



Essential Terms for TGI Health

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Gender Affirming Care

Bottom Surgery

Refers to the surgical procedures that enhance and affirm the expectations of physical anatomy related to genitalia and reproductive organs.

Chosen/Lived Name

Describes a name someone uses in their day-to-day personal and professional lives in place of a legal, given name—a name that a person chooses and lives by in place of a given name. A lived or chosen name is different from a nickname because it is not used based on familiarity or context-specific; it is meant to replace a legal, given name for all intents and purposes.

Dead Name

Describes a name that someone no longer uses to live by, generally, a legal-given name. Dead name and legal name refer to the same information, however, they convey a different tone. When collecting information that requires the use of a federally registered name, use “Legal name” to convey the context for why you need to know this information.

Gender Affirmation

Refers to being recognized or affirmed in a person’s gender identity. It is usually conceptualized as having social, psychological, medical, and legal dimensions. Gender affirmation is used as a term instead of transition by many transgender people because the word “transition” emphasizes a cross-over from one gender to another, rather than emphasizing affirming gender identity, “I decided to seek gender affirming care in 2021,” or, “I’ve been receiving gender affirming care for six years.”

Gender Affirming Care

The World Health Organization defines Gender gender-affirming care as a range of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions “designed to support and affirm an individual’s gender identity.” The process may or may not involve measures such as name



changes, adopting proper gender identity-based pronouns, hormone therapy, surgery, or routine cosmetic procedures.

Gender Dysphoria

A state of emotional and physiological distress or discomfort that may be experienced because a person's gender identity differs from that which is physically congruent and/or socially attributed to their sex characteristics or sex assigned at birth. Gender Dysphoria is used as a diagnostic term in the DSM-5, to describe an incongruence between the sex assigned at birth and experienced gender, accompanied by distress. Not all transgender and gender-diverse people experience gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria can be triggered in multiple ways, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Physical or body dysphoria is when there is a sense of incongruence between a person's physical characteristics and gender identity. Body dysphoria is not necessarily related to other people's perceptions of an individual's body. Body dysphoria is mostly about how the individual perceives their own physical characteristics in relation to the expectations laid out by their gender identity.

Social dysphoria, on the other hand, is necessarily about the perception of other people. It is the feeling of distress triggered when a person is regarded as, addressed as, treated as, or expected to behave as a gender that they do not identify.

Mental and emotional dysphoria is the sensation of distress that is triggered when living with the incongruence in self-esteem and social status as a result of fear from the stigma and rejection associated with being transgender.

Gender Euphoria

Describes a state of elation or joy that may be experienced because a person's gender identity is affirmed, though it differs from that which is physically and/or socially attributed to their sex assigned at birth. Like dysphoria, euphoria can be triggered physically, socially, and mentally/emotionally.

Physical or body euphoria is triggered by an internal sense of congruence between the internal expectations formed based on gender identity and the internal perception of physical characteristics. This sensation may be experienced with or without gender-affirming care and is not necessarily dependent on the perception of other people.



Social gender euphoria describes the sensation triggered when a person is regarded as, addressed as, treated as, or expected to behave as the gender that they identify.

Mental and emotional euphoria is the sensation of peace that is triggered when living with a sense of congruence between self-esteem and social status as a result of the normalization of transgender people and a neutral association with being transgender.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Broadly defined as the administration of exogenous hormones (hormones produced outside the body) to supplement or replace hormones that are deficient or absent in an individual's body. These hormones can be taken as injections or pills, locally or systemically.

Misgendering

Refers to when language or behavior is used that misinforms about and/or incorrectly reflects the gender of the subject. This may be a pronoun (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs), a form of address (sir, Mr.), or an action such as giving access to the incorrect bathroom.

Passing

Refers to the ability to remain identified as one's gender identity, rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Stealth

Refers to the act of concealing or not disclosing one's transgender status. Transgender people may choose to live stealth for many reasons.

Top Surgery

Refers to the surgical procedures that enhance and affirm the expectations of physical anatomy related to the chest. Generally, this term is used by the transmasculine community to denote chest masculinization. Generally, transwomen will not use "top surgery," and will say "breast enhancement."

Transition

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health defines transition as the process whereby people usually change from the gender expression associated with their assigned sex



at birth to another gender expression that better matches their gender identity. People may transition socially by using methods such as changing their name, pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, and/or how they move and speak; medically, through gender affirming care, and/or through the legal system. (Standards of Care, Version 8, 2022).

