



# SEE CHANGE HAPPEN

## TRANSGENDER 101

An overview and terminology

### Abstract

The document highlights and unpicks some of the commonly accepted terminology in regard to Transgender individuals

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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# INDIVIDUALITY

Individuality is the quality that makes one person or thing different from all others. We are all a product of our own unique collection of attributes.

From birth, everyone has the right to have their own identity. The identity of an individual is the assertion of his or her existence in a society. It is also a matter of recognition of their individuality and what differentiates them from their peers.

From birth, we all develop our own identity which is a fundamental human concept that allows each of us the ability and freedom to enjoy and explore all of our own rights.

Identity encompasses the family name, the surname, date of birth, gender, class, ethnicity and experiences of the individual. Through these details, an individual will hold rights and obligations specific to their status (woman, man, child, handicapped, refugee, etc.).

## Waterline of Visibility

Much of our own individuality is not visible just by our appearance, just like an iceberg much of who we are is hidden beneath the surface or “the waterline”. We make assumptions or judge based on labels or our own perceptions but unless you get to know someone you won’t really understand a person’s true uniqueness.

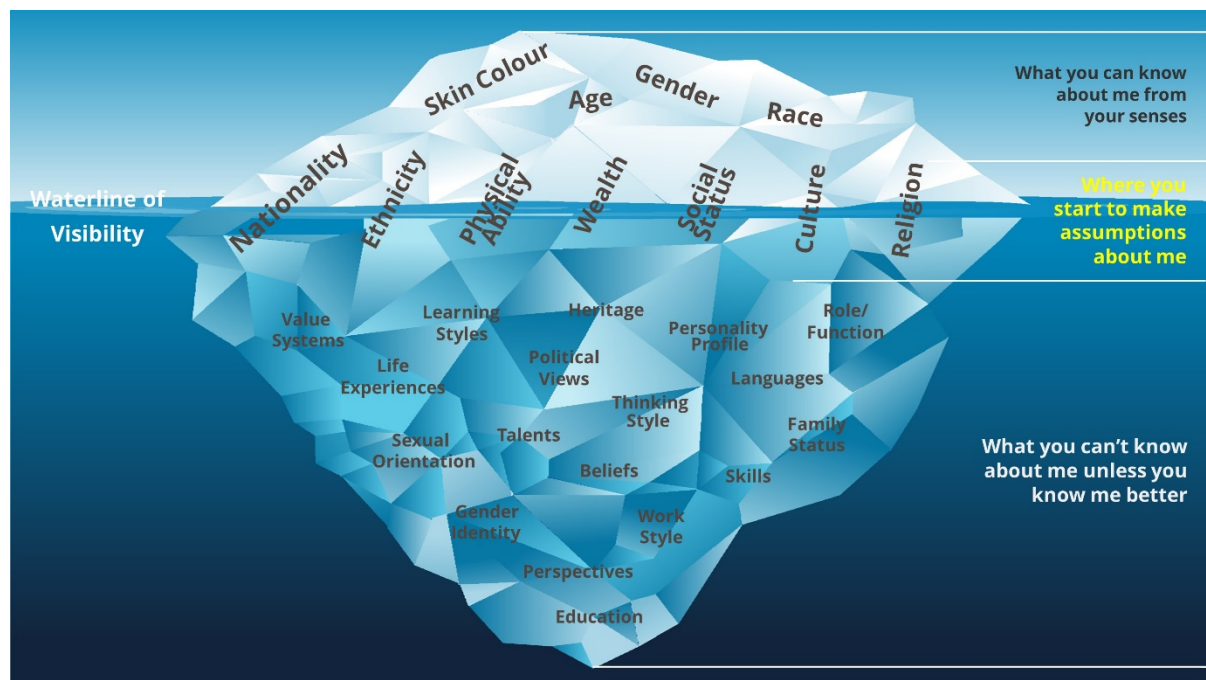


Figure 1 - Waterline of Visibility

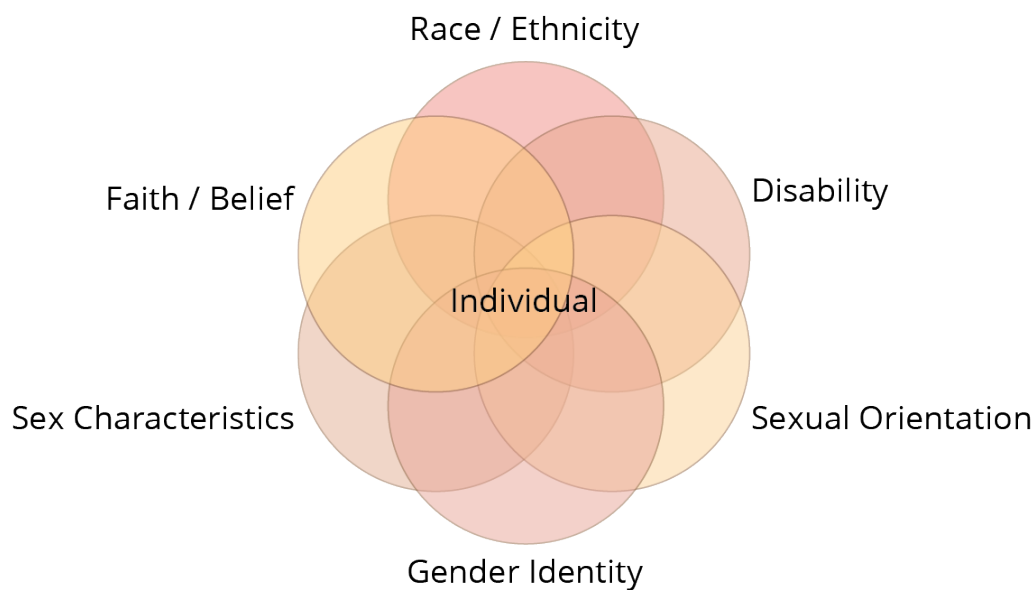
## INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Individuals do not fit neatly within any one category, but live as people with racial, gendered, abled and sexual identities, privileges and forms of oppression are interlinked and cannot be addressed alone.

The relationship between a person's various social identities is more important than a single social identity when it comes to implementing social justice. For example, one might be an upper middle class black cisgender (i.e., assigned female at birth, and still identifying as female) straight woman. This individual would experience life as a woman, as a black person, as a cisgender person, as a straight person, and as an upper middle-class person at the same time while importantly also facing oppression because of the interaction of these identities.

In other words, social identities are not additive, they are intersectional, much like a traditional Venn diagram where various characteristics overlap to create a particular individual's identity.



