



Gender Minorities Aotearoa



Glossary of Gender Related Terms and How to Use Them



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Gender Minorities Aotearoa
Glossary of Gender Related Terms and How to Use Them

3rd Edition

Published by

Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Wellington

2017

Gender Minorities Aotearoa's Glossary is free to use.

Please reproduce in full with original credits.

Not for profit.

Notes on 'trans' and 'minorities'

We say 'transgender,' or 'trans' as catch all terms for all sex and gender minorities, including intersex, transsexual, takataapui, and other minority genders.

Sometimes people ask, "Why do you say Gender Minorities instead of Gender Diverse?" The answer is that "Diverse" means there is much variety, while a "Minority Group" is a category of people who are seen as different to the social majority, and are discriminated against on that basis.

We feel that this language acknowledges struggle and honours resilience.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Gender Minorities Aotearoa acknowledges that language is always evolving, thus some of the terms here will not fit with how people know themselves to be.

This glossary is a guide only, please see links at the bottom of our glossary web page for other glossaries and interpretations of gender language.

Gender or Gender Identity (same same)

One's actual, internal sense of being male or female, neither of these, both, etc.

Everyone has a gender, including you. In some circles, *gender identity* is falling out of favour, as one does not simply *identify as* a gender, but is that gender.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is culturally typically associated with the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms or may simply use *transgender*. Some of those terms are defined below. Some people who fit this definition may not consider themselves to be *under the transgender umbrella* or *transgender*. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual.

Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will want to take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures. The term *transgender* is not indicative of sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Transsexual

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have changed or seek to change their bodies – this can involve hormone replacement therapy (HRT), genital reconstruction surgery (GRS), top surgery (removal of breasts), permanent facial and other hair removal, and/or other medical treatments.

In some circles, the term has started to fall out of favour due to its perceived focus on medical transition, however, those who prefer transsexual often see it as an important distinction due to the definitive experience of incongruity/dissonance/dysphoria with one's body, which is often the cause of specific medical needs.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is **not** an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as *transsexual* and many transsexual people do not identify as *transgender*. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: for example transsexual woman or transsexual man.

Cis, Cisgender and Cissexual

Prefix or adjective that means *not trans*. Cisgender people identify more or less with the gender assigned to them at birth. In discussions regarding trans issues, one would differentiate between women who are trans and women who aren't by saying *trans women* and *cis women*. Cis is not an insult, but a neutral descriptor – much like *heterosexual* is to *homosexual*.

Trans

Trans is used as an abbreviation of either transgender or transsexual, or as an umbrella in the same way that *transgender* is used.

Trans*

Some non-binary and other gender non-conforming people use *trans** (with the asterisk, pronounced tran-star) to indicate that they're definitely not cis, but not necessarily a trans woman/man either. Some use it as a broad umbrella of inclusivity. Others see *trans** as unnecessary due to *trans* and *transgender* already existing as umbrella terms which capture all non-cis identities. In some areas *trans** is gaining popularity while in others popularity is rapidly declining.

Gender Expression / Presentation

The physical expression of one's gender through clothing, hairstyle, voice, make up, body shape, etc. Most transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender (who they are).

Sex

The system for assignment and classification of people as male or female based on imprecise perceptions of their physical anatomy - generally the appearance of their external genitalia at birth. Sex is not fixed or immutable, and no single criterion (e.g.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

genitals, chromosomes, hormones, fertility) definitively describes one's bodily shape or configuration.

The Sex Binary

An incorrect system of viewing sex as consisting solely of two categories, termed male and female, with two sets of matching chromosomes, hormone levels, reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

The sex binary assumes that sex is immutable biological fact and asserts that no other possibilities or anatomy are believed to exist, or should be allowed to exist. This system is oppressive, and is the cause of marginalisation for people who do not fit within the sex binary.

AFAB/AMAB (sometimes CAFAB / CAMAB)

Acronyms meaning *assigned female at birth* or *assigned male at birth*. When the 'C' is added, it stands for '*coercively*'. In cases when it's necessary to refer to the birth-assigned sex of a trans person, this is the way to do it.

The Gender Binary

Similar to the sex binary, the gender binary is an incorrect system of viewing gender as consisting solely of two categories, termed male and female, in which no other possibilities for gender or anatomy are believed to exist. Gender is not fixed or immutable, and no physical criterion (e.g. genitals, chromosomes, hormones) defines one's gender. Gender is experiential, and only the person themselves can define their gender.

The gender binary system is oppressive, and is the cause of marginalisation for people who do not fit within the gender binary.

