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Key Definitions/Terminology

Transgender (“trans”): A term that describes people with a gender identity that does not match societal expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

While some trans people identify with a particular sex or gender (i.e. male, female), other trans people identify outside of the gender binary.

- A transgender woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth
- A transgender man is a man who was assigned female at birth

Cisgender: A term that refers to people whose gender identity comports with the sex they were assigned at birth; a non-trans person.

Assigned Sex at Birth: The male or female designation assigned to an infant at birth based on the appearance of the infant’s genitals and usually recorded on the person’s birth certificate.

Intersex or Differences of Sex Development: Conditions where an individual’s reproductive, sexual anatomy and/or a chromosomal pattern do not seem to fit typical definitions of male or female as defined by medical providers. An intersex person may also be transgender, gender non-conforming, or cisgender.

Gender Identity: An individual’s self-conception of their gender.

Gender Expression: How people express their gender identity or gender role.

Gender Non-Conforming (“GNC”): Generally, this term is used for transgender people who identify with gender roles or expressions associated with both men and women OR who simply do not identify with the male/female divide at all. Sometimes GNC people use the terms “gender queer” or “gender variant.”

Gender Dysphoria: This is a condition in the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (“DSM-V”), marked by a strong and persistent discomfort with a person’s assigned sex at birth.

Misgendering: The act of assigning the incorrect gender.

Transgender vs. Transsexual: “Transgender” is considered a more general umbrella term, while “transsexual” often has a medical connotation. While many trans people identify as transsexual, many may not. These terms are also used interchangeably by many people.