*Figure 2 - Intersectionality*

## WHAT IS LGBT+

From time to time online debate flares up about exactly what the LGBT+ community should call itself. Generally speaking, most people default to either LGBT or LGBT+.

This explicitly calls out key components of a diverse group: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. As shorthand goes, it's fairly effective, recognizing the spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identity in four simple letters. It can't please everyone, and like most compromises, leaves plenty of people feeling unheard or excluded.

Many activists have reclaimed the word "queer" as a preferred descriptor. Taking back the word from the bullies and foes is a way to regain power.

Over time, a number of other additions have been suggested to the LGBT+ acronym. The most common is Q, signifying "questioning" to recognize that many people are uncertain about their sexual orientation or gender identity (or both).

### Decoding LGBTTQQIP2SAA

- *Lesbian*: people who identifies as women who that romantically and sexually attracted to other people who identify as women
- *Gay*: people who are romantically and sexually attracted to other people of their own gender. "Gay" is usually used by people who identify as men
- *Bisexual*: people who are romantically and sexually attracted to two (or all) genders
- *Transgender*: people who have a gender identity or expression different from the one they were assigned at birth or are expected to exhibit in adulthood
- *Transsexual*: people who have a gender identity or expression different from the one they were assigned at birth or are expected to exhibit in adulthood, who are also treated with medical intervention, including gender reassignment surgeries and/or hormone therapy
- *Queer*: people with a sexual orientation that is intentionally left vague
- *Questioning*: people who are unsure of their gender identity, or unsure of their sexual orientation
- *Intersex*: people with two sets of genitalia or various chromosomal differences
- *Pansexual*: people who refuse to be pinned down on the Kinsey scale;
- *2S*: Two-Spirit: a tradition in many First Nations that considers sexual minorities to have both male and female spirits
- *Asexual/Androgynous*: people who do not identify with any particular orientation
- *Allies*: recognizing that the community thrives best with loving supporters, although they are not really part of the community itself

Whilst that manages to be pretty inclusive, but it's also pretty unwieldy, and no doubt as language and identities evolve it will need to be expanded or clarified further.