Trans Woman

Trans woman refers to a woman who was assigned male at birth.

She may or may not be identified by others as trans, and may or may not identify herself as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between *trans* and *woman*.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Trans Man

Trans man refers to a man who was assigned female at birth.

He may or may not be identified by others as trans, and may or may not identify himself as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between *trans* and *man*.

Takataapui

Takataapui refers to Maori who are not heterosexual and/or not cisgender.

It is used both as a gender identity (similar to transgender), as an attraction or sexual orientation (similar to Lesbian, gay, bi, or pansexual). It is also used as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender Maori people (similar to 'Rainbow Community').

Takataapui – Rainbow Maori

Takataapui is a Te Reo Maori term, which is often used to roughly mean "rainbow person" or "rainbow community", in a similar way to LGBTQI+.

Some say it is specific to Maori, others use it for all LGBTQI+ people broadly.

Takataapui – No Simple Translation

Maori culture has traditionally included and celebrated people of all genders, and their relationships to people of any gender. Maori culture includes all Maori people.

Despite Aotearoa becoming a British colony in 1840, and the resulting laws and value systems being hostile to *takataapui* both historically and today; *tikanga* Maori continues to *awhi* and embrace *takataapui* *whanau*.

At its core, *takataapui* is a Maori concept that sits within Maori culture, with its own history and *wairua*, one very different to terms such as LGBTQI+.

So, there is no direct English translation, but these are some *whakaaro* or ideas for thought.

Takataapui – Maori Genders

Takataapui is used more specifically for Maori genders, such as:

- *taahine* – similar to mixed gender, sometimes non-binary, or transgender not-otherwise-specified
- *whakawahine* – similar to trans woman
- *tangata ira tane* – similar to trans man



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Takataapui is often used as a gender of it's self – Maori transgender not-otherwise-specified. Some also use takataapui to refer to non-Maori who are transgender and intersex.

Takataapui – Maori Attractions, Relationships, or Sexual Orientations

Takataapui is also used more specifically for Maori attractions or sexual orientations, along the lines of lesbian, bisexual, queer, gay, pansexual, etc. Some also use takataapui to refer to non-Maori who are lesbian, bisexual, queer, gay, pansexual, etc.

Takataapui - LGBT?

A takataapui person may fit the definitions or behaviours of a lesbian, pansexual, transgender, gay, intersex, bisexual, asexual, or any other identity, but may or may not identify with western concepts or English words for these.

Whakawahine

Whakawahine roughly translates as trans woman. More literally, it translates as being or becoming, in the manner or spirit of a woman. Many Maori trans women are whakawahine, love this term, and prefer it over transgender, transsexual, or other terms. Some Maori trans women feel that '*whaka*' or '*to create or become*' holds an implication that they are not women, and reject this term on that basis, often preferring *Taahine* or *Takataapui*.

Tangata ira Tane

Tangata ira tane roughly translates as trans man.

Taahine

Taahine is a relatively new term, roughly translating as transgender. This can mean a transgender woman, a transgender man, or a non-binary or gender fluid trans person.

Binary

Used as an adjective to describe the binary genders female/male or woman/man.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Non-Binary

Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Elsa is a binary trans woman and Jesse is non-binary).

Transition

Transitioning from being seen as one's birth assigned gender to one's actual gender. *Transition* generally initially includes social elements such as changing one's clothes, hair, name (socially and maybe legally), changing the gender marker on one's legal documents, binding breasts or wearing breast forms, etc., and may also include medical treatments such as laser hair removal, hormone replacement therapy, or various surgeries. There is no wrong way to transition, and no one right way.

Sexual Orientation

A person's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Trans people can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, etc. just like anyone else. For example, a trans woman who is primarily attracted to other women may identify as lesbian.

Asexual Orientation

A person's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to others. An asexual person is not primarily motivated by sexual drive and sexual attractions, though they may experience sexual attraction in some circumstances or have sexual relationships for a vast number of different reasons other than primary sexual attraction.

Bisexual

Currently being redefined by bisexual rights activists to mean that one is attracted to both their own gender, as well as other genders, or to genders similar to one's own and different from one's own. This better reflects the common experience of many bisexual people (rather than simply attracted to binary men and binary women).

In common use, most bisexual people identify as being attracted to men and women. Some bisexual rights activists say this interpretation is '*biphobia*', based in stigma against bisexuals, and erasing bisexual attraction to non-binary people, however as it is bisexuals



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

themselves who commonly identify as being attracted to men and women, this is an ongoing topic of debate.

