

# Transgender Terminology

Ruben Hopwood © 2011

## KEY TERMINOLOGY *(a brief guideline – not an exhaustive or ultimate authority list)*

**Sex:** What's between your legs (physical) – typically identified at birth by visible genitals

**Gender:** What's between your ears (psychological) – invisible to others unless demonstrated in expression.

**Gender/Sex Role:** actions, behaviors, jobs, language, clothing, self-expression that reflects or varies from masculine or feminine standards as expected by social norms

**Gender Identity:** how a person defines him/herself in terms of gender

**Gender Expression:** visible communication of gender to others by clothing, name, pronouns, manners...

**Transgender:** umbrella term covering the variety of unconventional gender expressions – Some transgender people may call themselves transgenderists.

**Gender Variant:** expressing a gender different from social custom for one's anatomy – also called gender non-conforming

**Sexual Orientation:** how one identifies one's internal typical physical/emotional attraction to or desire of others – different than, yet experienced through one's gender identity – not determined by behaviors. Sexual orientation is commonly mistaken for gender identity and vice versa. Gender Identity is about how you identify/see your gender. Sexual Orientation is about who you are sexually attracted to.

## OTHER TERMS

**Androgyne:** someone who presents all or no culturally constructed gender/s

**Bigender:** feeling one possesses two or more genders at the same time

**Being Read:** being perceived socially as a gender other than the one being presented by the person

**Cross Dresser:** a person who enjoys wearing the clothing usually considered typical for the opposite sex, but who does not identify him/herself as being the opposite sex

**Female-to-Male (FTM):** person identified female at birth who lives as male/masculine – terms include: trans-man, T-male, tranny boi/y, boi, men

**Gender Community:** the group of people dealing with concerns of gender identity – includes significant others, families, friends, and allies – or SOFFAs

**Gender Identity Disorder (GID):** formal clinical diagnosis describing the condition of being transsexual or transgender

**Intersex:** anyone born with atypical reproductive anatomy that does not fit the standard medical definition for male or female – also includes, but not limited to unexpected chromosomal combinations

**Male-to-Female (MTF):** person identified male at birth who lives as female/feminine – terms include: trans-woman, T-girl, new woman, affirmed woman, shemale (considered very derogatory), and woman

**Passing:** being perceived in society as being the gender that one is presenting

**Stealth:** someone who does not share, or want shared, their identity, experience, or past history

**Transition/ing:** the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one's particular gender identity – most often referring to medical and legal changes that take place when altering the natal sex – also called gender affirmation.

**Transphobia:** irrational fear, hatred and disgust towards individuals who are transgender or transsexual. Transphobia can appear when transgender or transsexual individuals are discriminated against, harassed, threatened, insulted or made fun of. This term is often confused with homophobia; however homophobia refers specifically to negative attitudes or feelings towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.

**Transsexual:** person who believes their anatomical sex is not their true sex and seeks to medically/surgically align the two

### **References**

Bottéas, P. (2004). *Glossary*. Fenway Community Health: Unpublished document.

Frequently asked questions: Frequency. (no date). ISNA Intersex Society of North America. Website: <http://www.isna.org/>.

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association and LGBT health experts. (2001). *Healthy people 210 companion document for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health*. San Francisco, CA: Gay and Lesbian Medical Association.

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association and LGBT health experts. (2006). *Guidelines for care of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients*. New York: Pfizer US Pharmaceuticals.

Gender Education and Advocacy, Inc. (2001). *Gender variance: A primer*. Website: <http://gender.org/>.

Herman, J. (2006). Personal conversations.

Human Rights Campaign Foundation. (no date). *Transgender Americans: A handbook for understanding*. Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Available from [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org).

Human Rights Campaign Foundation. (2004). *Transgender issues in the workplace: A tool for managers*. Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Available from [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org).

Lev, A. I. (2000). *Transgender emergence: Understanding diverse gender identities and expressions*. New York: The Haworth Clinical Practice Press.

*Transgender At Work*. (2005). Website: <http://www.tgender.net/taw/>.

*Transgender Care*. Website: <http://www.transgendercare.com/>.