## Labels

Labels are tricky things. Most oppressed and minority communities have struggled with finding a descriptor that they feel embraces them and that they can embrace.

The evolution of Negro to Coloured to Black to African-American shows a clear transition from outside labels to a community claiming its own identity, although many within the community object to African-American.

The journey from Indians to Native Americans to First Nations is similar, with many outside the community being unfamiliar with the latter designation.

The transition from handicapped to disabled was successful (and defined in law) but the attempt to destigmatize to “differently abled” was just too awkward to find common usage.

## Awkwardness

It’s that kind of awkwardness that stymies the best attempts to find the magic LGBT+ label. The problem stems from the best of intentions, inclusion. People are complex, with multiple identities. Everyone has a sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion (or lack thereof), ethnicity, and many other components. It’s laudable for the LGBT+ community to recognize that there is strength in working together and to try to find a descriptor that shows that intent. In the long run, the intent matters more than the label.

Rather than take umbrage at a less than fully inclusive LGBT+ – which at least shows good intent – let’s focus on the work we need to do together to make this a better place for everyone.

## WHO ARE TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Transgender people come from all walks of life. We are dads and mums, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. We are your co-workers, and your neighbours, we are 7-year-old children and 70-year-old grandparents, we are a diverse community, representing all racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as faith backgrounds.

The word “transgender” – or trans – is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to us at birth. Although the word “transgender” and our modern definition of it only came into use in the late 20th century, people who would fit under this definition have existed in every culture throughout recorded history.



## What's the difference between sex and gender?

Sex generally refers to the designation of a person at birth as either "male" or "female" based on their anatomy (e.g. reproductive organs) and/or their biology (e.g. hormones).

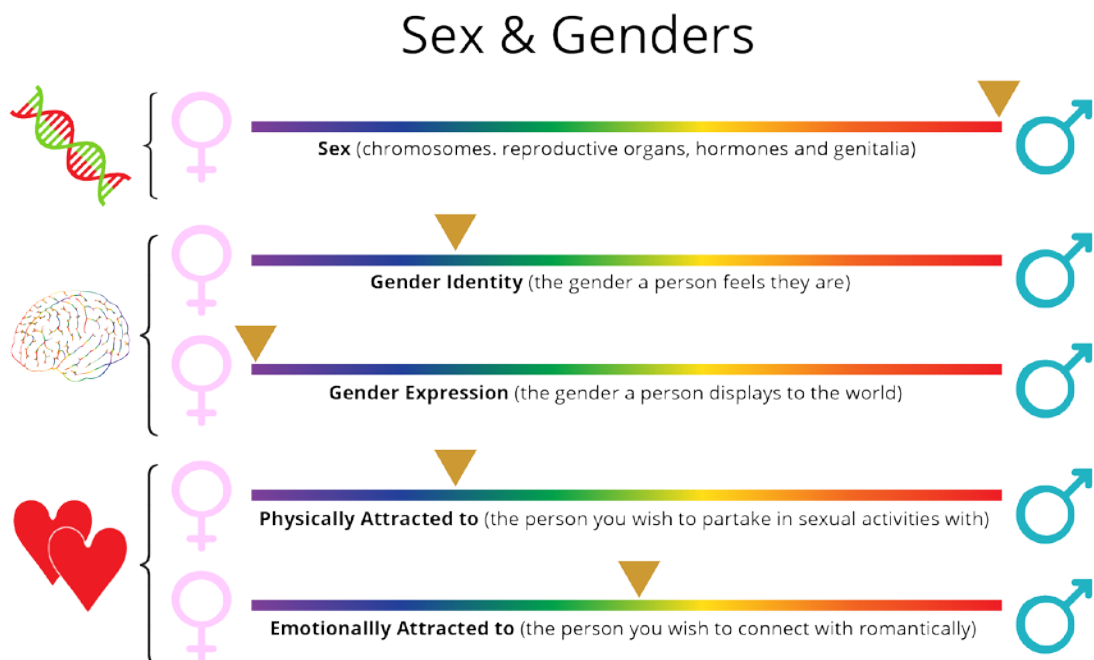


Figure 3 - Sex & Gender

Gender refers to the traditional or stereotypical roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society consider appropriate for men and women.

