



The Gender Equality Society of Saskatchewan (GESS) is a non-partisan network of partners and allies working together for the rights of all people in Saskatchewan. Our mission is to engage in advocacy and education to improve opportunities for civic participation within Saskatchewan for all people regardless of their perceived or actual gender identity or gender expression.

The main purpose of this document is to assist professionals to communicate **clearly, consistently** and **respectfully** about issues faced by the trans, genderqueer, and intersex community of Saskatchewan.

Please note: The preferred terms of the individual or group being discussed must always take precedence over what is found in this document. **When in doubt, ask them!**

BEST PRACTICES for NAMES, PRONOUNS and DESCRIPTIONS

Always use the preferred name. Often trans, genderqueer, and intersex people for various reasons cannot change their name legally. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who lives by a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).

Whenever possible, ask the person which pronoun they would like you to use. A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or had some form of surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. Some common pronouns are he/him/his, she/her/hers, ze/hir/hirs, and they/them/theirs.

It is **never appropriate** to put **quotation marks** around either a trans, genderqueer, and intersex person's **chosen name** or the **pronoun** that reflects that person's gender identity.

Use the correct term or terms to describe a person's gender identity. For example, a person who is born male and transitions to become female is a trans woman, whereas a person who is born female and transitions to become male is a trans man.

When referring to the histories of trans, genderqueer, and intersex people, it is best to use non-gendered language. If gendered language is necessary, it is proper to use the pronouns that correspond with their present gender identity and expression.

When possible, avoid discussions of someone's genitals and/or medical or surgical status. This is personal information, as is anyone's medical history, and should not be subject to public discussion or debate without a person's expressed consent.

PROBLEMATIC AND/OR OFFENSIVE TERMS

PROBLEMATIC	PREFERRED
Transgenders, a transgender, transgendered	Transgender people, a transgender person*
Sex change, pre-operative, post-operative, non-operative, castrated, sterilized	Transition
Special rights	Equal rights, or equal protection

Other Problematic/Offensive Terms:

- Transsexual/Transexual/Transsexualism (n)
- Transgenderist (n)
- Transvestite (n)
- Disorders of Sexual Development (n)
- Hermaphrodite (n)

*Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun.

TERMINOLOGY

Sex (n) describes the biological classification of people as male, female, or intersex. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics.

Gender (n) describes the social classification of people as man or woman, masculine or feminine. Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviors, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to individuals.

Gender identity (n) refers to person's sense of self, and the sense of being male or female, man or woman, both or neither. A person's gender identity is different from their sexual orientation and may differ from a person's birth-assigned and/or biological sex.

Gender expression (n) refers to the external manifestation of one's internal gender identity, usually expressed through masculine, feminine, or androgynous behavior, clothing, haircut, voice and other physical characteristics.

Cisgender: A gender identity that matches a person's birth-assigned sex.

Correct Usage: Cisgender men, cisgender women, cisgender person.

Incorrect Usage: He is a cisgender, she is cisgendered.

Gender identities that differ from birth-assigned sex include, but are not limited to, the following:

Transsexual (adj): A term to describe individuals who feel strongly that they are living in the wrong biological sex, and who identify strongly with the gender identity typically assigned to the opposite sex. Transsexuals often seek or undergo medical treatments or procedures in order to align their bodies with their internally felt identity, such as hormone therapy or sex-reassignment surgery.

PLEASE NOTE: While some people still prefer to use the term 'transsexual' to describe their identity, many people prefer the term transgender. Also note that the term "transexual" (note the single 's') is a term coined by the pornography industry, and is often considered defamatory.

Transgender (adj): A term to describe individuals who are uncomfortable and disagree with, in whole or in part, their birth-assigned sex and/or their socially prescribed gender identities. This may include binary identified persons (or transsexuals), or people who describe themselves as being on a gender continuum rather than identifying with the biological binary of “male” or “female”, and/or the social binary of “man” or “woman”. Transgender individuals may or may not pursue and undergo hormone treatment and/or sex reassignment surgeries.

Correct Usage: Transgender men, transgender women, transgender rights.

Incorrect Usage: He is a transgender, she is transgendered.

Two Spirit (adj): An English language umbrella term for a wide range of mixed gender roles found in some First Nations and Aboriginal cultures. This concept may incorporate sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Intersex (adj): Individuals whose biological sex is ambiguous. There are many genetic, hormonal, and/or anatomical variations that make a person’s biological sex at birth ambiguous (e.g., Klinefelter Syndrome). Intersex has replaced the controversial term “hermaphrodite.” Currently, there is debate over whether the term intersex should be used to describe an individual or to describe a medical condition (intersex person, or person born with intersex). Because of this, it is best to ask the person the usage they prefer.

Cross Dresser (n): Someone who occasionally wears clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. “Cross-dresser” should NOT be used to describe someone who has transitioned to live full-time as the other sex or who intends to do so in the future.

Genderqueer (adj): Refers to people who “blur” gender norms through non-conformity to the gender binary (male/female, masculine/feminine). Genderqueer people may identify as either male, female, both, neither or may reject gender altogether.

Correct Usage: A genderqueer person

Incorrect Usage: They are a genderqueer

Trans or Trans* (adj): An umbrella term that encompasses all of the above identities, and more.

Correct Usage: Trans men, trans pride, trans rights, Trans* Community.

Incorrect Usage: He is a trans, she is a trans

Trans Man or Transman (n): A person whose biological sex assigned at birth was female, but whose gender identity is male.

Trans Woman or Transwoman (n): A person whose biological sex assigned at birth was male, but whose gender identity is female.

Other terms:

Transition (v): Transitioning refers to a host of activities that trans people may pursue in order to affirm their gender identity. This may (or may not) include physical changes from medication, surgery, etc. Transitioning involves substantial personal, legal, financial, social and medical risks and should never be viewed as a precondition to validate a person's gender identity. It should be noted that transitioning is a process that may take a lifetime to complete. Therefore, using "before her transition", "after his transition", or adding the prefixes "pre-" or "post-" can be problematic.

Gender Identity Disorder (GID) or Gender Dysphoria (GD) (n): A controversial DSM-IV diagnosis given to transgender and other gender variant people. Because it labels people as "disordered," Gender Identity Disorder is often considered offensive. The diagnosis is frequently given to children who don't conform to expected gender norms in terms of dress, play or behaviour. Such children are often subjected to intense psychotherapy, behaviour modification and/or institutionalization, all of these commonly associated with reparative therapies.

For more information, please contact:

Gender Equality Society of Saskatchewan (GESS)

- trans, genderqueer, and intersex advocacy and education
- email: genderequalitysask@gmail.com

This document is adapted from Trans Pride Canada's *Style Guide*, found at <http://www.transpride.ca/assets/trans-style-guide.pdf>