

III. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Cisgender	Refers to a person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.
Deadnaming	Deadnaming refers to using a name that a transgender person no longer uses to identify themselves. A deadname may be associated with the sex that a trans person was assigned at birth, not their gender identity. Using a deadname may cause a person distress, may endanger them by outing them as trans, and should not be done without their permission. In some cases, a deadname may be the person’s legal name. If the context requires a legal name to be recorded, do so and then use the name the person uses to identify themselves going forward. Protect the person’s deadname as confidential information that should be accessible only to people who need to know it.
Gender	Refers to a social (or cultural) construct comprised of characteristics and behaviours associated with a particular sex.
Gender expression	Refers to a person’s public presentation of gender through clothing, hairstyles, use of make-up, mannerisms, voice, etc. It may differ from their gender identity.
Gender identity	Refers to a person’s internal experience of gender—an individual’s understanding of their own gender. It may or may not coincide with the sex they were assigned at birth.
Intersex	Refers to a person whose sexual anatomy or chromosome patterns at birth do not fit neatly into “male” or “female.”

Misgendering

Refers to using the wrong gender labels, titles, or pronouns for someone. Intentionally misgendering someone may be professional misconduct.¹¹

What to do if you've used the wrong gendered language to refer to someone?

Say sorry, correct yourself, and move on using the correct pronouns. If you misgender someone in writing, whether and how you correct yourself depends on the context. Correcting a private letter or email might be done through a simple apology and using the correct gender going forward. Correcting public or published documents could be more complicated and should be approached in consultation with the person who has been misgendered.

Non-binary/ Nonbinary

Refers to a person who does not identify exclusively as male or female or who may identify as neither. Related terms include agender, genderqueer, or bigender.

Outing

Refers to the intentional or accidental revealing of someone's gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex assigned at birth without their knowledge or consent. Deadnaming and misgendering are ways of outing a person. Outing a person as trans or gay may expose them to social exclusion, harassment, or violence that they would not have otherwise faced. Outing someone in legal forums can present barriers to access to justice by discouraging the person who was outed from seeking legal resolutions or by otherwise obstructing the process.¹²

"Preferred" pronouns

Referring to "preferred pronouns" implies that pronouns and their associated gender identity are a choice and delegitimizes non-normative gender identities as "mere preference." Instead, refer simply to "pronouns."

Sex assigned at birth	Refers to the sex assigned to a person at birth, usually male or female, based on their anatomy. Some people are intersex (see above definition).
Sexual orientation	Refers to a person’s emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. A person’s sexual orientation may be toward persons of a different gender, the same gender, no gender, or more than one gender. A person’s sexual orientation is not dependent on their gender identity, or their sex assigned at birth.
Transgender man or trans man	Refers to a man who was assigned female at birth.
Transgender person or trans person	Refers to a person who experiences a gender identity that differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender includes many non-binary individuals. Some people mistakenly say “transgendered,” which is not a word. A person is transgender, not transgendered.
Transgender woman or trans woman	Refers to a woman who was assigned male at birth.
Two-spirit	<p>“Two-Spirit” is a term used within some Indigenous communities encompassing cultural, spiritual, sexual, and gender identity.</p> <p>The term reflects complex Indigenous understandings of gender roles, spirituality, and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in Indigenous cultures. Individual terms and roles for Two-Spirit people are specific to each nation.¹³</p>