

## Definitions

**Gender-affirming care:** as defined by the World Health Organization, encompasses a range of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions “designed to support and affirm an individual’s gender identity” when it conflicts with the gender they were assigned at birth. The interventions help transgender people align various aspects of their lives — emotional, interpersonal, and biological — with their gender identity. As noted by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), that identity can run anywhere along a continuum that includes man, woman, a combination of those, neither of those, and fluid.\*

\*Further reading:

<https://www.aamc.org/news/what-gender-affirming-care-your-questions-answered>

## Transgender and Gender-Diverse (TGD) People: Glossary of Terms

This Glossary provides definitions of some of the terms related to the experience of people who are TGD. Keep in mind that terms often change and may differ depending on who you ask or where you are.

**Agender** (adj.) Describes a person who identifies as having no gender, or who does not experience gender as a primary identity component.

**Bigender** (adj.) Describes a person whose gender identity combines two genders.

**Binding** (verb) The process of tightly wrapping one’s chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts. This is achieved through use of constrictive materials such as cloth strips, bandages, or specially designed undergarments, called binders.

**Chosen Name/Name Used** (noun) The name a person goes by and wants others to use in personal communication, even if it is different from the name on that person’s insurance or identification documents (e.g., birth certificate, driver’s license, and passport). Chosen name is recommended over preferred name. The terms Chosen name or Name used can be put on patient health care forms alongside Name on your insurance (if different) and Name on your legal identification documents (if different). In

conversation with patients, health care staff can ask, “What name do you want us to use when speaking with you?”, or “What is your chosen name?”

**Cisgender** (adj.) A person whose gender identity is consistent in a traditional sense with their sex assigned at birth; for example, a person assigned female sex at birth whose gender identity is woman/female. The term cisgender comes from the Latin prefix *cis*, meaning “on the same side of.”

**Gender** (noun) The characteristics and roles of women and men according to social norms. While sex is described as female, male, and intersex, gender can be described as feminine, masculine, androgynous, and much more.

**Gender affirmation** (noun) The process of making social, legal, and/or medical changes to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Social changes can include changing one’s pronouns, name, clothing, and hairstyle. Legal changes can include changing one’s name, sex designation, and gender markers on legal documents. Medical changes can include receiving gender-affirming hormones and/or surgeries. Although this process is sometimes referred to as transition, the term gender affirmation is recommended.

**Gender-affirming hormone therapy** (noun) Feminizing and masculinizing hormone treatment to align secondary sex characteristics with gender identity.

**Gender-affirming surgery (GAS)** (noun) Surgeries to modify a person’s body to be more aligned with that person’s gender identity. Types of GAS include chest and genital surgeries, facial feminization, body sculpting, and hair removal.

**Gender binary structure** (noun) The idea that there are only two genders (girl/woman and boy/man), and that a person must strictly fit into one category or the other.

**Gender-diverse** (adj.) Describes the community of people who fall outside of the gender binary structure (e.g., non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid people).

**Gender dysphoria** (noun) Distress experienced by some people whose gender identity does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. The

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) includes gender dysphoria as a diagnosis for people whose distress is clinically significant and impairs social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The degree and severity of gender dysphoria is highly variable among transgender and gender-diverse people.

**Gender expression** (noun) – The way a person communicates their gender to the world through mannerisms, clothing, speech, behavior, etc. Gender expression varies depending on culture, context, and historical period.

**Gender fluid** (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of more than one gender, but may feel more aligned with a certain gender some of the time, another gender at other times, both genders sometimes, and sometimes no gender at all.

**Gender identity** (noun) A person’s inner sense of being a girl/woman/female, boy/man/male, something else, or having no gender.

**Genderqueer or gender queer** (adj.) An umbrella term that describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary of male and female. Some people use the term gender expansive.

**Intersex** (adj) Describes a group of congenital conditions in which the reproductive organs, genitals, and/or other sexual anatomy do not develop according to traditional expectations for females or males. Intersex can also be used as an identity term for someone with one of these conditions. The medical community sometimes uses the term differences of sex development (DSD) to describe intersex conditions; however, the term intersex is recommended by several intersex community members and groups.

**Misgender** (verb) To refer to a person by a pronoun or other gendered term (e.g., Ms./Mr.) that incorrectly indicates that person’s gender identity.

**Outing** (verb) Involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Non-binary** (adj.) Describes a person whose gender identity falls outside of the traditional gender binary structure of girl/woman and boy/man. Sometimes abbreviated as NB or enby.

**Pangender** (adj.) Describes a person whose gender identity is comprised of many genders or falls outside the traditional cultural parameters that define gender.

**Pronouns** (noun) Pronouns are the words people should use when they are referring to you, but not using your name. Examples of pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. The appropriate phrasing is “What are your pronouns?” when seeking this information.

**Sex assigned at birth** (noun) The sex (male or female) assigned to an infant, most often based on the infant’s anatomical and other biological characteristics. Sometimes referred to as birth sex, natal sex, biological sex, or sex; however, sex assigned at birth is the recommended term.

