

GLOSSARY OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE TERMS

Here is a list of commonly used transgender and gender diverse terms.

It is worth pointing out, however, that the terminology relating to gender is constantly evolving, and individual interpretations of any particular word will differ.

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Agender – someone who does not feel that they belong to any gender category.

AMAB and AFAB – assigned male at birth, or assigned female at birth. This terminology refers to the biological label of sex that is recorded when a baby's birth is registered.

Bottom surgery – surgery to the lower body, usually phalloplasty (new penis) or vaginoplasty (new vagina).

Cisgender – a non-transgender person. Comes from Latin, as “cis” means “on the side of”, i.e. not trans.

Dead name – a trans person's name before they transitioned; it causes many trans people great distress if this name is used.

Gender – is different from sex in that it is a person's internal sense of who they are and how they see themselves. Gender can be fixed or fluid. Generally, when referring to “gender”, the descriptors of “man” and “woman” are used (in addition to “masculine” and “feminine”) and there are also other genders identities such as “non-binary” and “gender fluid”.

Gender dysphoria – a medical term used by doctors for the negative feelings a trans person experiences when they are not comfortable with their gender expression. Dysphoria is Greek for “unhappy” and the opposite of euphoria, meaning “happy”. In its mildest form, gender dysphoria may manifest as mild anxiety, but in other cases it can be much more debilitating.

Gender identity – is a person's identification of their gender.

Gender expression – this is how a person presents their gender to society, but importantly it may not be the gender with which they identify, which can cause gender dysphoria.

Gender fluid – someone whose gender identity and/or expression of gender moves between categories.

Gender queer – often used as an umbrella term to refer to someone who does not really feel they belong to conventional gender categories but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of masculine or feminine genders.

Genital plastic surgery – another phrase used for bottom surgery. Some references use “gender affirming surgery”, “gender reassignment surgery”, “genital reconstructive surgery”, and the media still use “sex change surgery”.

Gender spectrum – a way of describing gender as a continuum that includes male and female, but without establishing them as binary absolutes. The gender spectrum also includes other identities, such as non-binary and agender, etc. A person can fall anywhere on the gender spectrum and their position on it may not be fixed.

Intersex – someone who has ambiguous genitalia, but the more accepted terminology is DSD (Difference in Sexual Development).

MTF, FTM (trans woman or trans man) – a person who was assigned male at birth (AMAB) but identifies as a woman is a trans woman and the transition is referred to as male-to-female, and vice versa for a person who was assigned female at birth (AFAB) but identifies as a man.

Micro assault or micro aggression – an instance of subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group.

Non-binary – a gender identity that does not fit into the binary gender categories of “man” or “woman”.

Post op or pre op – these terms refer to genital plastic surgery and are out-of-date and offensive to a trans person.

