

A LANGUAGE GUIDE: TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE INCLUSION

Trans and gender diverse communities are disproportionately affected by prejudice-motivated discrimination and violence.

The health and wellbeing outcomes of people with trans and gender diverse experience are directly related to transphobic stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse, including when incorrect language is used, often unknowingly.

The guide explains key terms and offers examples of language that can help us build safer, more inclusive environments for trans and gender diverse communities.

TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE: These are umbrella terms that describe people who identify their gender as different to what was assigned to them at birth. Some trans people position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some connect strongly with their trans experience. The processes of transition may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life.

Terms such as 'cross dresser' and 'transvestite' aren't typically used by trans and gender diverse people to describe their gender experience.

NON-BINARY: This is an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender etc.

TRANSITION/GENDER AFFIRMING: The personal process or processes a trans or gender diverse person determines is right for them in order to live as their defined gender identity and so that society recognises this. Transition may involve social, medical/surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender.

CISGENDER: A term used to describe people who identify their gender as the same as what was assigned to them at birth (male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as'.

GENDER EXPERIENCES: Trans, transgender, gender diverse, cis and cisgender are all experiences of gender and are distinct from male, female and non-binary gender identities.

AFAB/DFAB: Assigned female at birth/Designated female at birth

AMAB/DMAB: Assigned male at birth/Designated male at birth

GENDER DYSPHORIA: The distress or unease sometimes experienced from being misgendered and/or when someone's gender identity and body personally don't feel connected or congruent.

Gender dysphoria does not = being trans or gender diverse, many trans and gender diverse people do not experience gender dysphoria and if they do, it may cease with access to gender affirming healthcare (if medical transition is desired). The trans and gender diverse experience is not a mental illness.

LEGAL SEX: The marker or classification recorded when a child's birth is registered. In NSW, this is either M or F. This marker can be amended to either M, F or X.

SEX CHARACTERISTICS: Physical parts of the body that are related to body development/regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics emerge at puberty and can include the development of breast tissue, voice pitch, facial and pubic hair etc.

'Sex characteristics' is more accurate than 'biological sex', 'biologically male' or 'biologically female'. Body parts do not have genders.

CISGENDERISM/CISSEXISM: A view that the trans experience doesn't exist or is something to be pathologised. That gender identity is determined at birth and is fixed based on sex characteristics (or 'biology') and that only binary (male and female) identities are valid and real.

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YAY: LGBTI people when compared to the general population”

Trans and gender diverse people have any sexual orientation including heterosexual, queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual etc.

NAY: “LGBTI people when compared with their heterosexual peers”

YAY: Trans and gender diverse, transgender, trans person

NAY: Trans*, transgendered, transgenderism, tranny, pre-op/post-op, sex & gender diverse.

‘Transgender’ is an adjective, not a noun or verb. It shouldn’t be used on its own, e.g. ‘a trans’ or ‘the transgender’

YAY: Transitioning, affirming gender

NAY: Transing, transgendering, trans’d

YAY: Men, women and non-binary people

NAY: Men, women and trans

YAY: Gender-affirming healthcare, transition-related healthcare

NAY: Gender reassignment, sex change, sex reassignment

YAY: Gay and bi men (cis and trans)

NAY: Gay, bi and trans men

YAY: Man, man with a trans experience, trans man

NAY: Transman (as in tallman instead of tall man)

YAY: Sex characteristics include chromosomes, hormones, gonads and genitals. Body parts don’t have genders.

NAY: Biological sex is male, female or intersex, biologically male, biologically female

YAY: Ask: “What is your pronoun?”

NAY: “What is your preferred pronoun?”

YAY: Woman, woman with a trans experience, trans woman

NAY: Transwoman (as in tallwoman instead of tall woman)

YAY: Think: “Would I ask a cisgender person this?”

NAY: “Have you had the surgery?” / “Tell me more about your genitals?” / “What is your real name?”

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