

## Glossary

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**Cis** (or cisgender) is the term used to describe people whose gender is congruent with the sex assigned to them at birth. Cis people can be critical of and question stereotypical gender images, but subjectively they do not feel any dissonance between their gender identity and the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Cis-Normativity** is the assumption that everyone identifies with the sex assigned to them at birth and that there are only two sexes – female and male. Due to cis-normativity, people whose gender is different from the sex assigned to them at birth encounter a variety of individual and structural barriers and discrimination in the course of their lives. The **gender identity** of cis people is usually not questioned, as long as their gender performance is in line with the norm. Trans and gender diverse people, on the other hand, continuously find themselves in situations where they have to justify their identity and fight for its recognition.

**Deadname** is the first name given to a trans or gender diverse person (usually by their parents at birth) before their transition. Many trans and gender diverse people reject this name for themselves and decide to use a new name. Questions about the previous name are often considered inappropriate or invasive by trans and gender diverse persons.

**Gender** is the socially constructed idea what it means to be a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’. This description includes not only one’s own **gender identity**, but also the gender roles that are perceived and reproduced in our society through language, external characteristics and behavior. The lived and performed gender does not have to match the sex assigned at birth.

**(Physical) Gender Affirmation** describes the process that some trans and gender diverse people go through in order to align their body to their lived gender. This may include, for example, undergoing hormonal treatment (→ **gender affirming hormone therapy**), hair removal and/or surgery on the primary and/or secondary sexual characteristics, or speech therapy for the voice, among other options. It is important to note that this process is individually designed and that there is no predetermined sequence of steps that an individual 'must' undertake. Each person decides individually to include or exclude certain steps. Linguistically, the concept of affirmation expresses what is meant: the affirmation of the lived gender. This process has historically been called a 'sex-change'. This term is considered unhelpful because it does not describe the actual process and it is not inclusive of the diversity of gender identities and how they are physically manifest. The term 'gender reassignment' is rejected by many trans and gender diverse people for the reasons mentioned above. Usually, the term affirmation refers to physical characteristics, but it can also describe a social or legal affirmation process → **transition**.

**Gender Identity** comprises those aspects of personal identity that relate to an individual's lived and experienced gender. In cis people, gender identity is congruent with the sex attributed to the person at birth. In trans and gender diverse people, gender identity deviates from this and can include identification with a different gender. This does not (always) have to happen in one of the common, binary patterns described by terms like 'female' and 'male', as well as 'female-to-male' or 'male-to-female'. People may also have gender identities between or outside binary gender norms (for example as **non-binary** or **gender fluid**). Contrary to the stereotypical assumption that gender identity is stable and unchangeable, it can change multiple times over the life course of a person.

**Gender Fluid** describes a form of identity that is not based on clearly defined female or male characteristics but moves between or beyond these boundaries. An identification of a person between or outside binary gender norms can be fluid and change from time to time or from situation to situation and is not a permanent state. See also **non-binary**.

**Genderqueer** similar to gender fluid persons, genderqueer describes a gender identity outside gender binary norms. See also **non-binary**.

**Gender non-conforming** similar to gender fluid, genderqueer or non-binary persons, gender non-conforming describes a gender identity outside gender binary norms and/or reject normative gender attributes.

**FtM** The acronym stands for 'female to male' and is often used to describe people who were assigned female gender at birth but are male.

**Heteronormativity** describes the assumption (accepted by the majority in the Global North) that there are only two sexes (female and male) and that appropriate romantic and sexual behavior occurs only between females and males. The consequence of this basic assumption is that people who live a sexuality outside of this norm must actively express this in order to receive (in the best case) recognition. A continuous representation of heterosexual couples and families in the media and language consolidates this basic assumption.

**Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy (GAHT)** is the process of taking drugs containing testosterone or estrogen (often in combination with testosterone blockers) in order to align a trans or gender diverse person's body with their gender identity. Not every trans and gender diverse person decides to undergo this step of a physical transition. Also known as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

**Hysterectomy** is the surgical removal of the cervix.

**Indigenous Gender Diverse Identities** In many global regions gender diversity is present, accepted, if not even celebrated since hundreds, if not even thousands of years. Through the Christian colonization of the world those identities have been oppressed, marginalized, and often almost eradicated. Some identities are: Transpinays/Transpinoyos/Baklâ (Philippines), Brotherboys/Sistergirls (Australia), Fa'afafine (Samoa), Hijras (India), Kathoey (Thailand), Māhū (Hawaii/Tahiti), Muxes (Mexico), Two-Spirits (North America), Vakasalewalewa (Fiji), and many more.

**International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** is a diagnostic manual published by the World Health Organization (WHO) that is used and recognized in WHO member states. The ICD-10, the currently dominant version of the manual, still categorizes trans identity as 'transsexualism' and lists 'gender identity disorder in children' as a mental disorder. In the updated version of the ICD-11

gender diversity has been moved to a new section of sexual health related matters and it was renamed to 'gender incongruence of adolescence and adulthood' and 'gender incongruence of childhood'. The update to ICD-11 in happened in 2019, however, this most recent version of the classification will only come into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**Intersex** describes people who were born with physical and sexual characteristics that do not fit the stereotypical norm of male and female. These can be variations in the body's hormone composition, primary and/or secondary sexual characteristics, internal sexual organs and/or chromosomes that differ from the normative patterns of a 'female' and 'male' body. Intersex people sometimes are also trans.

**Legal Gender Recognition (LGR)** is the process of changing one's name and/or gender marker on official documents (i.e., ID card, passport, driver's license and where possible, also on birth-certificates). LGR is not available in many countries/regions and in some countries trans and gender diverse people are still legally persecuted.

**LGBTQIA+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and more (+). The acronym often appears in connection with trans-relevant topics and describes in the broadest sense the community of people with diverse experiences of sexuality and gender.

**Mastectomy** is the surgical removal of the breast tissue. In many cases this also includes a reshaping and replacement of the nipples. This procedure is colloquially called top surgery.

**MtF** stands for 'male to female' and is often used to describe people who were assigned male gender at birth but are female.

**Non-Binary** (also enby) describes a gender identity outside the binary gender norm of female and male. Some non-binary people may have a stronger tendency towards a female or male identity, but do not see themselves 'completely' as either a woman or a man. Non-binary people are often mistakenly categorized together as if their genders are the same. However, there are an infinite number of non-binary gender identities and they do not fall on a spectrum 'between' female and male; rather, each gender is unique to the person.

Many non-binary people regularly experience being misgendered since, due to cis-normativity, other people constantly assume that they are either female or male and cannot even imagine that they might be neither.

**Passing** is when a trans and gender diverse person's lived and performed gender is correctly read and understood in their environment. Trans and gender diverse people who are 'passing' are perceived by most people around them to 'fit' with the gender they are. The term 'passing' is considered problematic by some trans and gender diverse people because it reinforces the idea that trans and gender diverse people can have their gender identities respected only if they reshape their appearances to conform absolutely to cis-normative ideas of what a 'man' or 'woman' should look like.

**Phalloplasty** is the surgical procedure of shaping a penis. This procedure is colloquially called bottom surgery.

**Ovariectomy** is the surgical removal of the ovaries.

**Queer** as a term originates from English and means: strange, suspicious, crazy. Originally the term was used as a derogatory term for LGBTIQ+ people. However, in the 1980s, LGBTIQ+ activists began to use the term provocatively and affirmatively for self-representation. This redefined 'queer' as a positive self-description from within the community and this step led to a gradual wider acceptance. 'Queer' studies, for example, is today a well-established academic discipline. The term queer is used more and more as an affirmative term describing, among others, people who live outside heterosexual and/or cis norms, or who question normative structures of sexual and gender identity.

