

## **GENDER**

**Gender identity** | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Note: Gender identity is independent of sexual orientation, which refers to one's sexual attraction to others. See below for terms related to sexuality and sexual orientation.

**Gender expression** | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

**Cisgender** | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Transgender** | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

**Gender non-conforming** | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do.

**Gender binary** | A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

**Non-binary** | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being

both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

**Genderqueer** | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Gender-fluid** | A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

**Agender** | A person who does not identify with any gender or experience having a gender.

**Transitioning** | A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

## **SEXUALITY**

**Sexual orientation** | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

**Gay** | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

**Lesbian** | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women (both cisgender and transgender) and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

**Bisexual** | A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

**Pansexual** | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

**Asexual** | Often called “ace” for short, asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little or conditional sexual attraction.

**Queer** | A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Source: Human Rights Campaign

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>