## COMMON TRANSGENDER TERMINOLOGY

### Sex

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

### Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or

genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

### **Gender Expression**

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behaviour, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman.

### **Transgender (adj.)**

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including *transgender*. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

### **Transsexual (adj.)**

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is **not** an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word *transgender*. It is best to ask which term a person prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

### **Trans**

Used as shorthand to mean *transgender* or *transsexual* - or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means.

Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term's meaning in the context of your story.

Sometimes it is followed by an asterisk (\*), i.e. *trans\**. The asterisk is a "wildcard" that stands for the multitude of ways that *trans* people identify.

### **Cross-dresser (CD)**

While anyone may wear clothes associated with a different sex, the term *cross-dresser* is typically used to refer to men who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with women. Those men typically identify as heterosexual. This activity is a form of gender expression and not done for entertainment purposes. Cross-dressers do not wish to permanently change their sex or live full-time as women. *Replaces the term "transvestite" (TV).*

### **Transition**

Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one's family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person.

Avoid the phrase "sex change".

### **Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**

Also called Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS). Refers to doctor-supervised surgical interventions, and is only one small part of transition (see transition above). Avoid the phrase "sex change operation." Do not refer to someone as being "pre-op" or "post-op." Not all transgender people choose to, or can afford to, undergo medical surgeries.

Always avoid overemphasizing the role of surgeries in the transition process.

### **Gender Identity Disorder (GID)**

*outdated, see Gender Dysphoria*

### **Gender Dysphoria**

Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. It's sometimes known as gender identity disorder (GID), gender incongruence or transgenderism, but these terms should be avoided as they are outdated.

This mismatch between sex and gender identity can lead to distressing and uncomfortable feelings that are called gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a recognised medical condition, for which treatment is sometimes appropriate. It's not a mental illness.

Some people with gender dysphoria have a strong and persistent desire to live according to their gender identity, rather than their biological sex. These people are sometimes called transsexual or trans people. Some trans people have treatment to make their physical appearance more consistent with their gender identity.

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*Transgender individuals are not cross-dressers or drag kings/queens. Always use the term preferred by the person. Do not use the word "transvestite" at all, unless someone specifically self-identifies that way.*

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## OTHER TERMS YOU MAY HEAR

You may hear the following terms when doing research on transgender issues or speaking to someone. As they are not commonly known outside the LGBT+ community, they will require context and definition if used in mainstream conversations.

### **Cisgender**

A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-." A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say *non-transgender people*.

### **Gender Non-Conforming**

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity.

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*Not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming.*

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Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional – that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming.

The term is not a synonym for *transgender* or *transsexual* and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

### **Non-binary and/or genderqueer**

Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms.

The term is not a synonym for *transgender* or *transsexual* and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

### **Coming Out**

Letting someone know what your sexual orientation or gender identity is. Coming out can be a continuous process as you encounter new people and gain new understanding

of your own identity. In mainstream cultures, people tend to assume that you are heterosexual and cisgender unless you tell them otherwise. This is why LGBTQ+ people tend to “come out” and heterosexual and/or cisgender people do not.

### **MTF or “male to female”**

This refers to a person who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman.

Some trans people use “MTF” to describe their medical transition goals; they want their body to lose some “male-typical” sex characteristics and gain some “female-typical” sex characteristics.

### **FTM or “female to male”**

This refers to a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a man.

Some trans people use “FTM” to describe their medical transition goals; they want their body to lose some “female-typical” sex characteristics and gain some “male-typical” sex characteristics.

### **Gender Assigned at Birth**

When a baby is born, a cursory inspection of their genitals leads a doctor to declare “it’s a boy” or “it’s a girl”. Infants who have an intersex condition sometimes undergo surgery on their reproductive organs to make them look more “typical” of the gender they were assigned.

Often used acronyms:

- *AFAB/FAAB*: Assigned Female at Birth,
- *AMAB/MAAB*: Assigned Male at Birth.

Always avoid “*Genetic Female/Male*” and “*Real Girl/Boy*”

### **Stealth**

A *trans* person is said to “go stealth” if they are out as their preferred gender, but not out as trans\*. Many *trans* people “go stealth” for safety reasons, but some do it because they do not feel a connection to the *trans* community and thus do not want to be associated with it.

