

# TRANS\* 101

A resource from the Williams College  
Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

## Terms

**Transgender** – An umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth (ASAB), including but not limited to transsexuals, crossdressers, androgynous people, genderqueers, and gender non-conforming people. Transgender is a broad term and is good for non-transgender people to use. “Trans” is shorthand for “transgender.”

**Cisgender** - Cisgender is a gender identity where an individual's self-perception and presentation of their gender matches the behaviors and roles considered appropriate for one's assigned sex at birth.

**Trans\*** - Trans\* (with an asterisk) is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the transgender identity spectrum. There's a ton of diversity there, but we often group them all together (e.g., when we say “trans\*” issues). Trans (without the asterisk) is best applied to trans men and trans women, while the asterisk makes special note in an effort to include all non-cisgender gender identities.

**Gender Identity** - An individual's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Sexual Orientation** - Who you are attracted to. Examples include, heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, gay, asexual.

**Gender Expression** - How a person represents or expresses one's gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.

**Transsexual** - A term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. Often transsexual people alter or wish to alter their bodies through hormones or surgery in order to make it match their gender identity.

**Female to Male (FTM)** – A person who transitions from “female-to-male,” meaning a person who was assigned female at birth, but identifies and lives as a male. Also known as a “trans man.”

**Male to Female (MTF)** – A person who transitions from “male-to-female,” meaning a person who was assigned male at birth, but identifies and lives as a female. Also known as a “trans woman.”

**Genderqueer** – A term used by some individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female.

**Two-Spirit** - A contemporary term that references historical multiple-gender traditions in many First Nations cultures. Many Native/First Nations people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming identify as Two-Spirit; in many Nations, being Two-Spirit carries both great respect and additional commitments and responsibilities to one's community.

**Intersex** - A term used for people who are born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems that are not traditionally associated with either a “standard” male or female.

**LGBT** - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans\* (sometimes LGBTQ - where the Q stands for Queer or Questioning).

Info pulled from:

<http://www.transpeoplespeak.org/trans-101/>, <http://ganimede.transboys.info/trans101.html>, <http://srp.org/resources/trans-101/>, The definition of “two-spirit” is from the Task Force's First Nations/Indigenous/Two-Spirit Collective. [http://transequality.org/Resources/NCTE\\_TransTerminology.pdf](http://transequality.org/Resources/NCTE_TransTerminology.pdf), <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/05/what-does-the-asterisk-in-trans-stand-for>, Beemyn: [http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume34\\_3/feature.cfm?section=2](http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume34_3/feature.cfm?section=2) NCAA: <http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/NCAA/Resources/Latest+News/2011/September/Transgender+policy+approved>