emotional attraction to another person.

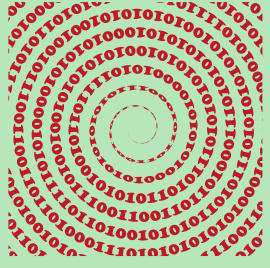


**Queer** is a term that LGBTQ+ individuals use to describe their sexual orientation as not heterosexual and/or gender identity as not cisgender.



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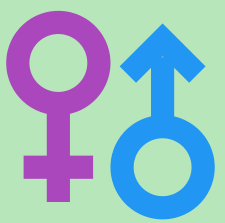
**Gender Binary** is the social construct that allows for the existence of only two genders. This construct situates "female" synonymous with "woman", "male" as synonymous with "man", and dictates how people assigned to these categories should act.



**Gender Identity** is a person's internal sense of what their own gender is, who they are as a woman, man, both, neither, etc.



**Gender Expression** is how a person outwardly exhibits their gender, typically through clothing, hairstyle, makeup, grooming, behavior, mannerisms, actions, etc.



**Cisgender** is a term used for people whose gender identity is consistent and fits comfortably with the sex and gender they were assigned at (or before) birth.



**Gender-Diverse** is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is not consistent or does not fit comfortably with the sex and gender they were assigned at (or before) birth. Other terms include Gender-Expansive, Gender-Variant.



**Gender-Creative** is an umbrella term for children and youth whose gender identity are not consistent or does not fit comfortably with the sex and gender they were assigned at (or before) birth. Other terms include Gender-Expansive.





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**Nonbinary** is an umbrella term for people who do not strictly identify as a woman or man, feminine or masculine. They may identify as neither or both. Some identities include Genderqueer, Gender Non-Conforming, GenderFluid and many more.



**Transgender** or **Trans** is a term used for people whose gender is different from the gender they were assigned at (or before) birth, and transitions to live and present as the gender they know themselves to be.



**Transition** refers to a personal process in which a person begins to identify and live as the gender they know themselves to be. This can include (not always) changing name, gender presentation, pronouns, and for some, medical transition: hormone therapy and/or gender affirming surgery.



**Transgender Woman** is a person who was assigned male at (or before) birth, identifies as a woman and transitions to live as a woman. Other terms include trans woman, MtF, transfeminine, trans femme, woman.



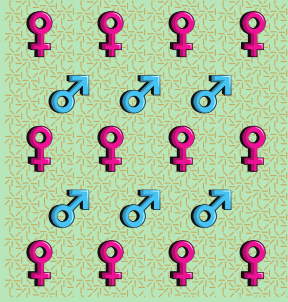
**Transgender Man** is a person who was assigned female at (of before) birth, identifies as a man and transitions to live as a man. Other terms include trans man, FtM, transmasculine, trans masc., man.



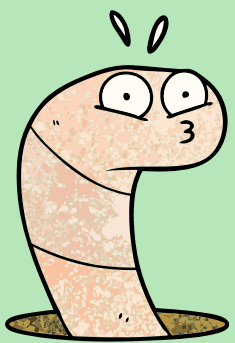
**Third Gender** is a concept in which individuals are categorized, either by themselves or by society, as both man and woman, or neither man nor woman. It is also a social category present in societies that recognize three or more genders. Two-Spirit is specific to Indigenous Northern Americans, Hijra or khwaja sara in India, Burrnesha in Albania, Mahu in Hawaii, Fa'afafine people in Samoa, okule and agule of the Lugbara people in the Congo and Uganda, insangoma of the Zulu in South Africa and many more!



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**Cisnormativity** is the assumption that a person identifies with the sex or gender they were assigned at (or before) birth, and that having a cisgender identity is the norm.



**Misgender** refers to language used to identify or speak about someone in a way that does not accurately reflect their gender, either intentionally or unintentionally.

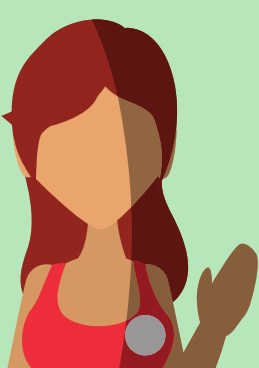


**Transphobia** encompasses attitudes, feelings and/or actions of prejudice, discrimination, fear, dislike, hatred, anger, aversion, discomfort, belief in stereotypes, silence of and violence towards transgender people.



**Transmisogyny** is the intersection of transphobia and misogyny.

Transmisogyny includes negative attitudes, feelings and/or actions of prejudice, discrimination, fear, dislike, hatred, anger, aversion, discomfort, belief in stereotypes, silence of and violence toward transgender individuals who fall on the feminine side of the gender spectrum, particularly trans women and transfeminine people. Transgender men, trans masculine people and other LGBT people can also be transmisogynistic.



**TERF** is used to describe cisgender women who self-identify as feminist but oppose including transgender women in spaces they reserve for people who were assigned female at birth. This is because they believe trans women are men and since men cannot coexist with their feminist ideologies, they exclude them from their beliefs and support. In fact, they often believe they should be denied rights and sometimes advocate for harm against trans people.



## PROBLEMATIC

## RECOMMENDED

"A transgender"

Transgender should be used as an adjective, not a noun. Do not say "...is a trans". Instead say, "...is a transgender person," "...is a trans person," "...is transgender," or "...is trans."

"Transgendered"  
"Transgendering"

"Transgender", someone is transgender, transitioning, trans-identified, or a member of the trans community. Do not add "-ed" or "-ing" at the end of the word transgender.

"Sex Change"  
"Pre-Op/Operative"  
"Post-Op/Operative"

"Transition", "Gender-Affirming" surgeries or procedures. Referring to a sex change or using terms such as "pre-" or "post-operative" inaccurately suggests that surgery is necessary for a person to align themselves with their gender identity.

Asking about  
surgery or  
someone's genitals

**It is sexual harassment! DON'T DO IT!**

"What's your real  
name"  
"What was your  
name before"

This inaccurately suggests that a person's gender identity and chosen (or common use) name is not "real". It perpetuates the idea that transgender people are deceptive. It is also rude and none of your business.

## HARMFUL, DEFAMATORY & OPPRESSIVE

Words like "she-male," "he-she", "gender-bender\*", "trannie\*", "tranny\*" are dehumanizing and should not be used.

\*There are some transgender people who use these terms to describe themselves. This is insider language and you should **NEVER** use these terms for someone else, **even if** you are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Gender Identity is an integral part of a person's identity.  
Please do not characterize transgender people as "deceptive", "fooling" other people, or as "pretending to be", "posing" or "masquerading."