

Campus Climate for Transgender and Nonbinary Students

Jon Humiston & Sarah Marshall

Avoid Saying	Say Instead	Why	Example
Biological man; biological woman	Cisgender man; cisgender woman	Cisgender is more appropriate for those who identify as the sex they were assigned a birth.	She identifies as a cisgender female who partners with a cisgender male.
Born female or male or Biological female or male	Assigned female/male at birth	Assigned language accurately depicts the situation that happens at birth	Max was assigned female at birth, then he transitioned in high school.
Both genders or opposite genders	All genders	Both implies only two; opposite reinforces antagonism among genders	Video games are not just a boy thing – all genders play them.
Homosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Homosexual often connotes a medical diagnosis	We want to do a better job of being inclusive of our gay or lesbian students.
A gay or a transgender	A gay/transgender person or a person who is gay / a person who is transgender	Gay and transgender are adjectives that describe a person or group	We had an athlete who identifies as transgender in our league this year.
Transgender people and normal people	Transgender people and cisgender people	Saying normal implies abnormal, which is a stigmatizing way to refer to a person	This group is open to both transgender and cisgender people.
Preferred gender pronouns	Pronouns; personal pronouns	Pronouns are not preferred, they are part of someone's identity	What are your pronouns?
Ladies & gentlemen; He or she; boys & girls; men & women; sir/madam, hey guys	Honored guests; everyone; folks; friends & colleagues; students; faculty members; you all	Moving away from binary language is more inclusive for all people	Good morning everyone.
Chairman, policeman	Chairperson, police officer	People of all gender assume do these jobs	The chairperson was effective at leading their department.
"It" when referring to someone (whose pronouns are unknown)	They	It is referring to things, not people.	You know, I'm not sure how they identify.
Gender neutral	Gender inclusive	Gender inclusive incorporates all genders versus gender neutral indicates the absence of gender.	The restrooms are gender inclusive, meaning open to all. Better yet, let's just call them restrooms and not assign any gender.
Transgendered	Transgender	Transgender is an adjective.	Kaitlyn Jenner is transgender.
Transsexual	Trans, transgender	Outdated, transsexual often refers to those whose bodily characteristics have been altered through surgery or hormone treatment to bring them into alignment with their gender identity.	Maria identifies as transgender.

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		As not all trans people seek alignment, the more inclusive term is trans or transgender.	
Gender Identity Disorder	Gender dysphoria	A diagnosis, often used by psychologists and doctors, to describe the distress, unhappiness, and anxiety that transgender people may feel about the mismatch between their bodies and their gender identity.	In order to receive medical treatment to help with their transition, their medical diagnosis is gender dysphoria.
Sex change operation	Sex Reassignment Surgery; Transition; gender affirmation; change of gender marker	Transition occurs in many forms and cannot be assumed that all transgender people will pursue surgery as part of their transition.	Mark is transitioning to trans female by first telling her family and changing her name and using the pronouns she/her.

Mistakes to avoid:

- Don't assume someone's gender identity. If you do not know which pronoun to use, use the person's name or ask "what pronouns would you like me to use?"
- If you trip up with a pronoun, simply correct yourself and move on.
- Do not ask someone their former (dead) name.
- Do not assume that all people fit the gender binary. People are individuals who do not fit into convenient gender categories.

Common Gender Identity Terms

Cisgender: Those who identify as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Dysphoria: A diagnosis, often used by psychologists and doctors, to describe the distress, unhappiness, and anxiety that transgender people may feel about the mismatch between their bodies and their gender identity. This may be a necessary, formal medical diagnosis in order to receive medical treatment to help them with transition.

Gender Expression: External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture.

Gender Fluidity: A sense that one's gender identity or expression is not set in stone, and that it can change over time or even from day to day. For some, gender fluid is a gender identity.

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Gender Nonconforming: When a person's gender expression doesn't fit inside traditional male or female categories (sometimes called the gender binary).

Gender Non-Binary: When a person's gender identity doesn't fit inside traditional male or female categories (sometimes called the gender binary).

Genderqueer: A term for people who don't identify as man or woman or whose identity lies outside the traditional gender binary of male and female. Some use genderqueer, gender nonconforming and non-binary interchangeably, but others do not.

Intersex: A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male. The outdated term was hermaphrodite.

Sexual Orientation: Describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people can be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer . . .

Transgender: A general term used to describe someone whose gender identify is different than the sex assigned at birth. Some put an asterisk at the end of trans* to expand the word to include all people with nonconforming gender identities.

Transition: Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over time. Transition can include personal, medical or legal steps. Transition can include telling family and friends, using a different name, using different pronouns, changing legal documents, hormone therapy and sometimes gender reassignment surgery.

Resources that informed this handout:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjP2qfrnvTuAhUKZc0KHWmkAC8QFjAAegQIARAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fthesafezoneproject.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2017%2F07%2FSZP-Language-DO-DONT-Handout.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3ILNUwlf7j0J2s86zLf0wd>

<https://www.loftgaycenter.org/>

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/transgender/transgender-identity-terms-and-labels>

<https://www.glaad.org/reference>

<https://mashable.com/2015/10/18/transgender-ally-words/>

<https://lgbt.umd.edu/good-practices-inclusive-language>