## **TRANSGENDER NAMES, PRONOUN USAGE & DESCRIPTIONS**

It is commonly accepted that using the singular “they” to describe people who “identify as neither male nor female.” It is increasingly common for people who have a nonbinary gender identity to use they/them as their pronoun.

### **Always use a transgender person's chosen name.**

Many transgender people are able to obtain a legal name change from a court. However, some transgender people cannot afford a legal name change or are not yet old enough to legally change their name. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who uses a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).

### **Use the pronoun that matches the person's authentic gender.**

A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or undergone surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you are not certain which pronoun to use, ask the person, "What pronouns do you use?"

### **If it is not possible to ask a transgender person which pronoun they use, use the pronoun that is consistent their gender expression or if in doubt use the singular they.**

For example, if a person wears a dress and uses the name Susan, feminine pronouns are usually appropriate. Or it is also acceptable to use the singular *they* to describe someone when you don't wish to assign a gender. For example: "Every individual should be able to express their gender in a way that is comfortable for them."

Some people use the singular *they* to reflect their non-binary gender identity.

### **Every usage of gender neutral language**

For example: "Somebody has dropped their £10 note on the pavement, I wonder if they have realised. When I find them I will give it back."

We don't know the identity or gender of the particular person; therefore, we instinctively use gender neutral language, we do this already and it is not foreign or strange to us.

It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity to use they/them as their pronoun.

For example: "Jacob writes eloquently about their non-binary identity. They have also appeared frequently in the media to talk about their family's reaction to their gender expression."

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*It is never appropriate to put quotation marks around a transgender person's chosen name or the pronoun that reflect their gender identity.*

---

## TERMS TO AVOID

PROBLEMATIC	PREFERRED
<p><b>"transgenders," "a transgender"</b>  <i>Transgender</i> should be used as an adjective, not as a noun.</p> <p>Do not say, "Tony is a transgender," or "The parade included many transgenders."</p>	<p><b>"transgender people" or "a transgender person" or "a transgender individual"</b>            For example, "Tony is a transgender man," or "The parade included many transgender people."</p>
<p><b>"transgendered"</b>            The adjective <i>transgender</i> should never have an extraneous "-ed" tacked onto the end.</p> <p>An "-ed" suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors.</p> <p>It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer.</p> <p>You would not say that Elton John is "gayed" or Ellen DeGeneres is "lesbianed," therefore you would not say Kelly Maloney is "transgendered."</p>	<p><b>"transgender"</b></p>
<p><b>"transgenderism"</b>            This is not a term commonly used by transgender people.</p> <p>This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to "a condition."</p>	<p><b>"being transgender"</b>            Refer to <i>being transgender</i> instead, or refer to <i>the transgender community</i>.</p> <p>You can also refer to <i>the movement for transgender equality and acceptance</i>.</p>

<p><b>"sex change," "pre-operative," "post-operative"</b></p> <p>Referring to a "sex-change operation," or using terms such as "pre-operative" or "post-operative," inaccurately suggests that a person must have surgery in order to transition.</p> <p>Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.</p>	<p><b>"transition"</b></p>
<p><b>"biologically male", "biologically female", "genetically male", "genetically female", "born a man", "born a woman", "real-male", "real-female"</b></p> <p>Problematic phrases like those above are reductive and overly-simplify a very complex subject.</p> <p>As mentioned above, a person's sex is determined by a number of factors - not simply genetics - and a person's biology does not "trump" a person's gender identity.</p> <p>Finally, people are born babies: they are not "born a man" or "born a woman."</p>	<p><b>"assigned male at birth", (amab) "assigned female at birth" (afab) or "designated male at birth," "designated female at birth"</b></p>
<p><b>"passing" and "stealth"</b></p> <p>While some transgender people may use these terms among themselves, it is not appropriate to repeat them in mainstream media unless it's in a direct quote.</p> <p>The terms refer to a transgender person's ability to go through</p>	<p><b>"visibly transgender," or "not visibly transgender"</b></p>



daily life without others making an assumption that they are transgender.

However, the terms themselves are problematic because "passing" implies "passing as something you're not," while "stealth" connotes deceit.

