

Gender and Sexual Orientation Terms and Definitions

Androgynous: a term for a person who expresses or presents merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

Bisexual: a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to men and women.

Crossdressing (CD): dressing as someone from a different gender category; may be done by people from all genders and sexual orientations. Crossdressers sometimes referred to as transvestites (TV).

Drag: crossdressing, especially in public or in a performance.

Feminine: concept of what is "naturally" or traditionally female in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

Gay: a person who identifies as a man who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to men.

Gender Binary System: a social system that requires everyone to be raised as a boy or girl (dependent on what sex you are assigned at birth), which in turn forms the basis for how you are educated, what jobs you can do (or are expected to do), how you are expected to behave, what you are expected to wear, what your gender and gender presentation should be, and who you should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

Gender Characteristics: characteristics that are used by others to attribute gender to an individual, such as facial hair or vocal pitch.

Gender Expression/Gender Presentation: the way a person expresses his or her gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

Gender Identity: a person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of biological sex.

Gender Nonconformity: not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.

Genderqueer: a term which is used by some people who may or may not fit on the spectrum of trans, or be labeled as trans, but who identify their gender and sexual orientation to be outside of the gender binary system, or culturally prescribed gender roles.

Gender Role: culturally accepted and expected behavior associated with biological sex.

Intersex: refers to a series of medical conditions in which a child's genetic sex (chromosomes) and phenotypic sex (genital appearance) do not match, or are somehow different from the "standard" male or female. About one in 2,000 babies are born visibly intersexed, while some others are detected later. For more information, please visit <http://www.intersexinitiative.org>.

Lesbian: a person who identifies as a woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to women.

Masculine: concept of what is "naturally" or traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

Pansexual: a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to folks of all genders.

Passing: crossdressing well enough to be seen as a member of a different sex/gender category.

Sex: one's biological assignment as male, female, or intersexed.

Transgender (TG): a term for designating those who transcend or transgress gender by not looking, acting, being, or identifying as traditionally male or female; can include crossdressers, transsexuals, intersex people, and other gender nonconformists.

Transsexual (TS): a person who feels that his or her gender identity does not match their biological sex ("I'm a woman in a man's body" etc.); a pre-op (preoperative) transsexual is a TS preparing to have sex reassignment surgery, and a post-op (postoperative) transsexual has already undergone sex reassignment, although not all transsexuals desire surgery; some transsexuals take hormones to make their bodies look more male or female.