



**TRANS\* PEOPLE  
WORKING GROUP**

on HIV and Sexual Health in EECA

# TRANS\* GLOSSARY



**ECOM**



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Trans\* People Working Group on HIV and Sexual Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, established with support of the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), prepared this list of terms recommended for use and reflecting the ideology, values, principles and trends of trans\* movement in the EECA region.

### **NOTES:**

1. Using asterisk (\*) in trans\*.  
The asterisk (\*) symbol used with trans\* makes a focus of the unlimited number of gender identities, which do not always fit in the binary variations of trans\* femininity/masculinity or relate to any medical interventions.
  
2. Trans\* is separated from the following word with a space, e.g. "trans\* people"

## Frequently used terms:

| Recommended  | Not recommended   | Why  |
|--|---|--|
| Transgender  | Transsexual   | The word "transgender" describes the range of gender experiences, while the terms "transsexual" and "transsexualism" medicalize and psychopathologize people with gender variations and refer to a diagnosis.  |
| Trans* men, trans* women, trans* people, trans* children, trans* adolescents, transgender people | Transsexual, pseudo/core/true transsexual, transgender and trans as a noun (such as "Kate is a transgender"), abbreviations TG and TS | It is not correct and contrary to the ideas of trans* movement as well as the WHO position reflected in ICD-11.<br><br>Abbreviations TG and TS are also not recommended as they imply depersonalization. TG is an abbreviation from "transgender", which puts transgender status before the personality. |

|  |                               |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Non-binary people, non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer   | "It", neither nor, unclear    | Non-binary people are a group of people who do not stick to the idea of duality, binarity. Neutral pronouns are often used by them.  |
| Gender non-conforming people   | "in-between"                  | It is important to use correct terms, which are not offensive.   |
| Transfeminine, transmasculine people   | FtM, MtF                      | FtM, MtF are acronyms, which define the direction of transitioning as a process. It is not appropriate to use them referring to people.  |
| Transgender transition(-ing), transmasculine, transfeminine transition(-ing), gender-affirming procedures, gender recognition procedures | Sex change and sex correction | Obsolete, medicalized terms based on the paradigm of the need for medical interventions, of having a list and limited options of the procedures to harmonize a transgender person. We can talk about transitioning, which is a comprehensive approach, but transgender people do not change or correct anything. |

|  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Feminization,<br>masculinization as<br>a process |                                      | Those words refer to<br>processes, not people.   |
| Cross-dresser                                    | Transvestite                         | The term "transvestite"<br>has a medicalized<br>connotation as it comes<br>from the diagnosis in<br>ICD-10: "Transvestism"<br>in the mental disorders                                    |
| Trans* status,<br>trans* experience              |                                      |  |
| Women*, men*,<br>lesbian*, gay*                  | Men and<br>transgender men,<br>women | When we use asterisk<br>after a word, we make<br>transgender people<br>visible. Thus, the term<br>"women**" includes all<br>people with female<br>gender – both cis and<br>trans* women. |
| Trans* sex worker                                | Tranny, shemale,<br>ladyboy          | Such terms should be<br>avoided as they have<br>negative, humiliating<br>historical links with<br>trans* feminine people<br>engaged in sex work.   |
| Internalized<br>transphobia                      | Internal<br>transphobia              |  |

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Cis men and trans* men |   | It is correct to use cis prefix to underline that trans* variations are also possible, when describing a certain concept, if the gender status is important. Thus, we indirectly make transgender people visible.                                     |
| Bigender, agender      |   |   |
| Gender dysphoria       | Sex dysphoria, gender/sex reorientation | Extremely pathologizing and medicalizing approach to transgender people.  |
| Intersex               | Intersexuality, hermaphrodite           | An ideological position promoted by the people involved in intersex movement, considering that "intersexuality" is in no way related to the types of sexuality and the word "hermaphrodite" is outdated and discriminating.                           |
| Sex assigned at birth  | Biological sex                          | Biological sex is a comprehensive term consisting of a number of categories (such as hormonal sex, chromosomal sex, etc.), which may rather often not correspond to the person's identity. This, the baseline for "sex" is the sex assigned at birth. |