When transgender people are living as their authentic selves, and are not perceived as transgender by others, that does not make them deceptive or misleading.

## DEFAMATORY LANGUAGE

### **Defamatory: "deceptive," "fooling," "pretending," "posing," "trap," or "masquerading"**

Gender identity is an integral part of a person's identity. Do not characterize transgender people as "deceptive," as "fooling" or "trapping" others, or as "pretending" to be, "posing" or "masquerading" as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are inaccurate, defamatory and insulting. (See "passing" and "stealth" as problematic terms above.)

### **Defamatory: "tranny," "she-male," "he/she," "it," "shim"**

These words dehumanize transgender people and should not be used in mainstream media. The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, "The person used a derogatory word for a transgender person."

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*Please note that while some transgender people may use "tranny" to describe themselves, others find it extremely offensive.*

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## TIPS FOR BEING A TRANS ALLY

The following are tips that can be used as you move toward becoming a better ally to transgender people.

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*This list is not exhaustive and cannot include all the "right" things to do or say because often there is no one "right" answer to every situation you might encounter.*

---

When you become an ally of transgender people, your actions will help change the culture, making society a better, safer place for transgender people - and for all people (trans or not) who do not conform to conventional gender expectations.

### **You can't tell if someone is transgender just by looking.**

Transgender people don't look any certain way or come from any one background. Many transgender people do not appear "visibly trans," meaning they are not perceived to be transgender by others. It is not possible to look around a room and "see" if there are any transgender people. (It would be like a person looking around the room to "see" if there are any gay people).

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*You should assume that there may be transgender people at any gathering.*

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### **Don't make assumptions about a transgender person's sexual orientation.**

Gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to. Gender identity is about our own personal sense of being male, female, or outside that gender binary. Transgender people can be gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, or straight.

### **If you don't know what pronouns to use, listen first.**

If you're unsure which pronoun a person uses, listen first to the pronoun other people use when referring to the person. Someone who knows the person well will probably use the correct pronoun. If you must ask which pronoun the person uses, start with your own. For example, "Hi, I'm Alex and I use the pronouns he and him. What about you?" Then use that person's pronoun and encourage others to do so. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologize quickly and sincerely, then move forward.

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*The bigger deal you make out of a situation, the more uncomfortable it is for everyone.*

---

### **Don't ask a transgender person what their "real name" is.**

For some transgender people, being associated with their birth name is a tremendous source of anxiety, or it is simply a part of their life they wish to leave behind. Respect the name a transgender person is currently using. If you happen to know the name someone was given at birth but no longer uses, don't share it without the person's explicit permission.

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*Don't share photos or stories of someone from before their transition, unless you have their permission.*

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### **Understand the differences between "coming out" as LGB and "coming out" as transgender.**

"Coming out" to other people as lesbian, gay, or bisexual is typically seen as revealing a truth that allows other people to know your authentic self.

The LGB community places great importance and value on the idea of being "out" in order to be happy and whole.

When a transgender person has transitioned and is living their life as their authentic self--that is their truth. The world now sees them as who they truly are. Unfortunately, it can often feel disempowering for a transgender person to disclose to other people that they are transgender. Sometimes when other people learn a person is trans, they no longer see the person as a "real" man, woman, or person they are which, of course, is not the case.

Some people may choose to publicly discuss their lives in an effort to raise awareness and make cultural change.

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*Don't assume that it's necessary for a transgender person to disclose that they are transgender in order to feel happy and whole.*

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### **Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."**

Some transgender people feel comfortable disclosing their gender history to other people, and some do not.

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*A transgender person's gender history is personal information and it is up to them to share it with others.*

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Do not casually share this information, speculate, or "gossip" about a person you know or think is transgender. Not only is this an invasion of privacy, it also can have negative consequences in a world that is very intolerant of gender diversity.

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*Transgender people can lose jobs, housing, friends, or even their lives when other people find out about their gender history.*

---

**Respect the terminology a transgender person uses to describe their identity.**

Transgender people use many different terms to describe their experiences. Respect whichever the term; transgender, transsexual, non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer etc. a person uses to describe themselves.

If a person is not sure of which identity label fits them best, give them the time to figure it out for themselves and don't tell them which term you think they should use.

