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Transgender Terminology

USEFUL TERMS FOR WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

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There are many useful sites far more comprehensive than the list below for working with transgender individuals. I highly recommend these two:

<http://www.transstudent.org/definitions>

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

AFAB – Assigned female at birth; an individual whose sex was assigned at birth as female. A sometimes less-preferred acronym, FTM (Female to Male) also is used. Never assume which label or pronouns to use. It is better to ask the individual what he/she/they prefers.

AMAB – Assigned male at birth; an individual whose sex was assigned at birth as male. A sometimes less-preferred acronym, MTF (Male to Female) also is used. Never assume which label or pronouns to use. It is better to ask the individual what he/she/they prefers.

Cisgender/cis – A term meaning that the sex assigned at birth is in agreement with an individual’s gender identity. This does not indicate sexual orientation or gender presentation.

Transgender/trans – A term meaning that the sex assigned at birth is in disagreement with an individual’s gender identity. Trans is an umbrella term that includes many gender identities. Transgender is an adjective, so using the term “transgendered” is not correct. This term does not indicate sexual orientation or gender presentation.

Queer – A term that has been reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community as meaning anyone who falls outside the binary of gender or sexual orientation.

Transfeminine – An individual who identifies as feminine whether or not she chooses to have surgeries to transition physically.

Transmasculine – An individual who identifies as masculine whether or not he chooses to have surgeries to transition physically.

Transitioning – The process of changing one’s gender presentation to match one’s gender identity. This may include coming out to family and friends, name changes and may or may not include hormone therapy and surgical procedures. Do not assume that everyone transitions the same way or that everyone has hormone therapy or surgical procedures.

Gender binary – The idea that only two genders exist, either male or female.

Gender identity – How an individual feels; masculine, feminine, or something other. This term is not synonymous with sex.

Gender expression/presentation – How an individual presents themselves to the world; it may be masculine, feminine or something other.

Gender fluid – A term for an individual whose gender identity may change at times or be “fluid”.

Gender non-conforming – An individual who does not conform to societal norms of his/her/their assigned sex.

Genderqueer – An individual whose gender identity falls outside the gender binary, regardless of gender presentation. Such people may feel that they are neither male nor female or that they are somewhere in between, or they may move from gender to gender at different times.

Non-binary – This is the preferred term for all genders outside the gender binary.

Transsexual – This term is not synonymous with transgender and may be considered by some as outdated or pejorative. The preferred umbrella term is transgender. Do not use the term transsexual unless instructed to do so by the individual.