## Comments to some terms\*

**Gender-affirming (procedures, practices, etc.), from "to affirm":** any actions performed by people at their own discretion to bring various aspects of their lives in line with their gender identity/gender self-awareness. Such actions can include: self-actualization and reflections, disclosing one's identity/self-awareness to the desired circle of people (coming out), working with psychologists, changing one's haircut, clothing and appearance (in particular, through cosmetic and medical procedures), changing one's name, title, pronouns and gender-containing word endings, changing one's official name and/or gender marker in one's identification documents, changing one's body through physical exercises, using binders and/or devices imitating breasts or genitalia, taking hormone therapy and going through surgeries. None of those actions (maybe apart from self-actualization and reflections) is mandatory. Their necessity and scope should be defined by the needs of a specific person.

Depending on the sphere of a person's life affected by gender-affirming procedures/practices, they may be divided into three related types: medical (aimed at changing physical characteristics of a person's body); social (aimed at changing gender expression and social interactions of a person); legal (changing gender marker in passport, substituting the given name with a gender-neutral name, re-issuing documents).

### **Non-binary people:**

an umbrella term, which refers to people whose gender identity/self-awareness do not fit into the binary opposing division into men/women, people who do not have any gender identity/self-awareness or people who do not recognize the legitimacy of gender system as it is. Such people may use or not use the term "transgender" to refer to themselves. They may use different terms to refer to their identity/self-awareness.

### **Gender dysphoria:**

negative feelings and emotions of varied intensity and nature, which are caused by the misalignment between gender identity/self-awareness of a person, on the one hand, and such person's sex assigned at birth, physical sexual characters/functions, the way such person is perceived by others or the gender scenario imposed on such person, on the other hand.

### **Transgender people (or trans\* people):**

an umbrella term referring to people, whose gender identity/self-awareness are in some way different from such person's sex assigned at birth.

Latin prefix 'trans' means 'on the other side of': thus, transgender people are "on the other side of" their sex assigned at birth.

### **Transgender man:**

a person assigned female at birth who identifies as male. Also see "transmasculine people".

### **Transgender woman:**

a person assigned male at birth who identifies as female. Also see "transfeminine people".

### **Gender-affirming procedures/practices:**

the term, which may refer to both procedures/practices (medical, social, legal transitioning) and the period of time, when they are performed.

### **Transmasculine people:**

an umbrella term referring to non-cisgender people assigned as female at birth, who want to give their body and/or appearance some masculine characteristics (and, possibly, get rid of the feminine characteristics) of transgender men or non-binary people.

It is important to note that not all non-binary people assigned as female at birth will be ready to use the term "transmasculine" to refer to them: some of them may want to get rid of their feminine characteristics, but not aiming for body masculinization or masculine expression, thus finding this term inappropriate. That is why it should be used carefully.

### **Transfeminine people:**

an umbrella term referring to non-cisgender people assigned as male at birth, who want to give their body and/or appearance some feminine characteristics (and, possibly, get rid of the masculine characteristics) of transgender women or non-binary people.

It is important to note that not all non-binary people assigned as male at birth will be ready to use the term "transfeminine" to refer to them; some of them may want to get rid of their masculine characteristics, but not aiming for body feminization or feminine expression, thus finding this term inappropriate. That is why it should be used carefully.

**Feminization:**

the process of developing physical characteristics defined as "female". Referring to physical characteristics: related to the female pattern of reproductive system operation and estrogen-dominated endocrine profile.

**Masculinization:**

the process of developing physical characteristics defined as "male". Referring to physical characteristics: related to the male pattern of reproductive system operation and androgen-dominated endocrine profile

**Cisgender people (or cis people):**

people whose gender identity/self-awareness matches their sex assigned at birth. Latin prefix 'cis' means 'on this side of': thus, cisgender people are "on this side of" their sex assigned at birth.

**Transgender status:**

this term shows how gender identity/self-awareness of the person is aligned with such person's sex assigned at birth; the fact of an individual being transgender/cisgender.

\* This list of terms was prepared based on the Glossary published by T-Action trans-initiative group ([http://t-action-team.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Trans-Zdorovie\\_T-Action.pdf](http://t-action-team.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Trans-Zdorovie_T-Action.pdf))





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