



Gender Terminology

Sex is the biological and anatomical, assumptions we make about one's internal and external body that include hormones, chromosomes, genitals, reproductive organs, etc., as well as parts of a body that are related to genetics like size, hair, voice and fat storage. The term hermaphrodite referred to the "blending" of male and female organs and due to the pathologizing affect of the term, it has been replaced with **intersex**, **intersexed** or someone with an **intersex condition**.

Depending on how one is labeled at birth, at some point we have a sense of agency and affirm this label or reject it. **Trans** is often used as an umbrella term for those that reject how they were labeled and/or socialized at birth. Trans* has been used as an inclusive term (primarily from an academic lens) because transsexual tends to only represent those seeing, interested in, or having had medical intervention with their bodies like surgery and/or hormone treatments. The term **cisgender** (cis—meaning congruent) used to describe those that affirm how they were labeled and/or socialized at birth.

Gender identity is the label one uses to describe one's sense of self to others (the label itself). Woman or Man are the **binary** (only two options) assumptions while there are a number of terms used to describe someone that vary by geography and/or age that include more than two options, like **Non-binary**, **gender fluid**, **gender nonconforming**, **gender variant**, **gender expansive**, **agender**, etc.

Gender expression refers to the manner in which a person sends out messages about how they want to be perceived or validated by others. This could be feminine, masculine, androgynous, or a mixture/combination that may vary in a moment, day-to-day or over a period of time. One's gender roles may also be considered part of this expression as yet more out bound messaging that a person sends out or takes on to affirm how they identify themselves. Gender perception of others is up to someone else validating one's identity and aren't in one's control. This is why being an ally or advocate is so important

Sexual orientation or Sexual identity refer to the words one uses to describe their sexual, romantic and/or emotional relationships (or the lack there of) with others. This can be heterosexual/straight, gay/lesbian, bi/pan/omnisexual, asexual, queer. Relationships with more than one partner can be described as polyamorous and/or non-monogamous.

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