**Transgender** (adj.) Describes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not correspond based on traditional expectations; for example, a person assigned female sex at birth who identifies as a man; or a person assigned male sex at birth who identifies as a woman. Transgender can also include people with gender identities outside the girl/woman and boy/man gender binary structure; for example, people who are gender fluid or non-binary. Sometimes abbreviated as trans.

**Trans man/transgender man** (noun) A transgender person whose gender identity is man/male may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will use the term man.

**Trans woman/transgender woman** (noun) A transgender person whose gender identity is female may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will use the term woman.

**Transfeminine** (adj.) Describes a person who was assigned male sex at birth, but identifies with femininity to a greater extent than with masculinity.

**Transmasculine** (adj.) Describes a person who was assigned female sex at birth, but identifies with masculinity to a greater extent than with femininity.

**Transphobia** (noun) Discrimination towards, fear, marginalization, and hatred of transgender people or those perceived as transgender. Individuals, communities, policies, and institutions can be transphobic.

**Transsexual** (adj.) A term used sometimes in the medical literature or by some transgender people to describe people who have gone through the process of medical gender affirmation treatments (i.e., gender-affirming hormones and surgeries).

**Tucking** (noun) The process of hiding one's penis and testes with tape, tight shorts, or specially designed undergarments.

**Two-Spirit** (adj.) Describes a person who embodies both a masculine and a feminine spirit. This is a culture-specific term used among some Native American, American Indian, and First Nations people.

Source:

<https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/publication/affirmative-services-for-transgender-and-gender-diverse-people-best-practices-for-frontline-health-care-staff/>

## **The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Illnesses, or DSM-5**

History of transgender and non-binary identities expressed in the DSM:

- In the first two publications of the DSM there was no category that referred to gender identity.
- In the DSM 3, a classification was added relating to gender identity which was referred to as “transsexualism.”
- In the DSM 4, the definition was changed to a diagnosis of “gender identity disorder”
- In the DSM 5, the previous diagnoses were removed entirely and replaced with a new classification, can anyone tell me what that is?

## **Criteria: Gender Dysphoria in Adolescents and Adults**

A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of at least six months' duration, as manifested by at least two or more of the following:

- A marked incongruence between one's experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics (or in young adolescents, the anticipated secondary sex characteristics)

- A strong desire to be rid of one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one's experienced/expressed gender (or in young adolescents, a desire to prevent the development of the anticipated secondary sex characteristics)
- A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender
- A strong desire to be of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender)
- A strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender)
- A strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender (or some alternative gender different from one's assigned gender)

The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Source: APA

<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/diversity/education/transgender-and-gender-nonconforming-patients/gender-dysphoria-diagnosis>

## Myths (Continued)

### *MYTH 1: Pronouns*

In recent years, the number of individuals using the pronouns “they/them/theirs” has increased.\* Many challenge the validity of this language, instead saying that “they/them/theirs” as a singular pronoun is grammatically incorrect. In reality, we use singular “they/them/theirs” as pronouns to refer to a person regularly in English when we don't know the gender of the person we are referring to. For example, if one sees that a person has left their bag in a common area, it is clunky to say, “Who left his or her bag here?” Rather, it is easier and more common to say, “Who left their bag here?” “They/them/theirs” as singular pronouns have been in use in the English language since before the use of the pronouns “you/yours”, dating back to when English utilized the pronouns “thy/thine.” “They/them” as a singular pronoun can be found in literature for centuries, including the works of Shakespeare and Jane Austen (for example, Austen uses “they” in the singular 75 times in *Pride and Prejudice*).

Source: <https://phys.org/news/2024-04-theythem-pronouns.html>

*MYTH 2: Sex binary*

While common understanding of sex determination relies solely on presence of XX/XY chromosomes, modern study of biological sex proves to be a much more complex interplay of numerous genes and hormones.\* Intersex as a characteristic is much more common than is assumed in our culture. The number of individuals in the world who are intersex is roughly the same as the number of individuals in the world who have red hair.

\*Source: <https://academic.oup.com/endo/article/142/8/3281/2988779>

## Examples of gender affirming medical care.

*Hormone replacement therapy is the most common medical intervention for transgender people.*

*Surgeries specific to transgender populations:*

Feminizing vaginoplasty

Masculinizing phalloplasty / scrotoplasty

Metoidioplasty (clitoral release/enlargement, may include urethral lengthening)

Masculinizing chest surgery ("top" surgery)

Facial feminization procedures

Reduction thyrochondroplasty (tracheal cartilage shave)

Voice surgery

*Surgeries not specific to transgender populations:*

Augmentation mammoplasty

Hysterectomy / oophorectomy

Orchiectomy

Vaginectomy

*Other interventions include:*

Facial hair removal

Voice modification

Genital tucking and packing, and chest binding

Source: <https://transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines/overview>