

GENERAL Gender TERMINOLOGY

Sex: The classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitals.

Gender Identity: One's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or a boy or a girl). For transgender people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.

Gender Expression: External manifestation of one's gender identity, usually expressed through "masculine," "feminine" or gender-variant behavior, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex.

M-F, F-M Transition: Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step process; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, legal and medical adjustments: telling one's family, friends and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more forms of surgery.

Intersex: Describing a person whose biological sex is ambiguous. There are many genetic, hormonal or anatomical variations that make a person's sex ambiguous (e.g., Klinefelter Syndrome). Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and perform surgical operations to conform the infant's body to that assignment. This practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults speak out against the practice. The term intersex is not interchangeable with or a synonym for transgender.

Transgender: An umbrella term (adj.) for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include but is not limited to:

Transsexuals, cross-dressers and other gender-variant people. Transgender people may identify as Female-to-Male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). Use the descriptive term (transgender, Transsexual, cross-dresser, FTM or MTF) preferred by the individual. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Transsexual: An older term which originated in the medical and psychological communities. While some transsexual people still prefer to use the term to describe themselves, many transgender people prefer the term transgender to transsexual. Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term, as many transgender people do not identify as transsexual. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

Gender Queer: denoting or relating to a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.