

The selected terms and definitions in this glossary are not meant to label an individual but are intended to be helpful functional descriptors. These terms, like all words, are social constructs developed over time. New language is constantly evolving and forming to unite community members, as well as to divide groups, by experience, politics, and membership. These terms and definitions are not standardized and may be used differently by different people and organizations in different regions.

Although the following are some of the most commonly used terms, individuals and groups may prefer other terms to describe their gender identity or expression. Labels and identities should only be self-selected by individuals, not assumed by others. Biology does not imply identity. Nor do behaviour and expression alone constitute identity.

The definitions used here are from the support document *Safe and Caring Schools: A Resource for Equity and Inclusion in Manitoba Schools* (MB MyGSA.ca) (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning). For additional definitions, refer to the Terms and Concepts section of the document at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/safe_schools/mygsa/terms_concepts.pdf.

agender

Without gender. Often used for self-identification by persons who do not identify with or conform to any gender.

binary gender system

A system that forces all people into only two categories—either men or women, boys or girls. In this system, men and women are expected to look and behave in particular ways that are different from one another.

cisgender/cisgendered (adj.)

Refers to someone whose gender identity and gender expression correspond with their assigned birth sex. (Egale Canada)

COFAB

Acronym for *coercively assigned female at birth*. Refers to people who were assigned to be female at birth, and raised with a female gender role that does not match their gender identity.

COMAB

Acronym for *coercively assigned male at birth*. Refers to people who were assigned to be male at birth, and raised with a male gender role that does not match their gender identity.



coming out

“1. The process through which [LGBT2SQ*] people recognize and acknowledge their non-heterosexual orientation and integrate this understanding into their personal and social lives. 2. The act of disclosing this orientation or identity to others.” (The Alberta Teachers’ Association)

“From ‘coming out of the closet,’ the process of becoming aware of and open about one’s sexual orientation or gender identity.” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 63)

The process of becoming aware of one’s trans identity, accepting it, and/or telling others about it.

discrimination

“The unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or groups of people; here unfair treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 63)

The unequal treatment of groups or individuals with a history of marginalization by a person, a group, or an institution which, through the denial of certain rights, results in inequality, subordination, and/or deprivation of political, educational, social, economic, and cultural rights.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission defines discrimination as “an action or a decision that treats a person or a group negatively for reasons such as their race, age or disability. These reasons are known as **grounds of discrimination.**”

As used in human rights laws, discrimination means making a distinction between certain individuals or groups based on a prohibited ground of discrimination.

“When you are treated less favourably than someone else either because of your real or perceived sexual orientation, your gender, your ethnicity or religion, etc.” (Schools OUT UK)

gender

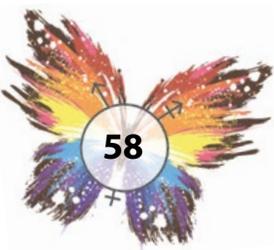
The social classification of people as masculine and/or feminine. Whereas sex is an externally assigned classification, gender is something that becomes evident in a social context. (Egale Canada)

gender diverse/creative (adj.)

Refers to a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from stereotypical, cultural, or societal expectations based on assigned sex and gender. (Egale Canada)

gender dysphoria

“A medical term for unhappiness or discomfort with the gender role assigned by one’s culture to one’s biological sex; a term disliked by many transgender [and gender diverse] people as implying that there is something wrong with them; may or may not coincide with *sexual dysphoria.*” (Girl’s Best Friend Foundation, and Advocates for Youth 64)



gender expression

The way a person presents and communicates gender identity to society, through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours and traits used publicly to express one's gender as masculine or feminine or something else. The traits and behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity are culturally specific and change over time. Gender expression is not an indication of sexual orientation. (Also called *gender presentation*.) (Egale Canada)

gender identity

A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender—one's internal sense of being male, female, or another gendered being entirely. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. (Egale Canada)

genderqueer (ambigender) (adj.)

Refers to a person whose gender identity may not correspond with social and societal gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may identify with both male and female genders, may move between genders, or may reject the gender binary or gender altogether. Those who identify as genderqueer may or may not also identify as trans. (Egale Canada)

intersex/intersexual (adj.)

Refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. Many people experience the designation of *intersex* as stigmatizing, given the history of medical practitioners imposing the diagnosis on infants, children, and young adults (some people may not be identified as intersex until puberty). As with all humans, gender identity for intersex individuals may be complex. (Egale Canada)

sex/assigned sex

The biological classification of a person as male, female, or intersex. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external anatomy. (Egale Canada)

sexual orientation

A person's capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender. (Egale Canada)

trans (adj.)

A term commonly used to refer to transgender, transsexual, and/or gender diverse identities and experiences. While it is often used as an umbrella term, some people identify just as trans. (Egale Canada)



transgender (adj.)

A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex (the antonym for cisgender)—often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions, including those who may self-identify as *male*, *female*, *two-spirit*, *genderqueer*, *bigender*, *gender fluid*, *transsexual*, *gender creative*, *pangender*, *transmen*, *transwomen*, *gender independent*, *agender*, *male-to-female (MTF)*, *female-to-male (FTM)*, and others. Transgender people (like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc. (Egale Canada)

transsexual (adj.)

A person whose sex assigned at birth does not correspond with their gender identity. A transsexual woman needs to live and experience life as a woman, and a transsexual man needs to live and experience life as a man. Some transsexual people may physically alter their body (e.g., sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy) and gender expression to correspond with their gender identity. Many identify as transgender, rather than transsexual, because they are uncomfortable with the psychiatric origins of the term *transsexual*. (Egale Canada)

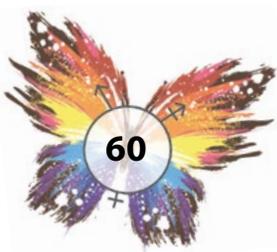
transition/transitioning

The process whereby people change their appearance or physical body to align with their gender (also called the *gender affirming process*).

Transitioning means different things to different people, due in part to issues of access, safety, and personal choice. It may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance, presentation, or function by medical, surgical, or other means. (Egale Canada)

two-spirit (n.)/**two-spirited** (adj.)

The term *Two Spirit* emerged in 1990 at the third annual Intertribal First Nations/Native American gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg. *Two-Spirit* is an Aboriginal spirit-name shared at that 1990 gathering of Aboriginal people who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans at the time. *Two-spirit* is a name now embraced by many LGBTIQ Indigenous people of Turtle Island. It is unique to North American Aboriginal LGBTIQ people because First Nations peoples' connections to this land and ecology are cultural, historical, and familial. (Albert McLeod, cited in Egale Canada)



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Notes

