



Transgender (often shortened to **trans**) is an umbrella term that refers to people who experience and/or express their gender differently from conventional or cultural expectations. Broadly speaking, anyone whose identity, appearance, or behavior falls outside of conventional gender norms can be described as transgender. However, not everyone whose appearance or behavior is gender-atypical will self-identify as transgender. Many gender variant people are viewed as transgender by others but not by themselves.

Androgyny is a term that refers to something that has no gender value or that mixes masculine and feminine characteristics. The term androgynous is often used to refer to people whose appearance or build make determining their gender difficult. Androgyny has also been used as a fashion statement, and some of the more common forms (such as women wearing men's trousers) are not perceived as transgender. Many people who self-identify as androgynous see themselves as genderqueer, gender fluid, or entirely genderless.

Genderqueer is a term that refers to people who live outside of the gender norms of society by bending or breaking the rules of gender, blurring the boundaries of gender, playing with or redefining gender, or refusing gender altogether.

Drag is a term that refers to people who "present" part-time as members of the opposite sex primarily to perform or entertain, though many drag performances are meant as a political comment on or parody of the concept of gender. A drag queen is a biological male who dresses as female, and a drag king is a biological female who dresses as male. While drag performance should not be considered an indicator of a person's gender identity or sexual orientation, many drag queens and kings identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Drag performers may or may not identify as transgender.

Cross-dresser is a term that refers to people who wear the clothing and/or accessories considered by society to correspond to the opposite sex. Unlike transsexuals, cross-dressers typically do not seek to change their physical characteristics and/or manner of expression permanently or desire to live full-time as a gender different than their birth sex. Cross-dressers can be male or female and of any sexual orientation, though research shows that the majority of cross-dressers are heterosexual men, and as many as 2-3% of biological males engage in cross-dressing on occasion. Cross-dressers vary in how completely they cross-dress (from one article of clothing to fully cross-dressing) as well as in their motives for doing so. Some cross-dressers find it sexually appealing or arousing, while others find it emotionally or psychologically fulfilling. Many cross-dressers wish to express more than one aspect of their personalities (both a sense of masculinity and a sense of femininity) and they find the practice liberating in terms of expressing aspects of identity that would not otherwise be acceptable within rigid gender-role expectations. Cross-dressers are sometimes referred to as "transvestites," but this term is considered derogatory and should not be used.

Two-Spirit is a term used in some Native American cultures to refer to people whose gender identification includes both male and female and usually implies a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit living in the same body. Two-Spirit is a contemporary term that references historical multiple-gender traditions in many First Nations cultures. In many Nations, being Two-Spirit carries both great respect and additional commitments and responsibilities to one's community. Two-Spirit people have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes. Some are counselors while others are medicine persons or spiritual functionaries. Many Native/First Nations people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming identify as Two-Spirit.

Transsexual is a term that refers to people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. Some, but not all, transsexuals wish to alter their bodies to conform to their internal sense of gender. The term can also be used to describe people who, without undergoing medical treatment, identify and live their lives full-time as a member of the gender different from their assigned sex at birth; non-medical methods of expressing gender identity include wearing preferred-gender clothing and body-shaping garments, adjusting mannerisms and speech patterns, and asking friends and family to use preferred names and pronouns. Transsexuals transitioning from male to female are often referred to as "MTFs" or "transwomen," and those transitioning from female to male are frequently referred to as "FTMs" or "transmen." Current estimates of the prevalence of transsexualism are about 1 in 10,000 for biological males and 1 in 30,000 for biological females. In contrast to the term "transgender," "transsexual" is not an umbrella term, and many people who identify as transgender do not identify as transsexual. Unlike cross-dressers, drag kings or drag queens, transsexuals are people who generally live full time as a different gender than their assigned sex at birth. Transsexuals are often referred to as "he-shes," "she-males," or "trannies," but these terms are considered derogatory and should not be used.

Intersex is a term that refers to people who are born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either males or females. Some people are born with XXY, XYY, or other variations of chromosomes; these genetic differences may or may not be visibly apparent or known to the person. Some people are born with XY chromosomes but are unable to respond to testosterone and therefore develop bodies with a vagina and breasts rather than a penis and testes. Some intersex conditions are known at the time of birth while others are not discovered until later in life or not at all. Some intersex people identify as transgender while others do not. The existence of intersexuality shows that there are not just two sexes and that our ways of thinking about sex (trying to force everyone to fit into either a male or female box) are socially constructed. Intersex people are sometimes referred to as "hermaphrodites," but this term is considered derogatory and should not be used.