

# Trans/gender divergent people – terms and definitions

**NB: The following 4 terms are adjectives not nouns, i.e never say “a transgender”:**

**Trans or transgender** (never “transgendered”) – someone whose gender does not, either partially or fully, align with the gender they were assigned at birth (not everyone will use this term)

**Transsexual** – someone who has medically transitioned (but many consider the word outdated, or even offensive)

**Non-binary or genderqueer** – somebody whose gender, either wholly or partly, falls outside of being exclusively a man or exclusively a woman

- Different terms/ ways of being non-binary are: agender (not having a gender), bigender (having two or more genders), gender fluid (gender changes over time, timescales can vary), third gender (a gender other than man or woman), neutrois (neutral gender), androgyne (ambiguous or blended gender), enby (shorthand for non-binary), non-binary butch, non-binary femme (see later explanations of butch/femme), non-binary trans man, non-binary trans woman (a person may mostly be a man or woman but still partly fall outside the binary)

**Trans\*** – some people self-identify as trans\* (with an asterisk), however it has become unpopular as an umbrella term and should not be used that way.

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**Trans woman/ trans man (never transwoman/transman)** – a trans woman is someone assigned male at birth who identifies as/lives as a woman, and vice versa

**AFAB/AMAB** (assigned female/male at birth) – the gender category a person was given when they were born. Avoids problematic terms like “biological male” or “female bodied”.

- This is **not** an identity, so avoid saying things like “they are an AFAB trans person”.
- Shortening this to assigned female/male makes the term more inclusive of intersex people assigned “indeterminate” at birth

**Gender identity** – a person’s core experience of themselves in relation to sex/gender. NB: not all trans people relate to “identity”, or “identifies as”, e.g. “I’m a woman” not “I identify as a woman”, “their gender is neutrois” not “their gender identity is neutrois”

**Cis or cisgender** – the opposite of transgender, someone whose gender aligns with the gender they were assigned. Using this term avoids problematic ways of describing non-trans people in relation to trans people. Cis/trans comes from latin.

**Gender diversity (some also use gender variance/ non-conformity)** – when we need to describe people who do not conform to or fit their assigned gender but may or may not consider themselves or be considered trans (useful for children and people who don't like, relate to or fit the word trans)

**Personal Pronouns** – (e.g he/she/they/xie) – the pronoun others should use when talking about a person. if in doubt ask; not everyone's appearance conforms to their gender. Many use gender neutral pronouns, such as singular they/them/their. It's ok to use "they" if you're unsure, but don't use it if you know someone prefers he or she

**Butch/femme** – used within the LGBT+ community to describe people who present in typically masculine or feminine ways. Not the same as being trans. E.g. a woman, can be butch (masculine presenting) while identifying 100% as a woman. Butch/femme can also be descriptions of someone's gender identity (or part of it).

**Gender incongruence/dysphoria** – The World Health Organisation now uses "incongruence" to describe trans people's experience of the misalignment of their gender from that assigned to them. Dysphoria, the opposite of euphoria, describes "clinically significant distress" now understood to be mainly caused by society's treatment of trans people rather than their being trans, and is falling out of use.

**Transition** – the process of developing congruence with your gender. May or may not involve surgery, hormone replacement therapy, and changes to assist being correctly identified through clothes, speech, etc. NB: "sex change" is an inappropriate term, as is "used to be a man" or other inferences that someone's gender was "created" by their transition.

**Gender recognition certificate (GRC)** – allows trans men/women to change birth certificate/registry documents only. Other documents including passport can be changed without a GRC. Many trans people don't have one as it's complex, expensive and not available to non-binary people. Never ask for a GRC.

**Crossdresser** – somebody who wears clothing that falls outside of what's expected for their gender. Some are trans, some not. "Transvestite" is also used but decreasing in popularity, crossdresser is also a controversial term to some

**Drag queen/king** – currently, someone who dresses as the opposite sex for performance purposes. Historically the line between drag and trans was more blurry

**Two Spirit** – only Indigenous Americans may use this identity, which is not directly synonymous with trans. Many other cultures have their own words and ways of conceptualising gender, which do not neatly map onto our ways of speaking about it, some have been erased/stigmatised by colonisation

**Intersex** – a person whose reproductive biology deviates from standard ideas of male and female (this can be hormonal, chromosomal, or anatomical – e.g. ambiguous genitalia, XXY or XO chromosomes, androgen insensitivity. Some intersex children are still subject to controversial "normalising" medical and surgical interventions

*Please note: terminology shifts and evolves; some trans people will use words now seen as incorrect or even offensive, words mean different things to different individuals – no one, unified trans story*