**Sexual Identity** Contrary to gender identity, which describes a congruence or even an incongruence with the lived/performed and ascribed gender, sexual identity (also called sexuality) refers to the desire of a person. It describes to whom we feel emotionally, sexually and/or romantically attracted. Like gender identity, a person's sexual identity can change over the course of a person's biography. Moreover, contrary to societal assumptions that a lived physical sexuality always aligns with emotional preferences and/or sexual fantasies, these can in fact differ. In addition to homo, bi- and heterosexuality, which are conceptually situated within the gender binary, there are pansexuality,

omnisexuality or an identification as 'queer' or 'bi+'. These latter terms are considered more inclusive since they describe desire in a way that can include people of all genders, not just people of the 'same' or the 'opposite' gender to oneself. People may self-describe as asexual if they do not live a (physical) sexuality. Contrary to stereotype, asexual people can and do have close romantic and intimate partner relationships. The sexual orientation of a trans person can change during/through a transition, but primarily sexual orientation has no relationship to the gender identity of an individual.

**TERF** stands for Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist and describes people who actively oppose trans and gender diverse rights and specifically promote the exclusion of transfeminine identities. One of their claims is that trans women are not women and therefore should be excluded from women's spaces. Most feminists reject this notion and are critically opposed to TERFs. TERFs have united with conservative and right-wing groups to further push an anti-trans-agenda, especially in the UK.

**Trans and gender diverse** is used in this book to describe people whose gender is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. The word trans with an open ending is a term chosen by the community itself and covers a variety of identities. Trans and gender diverse people may seek physical affirmation and/or legal recognition of their identity (where this is an option). There are trans and gender diverse people who find themselves in the binary framework of female or male; but many trans and gender diverse individuals also have gender identities outside these categories (→ **non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid**). Some people who are living as a different gender compared to the sex assigned to them at birth speak of their trans identity as something that happened in the past and are not (or no longer) trans or gender diverse. They often describe themselves as women or men with trans and gender diverse experience or a trans and gender diverse history.

**Transphobia** describes discrimination and violence towards trans and gender diverse people. However, the term transphobia mischaracterizes this behavior as an individual aversion or phobia, when in fact it is a socially-sanctioned pattern of violence towards trans and gender diverse people that is reproduced at individual, familial, social, economic, legal, and institutional levels. Rejection and/or violence towards gender diverse people requires active participation and a conscious decision to exclude or attack. By contrast, phobias

are (mostly) uncontrollable states of fear and a phenomenon on which those affected are usually unable to exert any active influence. Some more accurate alternative terms are trans and gender diverse antagonism or trans and gender diverse hostility.

**Transition** describes the process of a trans and gender diverse person adapting to their lived gender on a social, physical and/or legal level. This affirmation takes place individually for each person and can involve one or more steps. Some trans and gender diverse people decide for themselves only one type of social transition (e.g., change of first name, pronouns, external appearance – i.e., in the form of different clothing) without desiring a legal or medical transition. Others may wish to transition on various levels. It is important to note that it is only the individual person who determines what the desired steps are. There is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way of a transition. Additionally, in many countries, laws exist that hinder trans and gender diverse people’s ability to transition, and in some countries, trans and gender diverse people are legally and socially persecuted if they attempt to do so.

**Transsexuality** is a term often rejected by people from the trans and gender diverse community because it was originally coined in the 1950s by cis doctors to distinguish between supposedly ‘healthy’ (cis) and supposedly ‘sick’ (trans) people. The term is therefore pathologizing since it is still associated with the diagnosis of a mental disorder. In addition, the term is criticized because the ending ‘-sexuality’ is misleading. Being trans or gender diverse refers to the **gender identity** of a person and not to their **sexual identity**. Given the diversity of the trans community and the large number of possible identifications, some trans and gender diverse people nevertheless choose this term for themselves, as they feel it to be their own and it is often easier to convey this term.

**Vaginoplasty** is the surgical procedure of shaping a vagina. This procedure is colloquially called bottom surgery.