Bisexuality is believed by some to be the most common sexual orientation, more common than heterosexuality. This is due to pervasive instances of people identifying as heterosexual at times but bisexual when safe to do so.

Pansexual

Pansexual means being open to attraction to people of any gender, and inherently, explicitly includes transgender and non-binary genders.

Some pansexuals experience attractions based on characteristics other than gender. Some experience gender as a primary part of their attractions, but they have these attractions to people of all different genders. Pansexual does not necessarily mean without preference.

In the time when *'bisexual'* was broadly understood to mean *'attraction to both males and females'*, those who wanted to acknowledge being attracted also to non-binary people coined the term *pansexual*.

Note: There is some conflict between pansexual and bisexual activists. While some texts will say that pansexual is under *'the bisexual umbrella'* or *'part of the bisexual community'*, others will say bisexual comes under the broader *'pansexual umbrella'*.

Some bisexual rights activists claim that pansexual is a biphobic identity that erases their non-binary attraction. Some pansexual rights activists claim that this position assumes pansexuality is not a legitimate sexual orientation, and is thus panphobic.

Be cautious when discussing pansexual and bisexual in relation to one another.

Heteroflexible/Homoflexible

Similar to bisexual or pansexual, but with a stated heterosexual preference.

Commonly used to indicate that one is primarily interested in heterosexual relationships but is "flexible" when it comes to physical sexual activities. The same concepts apply to *homoflexible*, where one is primarily interested in homosexual relationships but is "flexible" when it comes to physical sexual activities.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Chaser

A person who sees trans people (usually trans women) as inherently sexual, and sexually objectifies them. As opposed to someone who simply is predominantly attracted to trans women; a *chaser* does not view trans women respectfully as whole people with humanity and agency, but rather as players in a sexual fantasy.

Heteronormative / Heteronormativity

This refers to the deeply held institutional belief that relationships between heterosexual masculine cis men and heterosexual feminine cis women are normal/natural/right, while all other relationships are viewed as abnormal/inferior/wrong.

Queer

Broadly used to indicate that one rejects heteronormativity and is not heterosexual – though sometimes queer is also used by heterosexual transgender people.

Queer is inherently political; rejecting enforced heterosexual narratives, and rejecting assimilationist homonormative respectability politics that reinforce them. In more simple terms, queer rejects "we're just like you" as the reason LGBTI+ people should have rights.

The term "*Queer*" was originally a slur reclaimed by Black, trans, disabled, HIV+, and other more marginalised rainbow people (particularly people of colour) who could not and did not assimilate into mainstream white gay culture that heterosexuals found palatable.

'Queer' was a response to white gay, lesbian, and bisexual people who didn't respect them, and were happy to throw their rights under the bus to distance themselves from "*the radical queers*" as '*the respectable ones*' and '*normal*', or "*we're just like you*".

Queer is sometimes used as an umbrella term to mean LGBTI+, though many queer people reject this. It is also sometimes used as an umbrella for '*not heterosexual and/or not cisgender*'. Because of the non-heterosexual connotation, many heterosexual trans people do not like to be called queer and may see this as being misgendered and called homosexual.

The word *queer* has long been used as a slur, so although it is commonly reclaimed, be a little cautious with its use.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Genderqueer

Similar to *queer*, but more specific to rejecting binary genders.

Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither male nor female, may see themselves as outside of or in between the binary gender boxes, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels. Some genderqueer people do identify within the binary (e.g. “genderqueer woman”), but reject the conventions and expectations associated with that gender.

Sexqueer

A rejection of labeling one’s physical body as female or male. Being sexqueer is not indicative of one’s current anatomy, birth assignment, or birth anatomy, and should definitely not be confused with *intersex*.

Intersex

Describes a person whose natal physical sex characteristics (e.g. anatomy, chromosomes) are ambiguous in the context of the male/female sex binary. A person may not know they have intersex anatomy until they reach puberty and their body changes differently than expected, or until they find themselves infertile as an adult.

When an intersex infant is born with ambiguous external genitalia, parents and medical professionals typically assign them a binary sex and perform surgical operations to conform the infant’s body to that assignment.

This practice is oppressive and is increasingly recognised as unethical and abusive; as intersex adults are speaking out against having been made to undergo potentially harmful medical procedures which they did not consent to.

Being intersex does not necessarily imply anything regarding one’s gender, orientation, or trans status.

Transvestite

Transvestite was once used to mean transsexual prior to the word *transsexual* being coined in the 1970’s, however now it’s usage is more similar to *cross dresser*.

