

“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive.” Audre Lorde

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two separate aspects of someone’s identity.

Gender identity refers to one’s internal knowledge of self as a man, woman, or some other identity. Identifying as transgender refers to one’s gender identity.

Sexual orientation refers to who you’re attracted to. Sexual orientations include (but are not limited to) straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and asexual.

Sex: a medically constructed categorization. Sex is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia, either in ultrasound or at birth.

Gender: A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as “masculine,” “feminine,” or “androgynous.” Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).

Gender Non conforming (GNC): Adjective for people who do not subscribe to societal expectations of typical gender expressions or roles. The term is more

commonly used to refer to gender expression (how one behaves, acts, and presents themselves to others) as opposed to gender identity (one's internal sense of self).

Queer: One definition of queer is abnormal or strange. Historically, queer has been used as an epithet/slur against people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality do not conform to dominant expectations. Some people have reclaimed the word queer and self identify in opposition to assimilation (adapted from "Queering the Field"). For some, this reclamation is a celebration of not fitting into social norms. Not all people who identify as LGBTQIA use "queer" to describe themselves. The term is often considered hateful when used by those who do not identify as LGBTQIA.

Transgender people identify as a gender identity that does not correlate with the gender they were assigned to at birth. For example, a transgender man identifies and lives life as a man and was assigned female at birth.

Transgender people, like anyone, can be straight, gay, lesbian, etc. since gender identity and sexual orientation are separate.

Transgender: An adjective used most often as an umbrella term and frequently abbreviated to "trans." Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one's internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth. While transgender may refer to a woman who was assigned male at birth or a man who was assigned female at birth, transgender is an umbrella term that can also describe someone who identifies as a gender other than woman or man, such as non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, no gender or multiple genders, or some

other gender identity.

Trans man: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Trans woman: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Two-Spirit: An umbrella term encompassing sexuality and gender in Indigenous Native American communities. Two-Spirit people often serve integral and important roles in their communities, such as leaders and healers. It may refer to an embodiment of masculinity and femininity but this is not the only significance of the term. There are a variety of definitions and feelings about the term two-spirit – and this term does not resonate for everyone. Two-Spirit is a cultural term reserved for those who identify as Indigenous Native American. Although the term itself became more commonly used around 1990, two-spirit people have existed for centuries.

Cisgender: a gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person's assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to highlight the privilege of people who are not transgender.

Heteronormativity: Attitudes and behaviors that incorrectly assume gender is binary, ignoring genders besides women and men, and that people should and will align with conventional expectations of society for gender identity, gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction. For example, someone assigned

female at birth is expected to 1) have a body that is considered “female” by the dominant culture, 2) identify as a girl or woman, 3) act feminine and fulfill the roles associated with girls and/or women, and 4) be romantically and sexually attracted to men.

Cross Dresser (CD): A word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially, as a member of a gender other than their assigned sex; carries no implications of sexual orientation. Has replaced “Transvestite.”

Misgendering: Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (i.e. “Hello ladies!” “Hey guys”), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (i.e. “Well, since we’re all women in this room, we understand...”).

Allyship: The action of working to end oppression through the support of, and as an advocate with and for, a group other than one’s own.

References and More Resources

<https://www.sclgbtqnetwork.org/> A local organization that focuses on supporting the SouthCoast LGBTQ community.

<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary> A website that breaks down terms typically used in relation to LGBTQ individuals.

<https://thegenderspectrum.weebly.com/gender-in-other-cultures.html>

Non-western examples of LGBTQ individuals.

<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/ally-tips> Suggestions on how to be a good

ally to LGBTQAI individuals.

<http://www.transstudent.org/sites> A list of websites about trans health, education, and information.

<https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why> Information about how to use personal pronouns.