---

*You wouldn't like your identity to be defined by others, so please allow others to define themselves.*

---

**Be patient with a person who is questioning or exploring their gender identity.**

A person who is questioning or exploring their gender identity may take some time to figure out what's true for them. They might, for example, use a name or pronoun, and then decide at a later time to change the name or pronoun again. Do your best to be respectful and use the name and pronoun requested.

**Understand there is no "right" / "wrong" way to transition, and it is different for each person.**

Some transgender people access medical care like hormones and surgeries as part of their transition to align their bodies with their gender identity. Some transgender people want their authentic gender identity to be recognized without hormones or surgery. Some transgender people cannot access medical care, hormones, and/or surgeries due to a lack of financial resources or access to healthcare.

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*A transgender person's identity is not dependent on medical procedures or their physicality. Accept that if someone tells you they are, then they are.*

---

**Don't ask about a transgender person's genitals, surgical status, or sex life.**

It would be inappropriate to ask a non-transgender, or cisgender, person about the appearance or status of their genitals. It is equally inappropriate to ask a transgender person those questions. Don't ask if a transgender person has had "the surgery" or if they are "pre-op" or "post-op." If a transgender person wants to talk to you about such matters, they will bring it up.

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*It wouldn't be appropriate to ask a non-transgender, or cisgender, person about how they have sex, so the same courtesy should be extended to transgender people.*

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### **Avoid backhanded compliments or "helpful" tips.**

While you may intend to be supportive, comments like the following can be hurtful or even insulting:

- "I would have never known you were transgender. You look so..."
- "You look just like a real woman/man."
- "She's so gorgeous, I would have never guessed she was transgender."
- "He is so hot. I would date him even though he's transgender."
- "You are so brave."
- "You would pass so much better if you could..."
- "Have you considered a voice coach?"

### **Challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes in public spaces, including LGB spaces.**

You may hear anti-transgender comments from anti-LGBT activists, but you may also hear them from LGB people. Someone may think that because they're gay, it's ok for them to use certain words or tell jokes about transgender people.

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*It's important to challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes whenever they are said and no matter who says them.*

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### **Support all-gender public restrooms.**

Some transgender and gender non-conforming people may not feel like they match the signs on the restroom door. Encourage schools, businesses, and agencies to have single user, unisex and/or all-gender restroom options.

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*Make it clear that transgender and gender non-conforming people are welcome to use whichever restroom they feel comfortable using.*

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### **Help make your company or group truly trans-inclusive.**

"LGBT+" is now a commonplace term that joins lesbian, bisexual, gay, queer, questioning, and transgender people under the same acronym. If you are part of a company or group that says it's LGBT+-inclusive, remember that transgender people face unique challenges.

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*Being LGBT+ inclusive means truly understanding the needs of the trans community and implementing policies address them.*

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**At meetings and events, set an inclusive tone.**

At a meeting where not everyone is known, consider asking people to introduce themselves with their name and pronouns.

For example, "Hi, I'm Nick and I use the pronouns he and him." This sends the message that you are not making assumptions about anyone's gender, and that people are free to self-identify. Start with yourself and use a serious tone that will discourage others from dismissing the activity with a joke.

However, if you feel this practice will have the effect of singling out someone in the room, avoid it. In a group setting, identify people by articles of clothing instead of using gendered language. For example, the "person in the blue shirt," instead of the "woman in the front."

If bathrooms in the meeting space are not already all-gender, ask if it's possible to put an all-gender sign on them. That's an easy and effective way to make spaces inclusive.

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*"Sir" and "Madam" are best avoided.*

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**Listen to transgender people.**

The best way to be an ally is to listen with an open mind to transgender people speaking for themselves. Talk to transgender people in your community. Check out books, films, YouTube channels, and blogs to find out more about transgender people and the issues people within the community face.

**Know your own limits as an ally.**

Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. It is better to admit you don't know something than to make assumptions or say something that may be incorrect or hurtful. Seek out the appropriate resources that will help you learn more.

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*Being an ally is a sustained and persistent pattern of action; not an idle or stable noun.*

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**Diversity is being invited to the Party,  
Inclusion is being asked to Dance**



**Joanne Lockwood**

## **Core Services:**

- Keynote & Motivation Speaking
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Seminars, Workshops & Training
- Trans Inclusion Audits & Policy Developments

**SEE Change Happen**

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