

# Commonly-Used LGBTQIA+ Terminology



**AFAB, or AMAB:** Assigned Female At Birth, or Assigned Male At Birth

**Agender:** Referring to a person who identifies as having no gender.

**Cis, or Cisgender Man/Woman:** A person whose gender identity matches with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**FTM, or MTF:** Acronyms (that are falling out of practice) that stand for Female-To-Male and Male-To-Female. You will sometimes hear trans individuals who have sought hormone therapy and/or gender confirmation surgeries use these terms to discuss their physical transitions. You should avoid using them in general.

**Gender Binary:** The social construction of gender in many cultures and societies, where gender is seen as a strict dichotomy between male and female.

**Gender Dysphoria:** Persistent feelings of depression and/or anxiety as related to the gender one was assigned at birth, as well as one's physical gendered appearance. Once called "gender identity disorder", it has been declassified as a medical disorder that needs to be "cured", or stifled. Children as young as 3 have been recorded as experiencing gender dysphoria. It is very real, and very dangerous to a person's health and well-being. People experiencing gender dysphoria need every single bit of care and validation they can get, from empathetic listeners to knowledgeable and understanding therapists to potentially getting them resources to help them pursue hormone therapy and/or gender confirmation surgeries.

**Gender Expression:** The outward, physical performance of gender identity, such as through clothing, hair, body shape, voice, behavior, and so on. One's gender identity and gender expression do not have to "match"! (i.e., a trans or cis man can dress in as feminine a manner as they want, a genderqueer person can dress in as masculine a manner as they want, etc.)

**Gender Identity:** A person's internal, deeply held sense of their own gender. It is impossible to tell what someone's gender/gender identity is just by looking at them.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** Referring to a person or persons who experience and/or perform gender in ways that do not conform within traditional gender binary "norms"

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**Gender Pronouns:** The English language has gender-specific personal pronouns, typically “he/him/his” for the masculine and “she/her/hers” for the feminine. Many (but not all!) gender non-conforming individuals choose to use the pronouns “they/them/theirs”, as in: “Devon went to the post office and they mailed a package.” Correctly using someone’s pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity. When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above).

**Genderfluid:** Referring to a person who identifies with having a gender which varies over time. They may at any time identify as male, female, or any non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.

**Genderqueer:** Another term referring to a person who identifies as having a gender outside of the gender binary.

**Intersex:** Referring to a person who is born with features such as hormone levels, chromosomes, or external/internal sexual and reproductive organs that do not align with the typical definitions of male or female. Being intersex is much more common than most people realize; it’s hard to know exactly how many people are intersex, but estimates suggest that about 1-2 in 100 people born in the U.S. are intersex. A person who is intersex often also identifies with another or other gender identity/identities.

**Non-Binary:** Referring to a person or people who identify as having a gender identity outside of the gender binary. (Can be heard used both as an individual identity and an umbrella term.)

**Romantic Orientation:** Referring to an individual’s pattern of romantic attraction based on gender, often considered distinct from sexual orientation. Someone can be homo-romantic, hetero-aromantic, aromantic, bi-romantic, and so on.

**Trans, or Transgender Man/Woman:** A person whose gender identity does not match with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Transition:** A usually multi-step process of changing one’s gender/gender identity. Steps may include a name change, pronoun change, dressing or presenting differently, hormone therapy, having medical gender confirmation procedures, and more.