Transitioning may or may not involve hormones and/or surgeries to alter the physical body. Transition can describe changing one's gender expression from any gender to a different gender. People may transition more than once in their lifetimes. (Standards of Care, Version 8, 2022).

Some transgender people feel comfortable using the term "sex change," in addition to or instead of "transition." The term "sex change" is not widely used because sex change is an unspecific blanket statement that implies a single procedure, whereas transition suggests a gradual, ongoing process. Remember to use reflective language; when in doubt, use "gender affirming care," and let the person lead the conversation on how else they may refer to gender affirming care.

SOGIESC

AFAB

An acronym that stands for Assigned Female at Birth. This acronym is commonly used in place of "female" by many transgender people when asked about their sex because it emphasizes that they did/do not identify as females, and/or may no longer have female sexual anatomy and/or physiology, but were assigned as female sex at their time of birth.

AMAB

An acronym that stands for Assigned Male at Birth. This acronym is commonly used in place of "male" by many transgender people when asked about their sex because it emphasizes that they did/do not identify as males, and/or may no longer have male sexual anatomy and/or physiology but were assigned as male sex at their time of birth.

Assigned Sex at Birth

Refers to a person's status as male, female, or intersex at birth based on anatomical characteristics at birth. We use the word assigned because it is not self-prescribed. Sex is usually assigned at birth based on the appearance of the external genitalia by the medical personnel overseeing the prenatal development and delivery of the baby.



Gender Expression

How a person presents their sense of self to align identity and social positioning through cues such as behavior, clothing, voice, or other perceived characteristics.

Gender Identity

The aspect of a person's internal sense of self that informs sexual identity, congruence with sex characteristics, and personal expectations for sexual and social development.

Sexual Orientation

An individual's self-identified positioning on the spectrum of romantic, physical, or sexual attraction to gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex characteristics. Incorporates attraction, behavior, and cultural identity.

Sex Characteristics

The physiological and anatomical biological factors that contribute to an individual's reproductive potential and bodily development. These are often distinguished between primary and secondary characteristics and used to categorize or "sex" people during development or birth. These aspects include chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, hormonal profiles, and physical traits that typically emerge during puberty. These factors can exhibit a wide range of diversity and may evolve over an individual's lifetime.

Sex

Sex is a bio-social term that encompasses the presentation of a person's sex characteristics and the unique cultural interpretations and expectations of those characteristics.

SOGIESC

An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics. SOGIESC is used as a framework for reconceptualizing gender and sex-based health by addressing the nuances of each bio-social aspect and abstaining from making assumptions about one aspect based on another.



The TGI Umbrella

Cisgender

A term that describes people whose gender identity and expression feel congruent with their natural sex characteristics and assigned sex at birth.

Endosex / Non-Intersex

Intersex is a term used to describe a person who is naturally born with sex characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, or genitalia that fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female bodies, and can be exclusively assigned into one category or the other.

FtM

An acronym for "Female to Male." This term is not widely used by the transgender community, it is replaced by "transgender man."

Gender Expansive

A term that describes a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond the current cultural or social expectations of gender.

Non-Binary

A term that describes a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond, actively resists, and/or does not conform to the current cultural or social expectations of a gender binary: man/woman.

Gender Non-conforming

A term that describes a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond, actively resists, and/or does not conform to the current cultural or social expectations of gender.



Intersex

Intersex is a term used to describe a person who is naturally born with sex characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, or genitalia that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female bodies, and cannot be exclusively assigned to one category or another.

"Intersex is an umbrella term for unique variations in reproductive or sex anatomy. Variations may appear in a person's chromosomes, genitals, or internal organs like testes or ovaries. Some intersex traits are identified at birth, while others may not be discovered until puberty or later in life." (interACT Advocates for Intersex Youth, 2025).

MtF

An acronym for "Male to Female." This term is not widely used by the transgender community, it is replaced by "transgender woman."

Transgender

A term that describes a person whose gender identity and expression feels discordant or incongruent with their natural sex characteristics and/or assigned sex at birth.

Transgender Man

Often shortened to "transman," a term that describes a person who has natural sex characteristics consistent with the bio-social schema of female anatomy and physiology and who has a gender identity consistent with the bio-social schema of boy and manhood.

Transgender Woman

Often shortened to "transwoman," a term that describes a person who has natural sex characteristics consistent with the bio-social schema of male anatomy and physiology, and who has a gender identity consistent with the bio-social schema of girl and womanhood.