

Gender and Sexuality Definitions

Terms 1-11 are from Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition, Routledge, 2007

Term 13 is from <http://www.basicrights.org/uncategorized/trans-101-cisgender/>

Terms 14-21 are from NCTE Transgender Terms

http://transequality.org/Resources/NCTE_TransTerminology.pdf

1. **Sexism** — A system of beliefs and practices that privileges men and subordinates women
2. **Assigned Sex**— The sex one is assigned at birth based on visible physiological and anatomical sex characteristics
3. **Gender Identity** — A person’s sense of being a woman, a man, or other gender identification
4. **Gender Roles** — Socially constructed behavior expectations for men and women
5. **Transphobia** — Fear of or discomfort with people who do not meet our cultural expectations for gender expression
6. **Transgender Oppression** — A system of cultural beliefs and practices that assume a fixed, binary system of gender into which everyone must fit
7. **Queer** — An umbrella term used by some lesbian, gay, bisexual people to refer to themselves, often to avoid binary and static conceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality
8. **Homophobia/Biphobia** — The fear, hatred or intolerance of lesbian, gay, bisexual people
9. **Heterosexism** — A system of institutional and cultural beliefs, norms and practices that advantages heterosexuals
10. **Heteronormativity** — The assumption that heterosexuality is the only normal sexual identity
11. **Heterosexual Privilege** — The system of advantages received by heterosexuals in a heterosexist society
12. **Sexual Orientation** — Emotional, affectional and sexual attractions toward someone of another sex (heterosexual), same-sex (lesbian or gay), any sex (bisexual/pansexual), or no sex (asexual).
13. **Cisgender** is a term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.
14. **Transgender** is an umbrella term that refers to people who live differently than the gender presentation and roles expected of them by society.
15. **Intersex** people have physical characteristics that do not match the typical understandings of male and female; previously called hermaphrodites. It is now considered offensive to use the term hermaphrodite, so it is more appropriate to call people intersex. Some intersex people identify as transgender while others do not. Some intersex conditions are known at the time of birth while others are not discovered until later in life, if at all; some intersex conditions are anatomical, while others are chromosomal. For more information, contact Advocates for Informed Choice (www.aiclegal.org).
16. **Crossdressers** refers to people who choose to wear the clothing generally associated with the opposite gender. They do so because they find it fulfilling in emotional or sexual ways. Crossdressing is about more than sexuality—it is a way that a person expresses all of who they are, both masculine and feminine. The word “transvestite” is outdated and offensive to some people. The currently used term is “cross dresser.”

17. **FTM and MTF** are abbreviations used by many female-to-male transgender persons (also known as transmen) and male-to-female transgender persons (also known as transwomen). You'll often hear transgender people referring to ourselves as MTF or FTM, so if you know these terms, you'll sound much more knowledgeable about our issues. Remember, the first letter is the gender assigned to someone at birth, the "T" stands for "to," and the last letter is how the person identifies now. So, MTF refers to someone who is male-to-female.

18. **Gender** refers to the societally-determined characteristics of a particular sex; these characteristics are commonly referred to as "feminine" and "masculine". Different societies have different ideas about what it means to be feminine or masculine and how people are expected to act.

19 **Sex** refers to the designation of the biological differences between females and males. This is the scientific term for what makes males and females different; remember, though, that not everyone fits into these 2 categories. There are a number of different factors that determine sex, not just chromosomes.

20. **Drag Queen** is a term historically used by gay men who dress in the clothing usually associated with women for the purposes of entertainment or personal fulfillment. There are also drag kings, who are biologically female and dress as men. In the African-American community, some people use the word "Queen" (not drag queen, just queen) to refer to gay men—these men may or may not cross dress.

21. **Transsexual** is a term for people who seek to live in a gender different from the one assigned at birth and who may seek or want medical intervention (through hormones and/or surgery) for them to live comfortably in that gender. Transsexuals are the people who generally live full time as a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth.

22 **Sexual Orientation** describes who people fall in love with and/or are sexually attracted to, while Gender Identity describes how people perceive their own internal sense of maleness or femaleness. Transgender people can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual—gender identity is separate from your sexual orientation.