Do NOT use this term to describe someone unless they self identify with this word.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Cross-dresser

Most commonly used to describe someone who primarily identifies with their birth assigned gender, but enjoys dressing as other genders. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression and for many, this is an integral part of their identity. Cross dressing is not necessarily tied to erotic activity, nor is it indicative of one's sexual orientation. Do NOT use this term to describe someone unless they self identify with this word.

Queens, Drag Queens, Drag Kings, Drag

Drag queens and *drag kings* are cross-dressing performers who take on stylised, exaggerated gender presentations for show, however for many, this is an integral part of their identity.

Historically, before the term "*transsexual*" came out in the 1970's, the term *drag queen* or simply *Queen* referred to trans women, whereas men who cross dressed as women for performance only were called *butch queens*. Many older trans women in New Zealand still prefer the term *Queen*, however others may see this as an insult. Use with extreme caution.

Gender Fluid, bigender

These are non-binary gender identities that indicate shifting between different genders or presentations. They are similarly used by those who feel they have both male and female sides to their personalities, such as some drag queens, some drag kings, and some cross-dressers.

Do not confuse these terms with *Two-Spirit*, a gender identity specific to Native American and First Nations cultures.

Neutrois and Agender

One who feels neutral in their gender or who rejects the influence of gender on their person. Sometimes the term *nongendered* are used in a similar fashion.

Identifying as neutrois or agender is not indicative of one's anatomy, birth assignment, or pronoun preference, and can be used in conjunction with another gender signifier, for example *neutrois woman*



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Androgyne

A person who feels both masculine and feminine, or who has a gender expression with both masculine and feminine characteristics.

Butch

An identity or presentation of non-heteronormative, reclaimed, queer masculinity. Butch can be an adjective (she's a butch woman), a verb (he went home to butch up), or a noun (they identify as a butch).

Although commonly associated with masculine queer/lesbian women, it's used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman.

Femme

An identity or presentation of non-heteronormative, reclaimed, queer femininity. Femme can be an adjective (he's a femme boy), a verb (she loves to femme up), or a noun (they're a femme).

Although commonly associated with feminine lesbian/queer women, it's used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman.

Gender Dysphoria

Clinical term referring to dissonance between one's assigned gender and/or one's body, and one's personal sense of self. Prior to the DSM-V, the term "gender identity disorder" was used, but that was removed as it often led to gender variance being stigmatised and misdiagnosed as a pathological condition.

Transphobia

Fear, discomfort, distrust, or hatred directed towards trans people or trans concepts. This word is used similarly to homophobia, etc. Some transphobia is based in ideas about naturalness, realness, and misconceptions around scientific fact or biology. Some transphobia is based in religious ideologies. Some transphobia is based in ideas of gender oppression revolving around reproductive capacity. There are many factors which contribute to transphobia.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Transmisogyny

The unique combination of misogyny, or hatred of women, with transphobia, or hatred of trans people.

TERF, or Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist

Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism, or '*Fundamentalist Feminism*', is a small but very vocal sub section of '*Radical Feminism*', which is generally focused on removing human rights, legal protections, and access to medical treatments and supportive social environments for transgender people.

Fundamentalist feminists also tend to be anti-sex worker's rights, anti-kink, anti-vaccination, anti-pharmaceuticals, and may be anti-contraceptives and anti-choice in relation to abortion.

Fundamentalist feminists have strong links to primitivism, "back to nature", fundamentalist family values, and sometimes fundamentalist religious views.

Cissexism / Cissupremacy

Bias in favor of cis people over trans people, or beliefs that cis people are inherently superior to trans, more real, more natural, etc. This often refers to systems which advantage cis people over trans people or unconscious systems of thought, rather than transphobic individuals.

Passing

Being read is the gender one wishes to be read as (usually used in a binary cisgender context). The term '*passing*' is falling out of fashion as it is seen to imply that one should desire to look cisgender.

Sexual Reconstruction Surgery / SRS or Genital Reconstruction Surgery/GRS

Refers to several different types of gender affirmation or transition related surgical procedures.

These terms are both preferred over "*sex change operation*" or anything with "*reassignment*." Not all transgender people choose to or can afford to have GRS.

Overemphasising the importance of GRS to the transition or affirmation process should be avoided.



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

Gender Minorities Aotearoa's Glossary is free to use – please reproduce it in full with original credits.

Not for profit.

Nods to:

Erin's Trans Glossary

New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective's *Doing it in Style*

GLAAD Media Reference Guide (*9th addition*)



Gender Minorities Aotearoa

genderminorities.com

Copyright 2017



Gender Minorities Aotearoa