

Useful Language/Terminology in discussing Gender & Sexual Identity

- **Sex Assigned at Birth:** Status (e.g. male, female, intersex) assigned at birth which is physician-determined based on sex chromosomes, hormone profiles, and internal/external organs; typically based on external organs exclusively.
 - **Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB):** or Female Assigned at Birth (FAAB) – indicates that the child was assigned as the female sex by birthing professional based on examination of sexual characteristics present at birth (ie: vulva)
 - **Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB):** or Male Assigned at Birth (MAAB) -- indicates
- **Intersex:** Someone born with anatomy (genitals, chromosomes, hormones, etc.) that does not fit the generally expected presentation of majority of AFAB and AMAB children.
- **Gender:** Societal expectations based on sex, both being socially created categories. We learn and teach these expectations the moment we interact with infants based on our cultural conceptions of gender.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's innate, deeply-felt psychological identification as a man, woman, or something else, which may or may not correspond to the person's external body or assigned sex at birth.
- **Gender Expression:** The manner in which people represent their gender to others. For example, an individual may express gender through mannerisms, clothes, and personal interests.
- **Cross-Dressing:** dressing in the perceived clothing of the opposite gender. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Drag:** The intentional performance of gender. Intentionally wearing the culturally expected dress of the opposite gender generally for performance purposes.
- **Transsexual:** *An older term* A person who lives full-time in a gender different than their assigned birth sex. Typically describes someone who wishes to pursue hormones and/or surgery for gender affirmation.
- **Trans or Transgender:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their assigned sex at birth.
 - **Female to Male (FTM) or Trans man or Man:** AFAB, identifies and may present as male
 - **Male to Female (MTF) or Trans woman or Woman:** AMAB, identifies and may present as female
- **Gender nonconforming (GNC):** 1) An umbrella term that includes all people whose gender varies from the traditional norm; or 2) to describe a subset of individuals who are assigned female or male, but feel their gender identity is neither female nor male.
 - **Androgyny, Pangender, Genderqueer, Gender Fluid** are terms and labels that some people use to describe themselves when they identify as having characteristics of both male and female genders, or feel their gender lies outside of the gender binary.
- **Dysphoria:** The sense that one's assigned sex, and the associated gender expectations, do not match one's internal sense of gender and self. Often a pervasive feeling of being "out of alignment."
- **Cisgender:** The opposite of transgender. A label for individuals whose gender identity is congruent with societal expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transphobia:** A term developed to describe varying degrees of fear, dislike, and hatred of trans or GNC individuals. Such feelings may result in prejudice, discrimination, and hostile behavior toward trans and GNC individuals. **Internalized transphobia** implies a self-hatred or dislike because one is trans or GNC.

- **Sexual Orientation/Identity:** A person's emotional, sexual, and/or relational attraction to others. Often comprised on the direction of attraction and its expression. This is related to but not dependent upon a person's gender identity.
- **Lesbian:** A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to other women.
- **Gay:** A man or woman who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to the same gender; some use the term only to identify gay men.
- **Bisexual:** Someone who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both genders. Sometimes the attraction to each gender is equal, while for others there may be a preference for one gender over the other. ***Experiencing attraction to difference and sameness***
- **Queer:** *Traditionally pejorative* Reclaimed term often used politically or an overarching term used for anyone identifies as such (typically used by non-heteronormative people).
- **Asexual/Aromantic:** Experienced on a spectrum. Asexual: a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality, which is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Aromantic: little or no romantic attraction to others.
- **Two Spirit:** An umbrella term indexing various indigenous gender identities in North America
- **Heterosexism/Cissexism:** refers to the systematic oppression of LGBTQ individuals through discriminatory practices that are part of our social structure and institutions.
- **Heterosexual privilege:** Social opportunities or benefits solely on the basis of one's sexual orientation. **Cisprivilege** includes the advantages one has due to being cisgender.
- **Gender pronoun:** The pronoun an individual has determined you should use when referring to them in the third person. Examples include: she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/theirs, and gender neutral terms like ze/hir/hir.
- **Mispronoun/Misgender:** Use of the incorrect pronoun or gender reference for a trans individual. Can be unintentional or intentional, and can be a micro/macro aggression.
- **Passing:** Term used to describe when an individual can be in public and have others perceive that individual as their experienced gender using correct pronouns/name/etc to refer to them. Some question the importance of passing
- **Passing Privilege:** The experience that trans identified individuals who can "pass" have greater safety and comfort when moving through the world.

******Not all definitions and labels mean the same to all people. Use the preferred terminology of the person/people with whom you are interacting. This list represents common meanings of these terms within communities, but is not exhaustive or universal.*

Created by the LGBTQ Subcommittee of the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force