

List of terminology

Binding: The practice of wearing a tight-fitting garment around the chest area, such as a sports bra or binder, to create the appearance of a flat chest. This can help a person assigned female at birth to reduce dysphoria.

Birth name or “dead name”: The name recorded on a person’s original birth certificate. Many trans people use another name which they have chosen. Using a person’s birth name (or “dead name” as it is also known) is a form of misgendering that can trigger dysphoria and endanger a person’s safety and privacy. If you are unsure about which name a person uses, ask them, “Which name and pronouns do you go by?”

Cisgender (cis): A term used to describe someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a girl or woman.

Cisnormativity: The widespread assumption that everyone is cisgender. This positions being cisgender as the “default” or “normal”, and being trans or gender diverse as “not normal”, which results in gender diverse people being marginalised.

Fa’afafine (Samoa and American Samoa), Mahu (Tahiti and Hawaii), Vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji), Palopa (Papua New Guinea), Akava’ine (Cook Islands), Fakaleiti/Leiti (Tonga), Fakafine (Niue): Pasifika terms describing people from Pacific cultures who were assigned male at birth and embody feminine roles and traits, and who play an important role in Pacific societies. Their meanings are best understood within their cultural context and may mean something different to each individual. These terms do not have a western equivalent but are usually translated to mean “in the manner of a woman”.

Fa’atama: A Samoan term describing a person assigned female at birth who embodies masculine roles and traits. The term’s meaning is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each individual.

Gender: How we identify and describe ourselves based on the gendered roles and expectations we are socialised into. We are assigned a gender at birth based on our sex characteristics, but not everyone’s gender aligns with the one they were assigned. Gender is understood differently across cultures and throughout history. It is different from sexual orientation, which refers to who a person is attracted to.

Gender-affirming healthcare: Transition-related healthcare and medical procedures which some trans people undergo to change their body in a way that affirms their gender, such as taking puberty blockers for younger people, gender-affirming hormone therapies, or undergoing gender-affirming surgeries.

Gender diverse: An umbrella term adopted in recent years as an alternative to the word “transgender”, in response to young people whose gender does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth but do not use the term “transgender” to describe themselves.

Gender dysphoria: The disconnect between a person’s body and their gender. Everyone experiences dysphoria differently, but dysphoria can often cause distress, anxiety, depression or trauma. These feelings are influenced by social factors too, such as the disconnect between

how a person sees themselves and how others see their gender (eg, being misgendered). The discomfort dysphoria can cause can be so intense that it can interfere with a person's ability to function in normal life, such as at school, work or during social activities. Gender dysphoria, or gender incongruence, are also medical diagnoses.

Gender euphoria: The positive feelings associated with the alignment of the way a trans person sees their own gender and body, and how others see their gender. The opposite of gender dysphoria.

Gender expression: How someone expresses their sense of masculinity and/or femininity through their clothes, mannerisms, voice, etc. Gender expression does not always align with a person's gender identity. For example, a cisgender boy might wear typically "feminine" clothing.

Misgendering: Referring to a person as a gender they are not, such as through using a person's birth name, pronouns, or gendered language such as "ma'am" or "sir". Misgendering is sometimes accidental but can also be done on purpose to "out" a trans person or invalidate their gender. Prolonged misgendering is a form of abuse, especially if it is done by multiple people. It can be highly distressing, endanger trans people's mental health and wellbeing, and cause trauma.

Non-binary: An umbrella term describing people who do not strictly identify with one of the two binary genders.

Packing: The practice of wearing padding or a prosthetic penis in one's underwear to give an outward appearance of a penis. Packing can help a person assigned female at birth reduce their dysphoria.

Pronouns: The words used when referring to someone in the third person. Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs. In some languages, such as te reo Māori, pronouns are gender neutral (eg, ia). Some people prefer that people use their name instead of pronouns, or pronouns that are less commonly known, such as ze/hir/hirs.

Sex: A medical way of categorising people's bodies based on sex characteristics, such as genitals, chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. People often conflate sex and gender, but sex does not always determine a person's gender.

Takatāpui: Takatāpui is a traditional word that was first interpreted as "intimate friend of the same sex". It has since been adapted to encompass all Māori who identify with diverse genders, sexes and sexualities, such as whakawahine, tangata ira tāne, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. Takatāpui is a self-standing identity used by Māori to combat western ideals of sex, sexuality, gender and gender expression. It denotes a spiritual and cultural connection to the past.

Transgender (trans): An umbrella term used to describe someone whose gender does not fully align with the gender they were designated at birth.

Transitioning: Steps taken over time by trans people to affirm their gender. Transitioning may include social, medical and legal processes, such as using a different name and pronouns, dressing in affirming clothes, changing one's name and/or sex marker on legal

documents, hormone therapy, puberty blockers and a range of gender-affirming surgeries. Everybody's transition will look and feel different.

Transphobia: A fear of, hatred, or discrimination against, trans and non-binary people.

Tucking: The practice a person assigned male at birth may undertake, involving tucking one's genitals inwards to smooth out the crotch area. This can help reduce gender dysphoria.