

Gender Terminology

Dirk Correia

dirk.ray.correia@gmail.com | dirkgraycorreia.com

(2/2017. Last Updated 10/2022)

Transgender (Person)	Someone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Must never be used as a noun.
Cisgender (Person)	Someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth
AFAB/DFAB	Assigned female at birth / Designated female at birth
AMAB/DMAB	Assigned male at birth / Designated male at birth
Trans	Shortened form of the word transgender
Cis	Shortened form of the word cisgender
Intersex	Someone born with reproductive organs that do not match our perceptions of what is biologically male or female
Trans Man	Someone who was AFAB but identifies as a man
Trans Woman	Someone who was AMAB but identifies as a woman
Non Binary	Someone who does not identify as strictly male or female
Binary	The strict idea of something being inherently male or female
Dysphoria	A sense or feeling of being uncomfortable with one's own body, societal view of their body, or biological sex
Passing	A person being seen without doubt/question as their gender. This is based on appearance, and standards of femininity and masculinity
Stealth	A trans person choosing to not disclose the fact that they are transgender, effectively passing as cis full time
Misgendering	Using the incorrect pronouns for a trans person, intentionally or unintentionally

Words Not to Use Regarding Transgender People

Transgendered	An incorrect way of saying transgender, the modifier (ed) is offensive
Hermaphrodite	An offensive term for intersex people
Transsexual	Antiquated way of saying transgender, some people still use this word, but

	most trans people, especially younger ones do not use this
Gay	Gender and sexuality have no correlation. This word is okay when talking about sexuality, but has no association with gender identity
Transvestite	An out-of-date word for someone who wears clothes that do not match their assigned gender
Sex Change	A better term in this context is Gender Reassignment Surgery, which usually refers to bottom surgery
Transgenderism	(Have only seen this in some literature) Not used
Real / Normal	Saying that cisgender people are ‘real boys,’ ‘real girls,’ or ‘regular people,’ insinuates that transgender people are not real or regular people
Biologically “x”	Biologically trans people are human, the existence of intersex people disproves that anything is inherently male or female.
Fully Transitioned	This is a common phrase that implies that a person must medically transition in order to be ‘fully’ transgender. It makes those who cannot or who do not want to medically transition feel incomplete.

Common Questions / Problems

1. *What are you biologically? What were you born as?*
 - a. This is offensive because it is the question “what do your genitals look like?” phrased a different way. It’s invasive and unneeded information.
2. *How does “X family member” feel about you?*
 - a. This is bringing up a possibly traumatic situation in this person’s life.
3. *What is your old/real name?*
 - a. Many trans people do not want to be associated with their given names. The term “real name” implies that the transgender person’s name and identity are not valid.
4. *Have you had the/a surgery? Do you plan on getting it?*
 - a. “The surgery” is actually a series of several medical procedures that a trans person may or may not choose to have. Surgery is not necessary to be transgender, there is no “real way” to be trans.

5. *How do you have sex / have relationships?*
 - a. In short, just like every other person. Although dating while trans has it's complications, everyone approaches romantic relationships differently.
6. *Don't you feel like you're lying to everyone by not coming out / being stealth?*
 - a. There is nothing to lie about. The choice to be visible is personal to each trans person's safety and comfort level.
7. *Being transgender is a trend! There are so many more trans people now.*
 - a. It is marginally safer to come out as transgender, and there is a broader understanding of gender as a whole.
8. *I know a trans person, and they let me say "x" why can't I use those terms with you?*
 - a. Every trans person is not the same, some people are comfortable with certain terminology, while others are not.
9. *Using the correct pronouns is so hard for me! I just can't keep up!*
 - a. Understand that although adjusting to someone else's pronouns may be difficult, it is much harder to be misgendered constantly. Their gender is not about your comfort.