



Appropriate Language Guide

For working with trans youth

This document serves as guidance for professionals explaining the basics of how to talk to (and about) trans youth in an appropriate and respectful way. Using the right language can transform a young person's experience for the better: it is a simple way of showing that you understand and respect their identity. Whilst this serves as general guidance, it is imperative to ask each young person the words they are comfortable with, which may change over time and between situations.

Inappropriate language	Preferred language
<p>Transsexual, transvestite, or tranny</p> <p>Whilst everyone uses different terms, and some young people may use these words to describe themselves, some consider them to be outdated or offensive. It is best to avoid these terms unless a young person tells you otherwise. 'Tranny' is a slur, and should never be used in reference to a trans person.</p>	<p>Trans or transgender</p> <p>Trans man or trans woman</p> <p>Non-binary person</p>
<p>Sex change or 'the surgery'</p> <p>The term 'sex change' is outdated and doesn't capture the range of experiences that trans people go through when they transition. Trans people can choose to go through a variety of treatments - there is no one surgery that makes someone trans.</p>	<p>Medical transition</p> <p>Gender affirming surgery</p> <p>Top surgery or chest surgery</p> <p>Bottom surgery</p>

<p>'Real' name or 'real' gender</p> <p>A persons 'real' name and 'real' gender are the ones that they feel most comfortable with. Most of the time, it is unnecessary to mention someone's birth name or gender. Always gain a young person's consent before sharing this information.</p>	<p>Birth gender</p> <p>Gender assigned at birth</p> <p>Birth name or dead name</p>
<p>Used to be a girl/boy</p> <p>Most trans people don't feel that they were ever truly the gender they were assigned at birth. In most situations it is not necessary to discuss a trans person's assigned gender at birth. How they identify now is much more important.</p>	<p>Now identifies as...</p> <p>Was assigned female/male at birth</p>
<p>Became a woman/man</p> <p>Again, most trans people feel that they were always the gender that they now identify as. We use the term 'transition' to describe the process of a person changing their gender expression.</p>	<p>Transitioned</p> <p>Came out as...</p>
<p>Preferred pronouns</p> <p>This language suggests that respecting someone's pronouns is optional, when it is absolutely necessary.</p>	<p>Pronouns</p>
<p>Believes they are...</p> <p>This language suggests that a person's gender identity is a belief rather than a reality.</p>	<p>They are</p> <p>They identify as</p>

Breasts/vulva/penis Some trans people are uncomfortable with certain words describing the body. Until you know what a person is comfortable with, it is best to use gender neutral alternatives.	Chest Genitals
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Gender vs sexuality: Gender describes how someone views their own identity (i.e. man, woman, non-binary etc.). Sexuality describes which kinds of people a person is attracted to (i.e. gay, straight, bisexual etc.).

Cisgender: Cisgender simply describes anyone who is not trans - someone whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary: people who don't identify as either a man or a woman. There are a range of non-binary identities.

Pronouns: Words we use to describe a person (i.e. he, she, they etc.). There are a range of pronouns, it's important to ask what pronouns a person uses rather than making an assumption.

Intersex: An intersex person is someone who is born with a mixture of male and female sex characteristics. Intersex people don't necessarily identify as trans.

You can find a glossary of more LGBTQ+ terms [here](#).

Transilience CIC
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