

# Gender Affirming Language Tips<sup>1</sup>

*Remember:* Always default to patient language, including language in the “avoid this” category.

Language changes quickly → update your learning regularly!

| <b>SAY THIS</b>   | <b>AVOID THIS</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Gender affirmation procedures/surgeries, transition-related medical care</b>             | Gender reassignment surgeries/procedures<br>Sex change. Gender confirmation surgeries works for some.                                       |
| <b>Assigned sex at birth, Assigned female at birth or Assigned male at birth</b>            | Born male or female, male or female bodied, biologically male or female, “born as a man or woman,” natal male or female, bio-male or female |
| <b>What gender were you assigned at birth?<br/>Do you have a (fill in anatomy)?</b>         | Are you biologically male or female?  |
| <b>Patient description of their identity &amp; sex</b>                                      | Patient is <b>really</b> male/female  |
| <b>Gender dysphoria</b>   | Gender identity disorder  |
| <b>Intersex</b>   | Hermaphrodite   |
| <b>Transgender/trans person</b>   | A transgender   |
| <b>Report what the patient states, “I am a transman” “I am transitioning.”</b>              | Describing a patient’s identity for them, to them and to others   |
| <b>Patient’s sex is not relevant to their complaint</b>                                     | Requiring sex categorization in reporting   |
| <b>What is your name?<br/>For legal name needs: What name is used for . . . ?</b>           | What is your preferred name?<br>What is your real name?   |
| <b>A different sex, another sex</b>   | Opposite sex  |
| <b>All genders, people of all genders</b>   | Both sexes, both genders  |
| <b>Transgender man or woman, trans man or woman, trans masculine/feminine, man or woman</b> | MTF, male-to-female or FTM, female-to-male, transsexual   |
| <b>People with . . . . “people with penises, people with ovaries”.</b>                      | Women/female & men/male (in a medical context)  |
| <b>Chest, genitals</b>  | Breasts, penis, vagina  |
| <b>What forms of transition are part of your path?</b>                                      | Have you had the surgery? Pre-op or post-op?  |

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Chang, Sand C., et al. *A Clinician's Guide to Gender-Affirming Care: Working with Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Clients*. Vol. 1, New Harbinger Publications, 2019.

## Definitions<sup>2</sup>

**Gendered medicine:** Refers to any aspect of medical practice that depends upon engaging with aspects of a patient's physiology which are gendered. Most obviously it refers to any examination, discussion or treatment related to genitalia, reproductive organs & sex characteristics.

**Gender identity:** A person's internal perception of their own gender. Gender identity is not always visible to others and may not correspond with sex assigned at birth

**Gender expression:** An individual's external presentation of gender: a combination of dress, demeanor and social behavior.

**Gender diversity:** **Gender diversity** is an umbrella term that is used to describe **gender** identities that demonstrate a **diversity** of expression beyond the binary framework

**Gender expansive:** An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people that expand notions of **gender** expression and identity beyond what is perceived as the expected **gender** norms for their society or context.

**Sex:** The physiological chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics used to classify someone as female, male, or intersex-typically classified based on genitalia.

**Intersex:** A term describing people who have physical sex characteristics that are not considered typical within the binary framework of male/female

**Gender dysphoria:** The distress that some, but not all, transgender people experience as a result of incongruence between their gender identity and assignment at birth

**Transition:** A process of shifting one's gender expression or body to better match one's gender identity (typically moving away from gender expression or body that is associated with sex assigned at birth). May include social, legal, and medical components. Not all trans people choose to transition, and transition pathways are highly individual.

**Cisgender:** A person who's gender identity matches their assignment at birth

**Transgender/Trans:** A person whose gender identity does not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth

**Non-binary:** A person who has a gender identity outside of the male/female binary

**Genderfluid:** People who experience their gender as changing, dynamic, or evolving over time.

**Gender nonconforming:** A term to describe individuals whose gender expression, identity or gender role differs from expectations based on sex assigned at birth

**Queer:** An umbrella term used by some to describe people who think of their sexual orientation or gender identity as outside of societal norms or binaries. Some people view the term queer as more fluid and inclusive than traditional categories for sexual orientation and gender identity. Some people find this term offensive, therefore, it should be used only when a person self-identifies using this label.

**Two-Spirit :** A contemporary term that connects today's experiences of LGBT Native American and American Indian people with the traditions from their cultures.

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