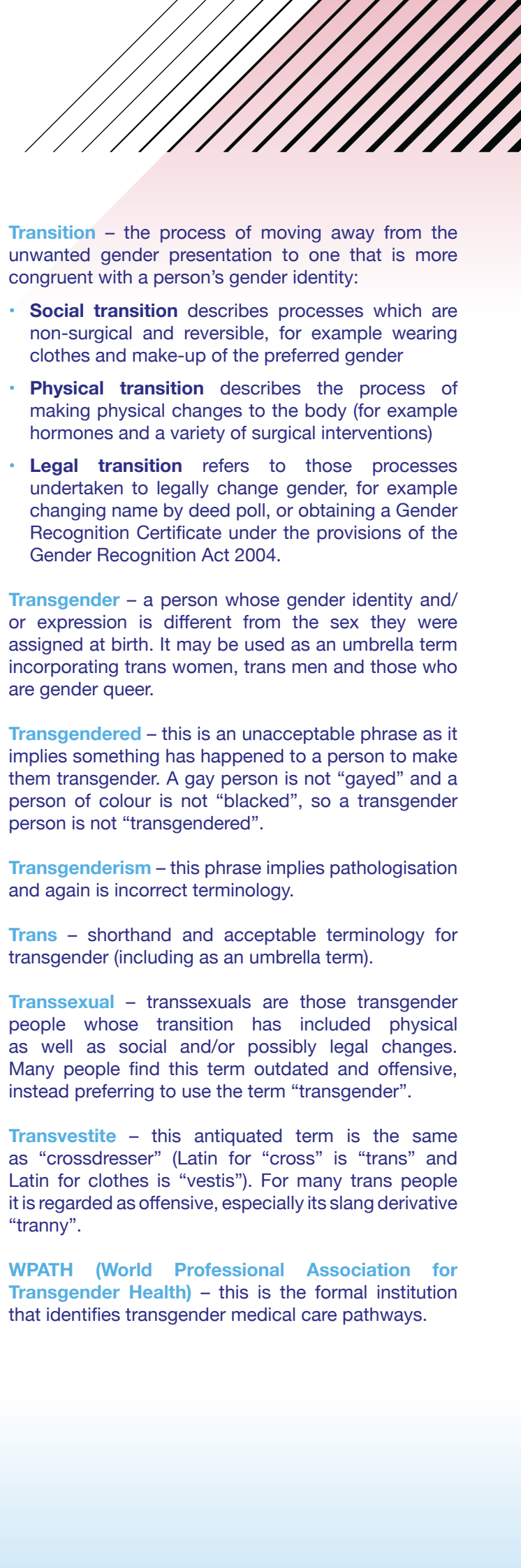
Pronouns – it is important to use the correct pronouns for a trans person. Misgendering a trans person by using the wrong pronouns can be very undermining and is likely to cause offence and upset; for example by calling a trans woman “he” or “him”, when they are “her” or “she”. Non-binary and other gender queer people may use other pronouns, for example “they” or “zie”.

Puberty blockers – young trans people are not allowed by medical practice to begin physical transition until they are in their later teenage years. Puberty blockers are hormones that delay the onset of puberty until the child has decided if they want to pursue physical transition processes (hormones and surgical interventions), some of which are not reversible.

Purging – trans people who, for lifestyle, health and/or relationship reasons, cannot present their gender as they would like (described as “in the closet”), may go through phases of acceptance then denial, known as purging. For example, the process of buying and wearing clothes that match their gender identity (acceptance) then throwing them away in disgust (denial).

Sex – refers to the biological label that is recorded when a baby’s birth is registered. Generally, when referring to “sex” at birth, the descriptors “male” and “female” are used.

Top surgery – surgery to the upper half of the body, normally breast enlargement or reduction surgery, but also vocal cord shaving and facial feminisation surgery.



Transition – the process of moving away from the unwanted gender presentation to one that is more congruent with a person’s gender identity:

- **Social transition** describes processes which are non-surgical and reversible, for example wearing clothes and make-up of the preferred gender
- **Physical transition** describes the process of making physical changes to the body (for example hormones and a variety of surgical interventions)
- **Legal transition** refers to those processes undertaken to legally change gender, for example changing name by deed poll, or obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate under the provisions of the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Transgender – a person whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. It may be used as an umbrella term incorporating trans women, trans men and those who are gender queer.

Transgendered – this is an unacceptable phrase as it implies something has happened to a person to make them transgender. A gay person is not “gayed” and a person of colour is not “blackened”, so a transgender person is not “transgendered”.

Transgenderism – this phrase implies pathologisation and again is incorrect terminology.

Trans – shorthand and acceptable terminology for transgender (including as an umbrella term).

Transsexual – transsexuals are those transgender people whose transition has included physical as well as social and/or possibly legal changes. Many people find this term outdated and offensive, instead preferring to use the term “transgender”.

Transvestite – this antiquated term is the same as “crossdresser” (Latin for “cross” is “trans” and Latin for clothes is “vestis”). For many trans people it is regarded as offensive, especially its slang derivative “tranny”.

WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) – this is the formal institution that identifies transgender medical care pathways.

