

# LANGUAGE

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We acknowledge that our communities are richly diverse, and that those visiting TransHub may exist outside of, or surpass the identities, languages and histories of the often simplified, often Westernised concepts of gender and the trans experience.

We've tried to ensure the language we use is intentional and accessible, but also depathologising, rights-based and committed to the self-determination, full autonomy and liberation of all trans people, binary and non-binary, of all genders.

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*I am writing [Transgender Warriors] as a contribution to the demand for transgender liberation, the language I'm using in this book is not aimed at defining but at defending the diverse communities that are coalescing.*

**Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul*, 1996**

## Terminology

TransHub uses the terms *trans*, *transgender* and *trans & gender diverse* as umbrella terms for a population of people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth. By this we mean all people of diverse gender experiences.

For brevity, throughout TransHub we use *trans and gender diverse people* at least once per page, but more often, the shortened - *trans people*.

When we use this phrase we mean you, who are not cis (we also tend to say cis rather than cisgender, too).

**Not sure we mean you? We do.**

**Not sure you are 'trans enough'? Head [here](#).**

The gender we are presumed to be when we are born, and the administrative classification recorded for us based on that presumption, has no bearing on our actual gender. Most people in the world tend to agree that the gender presumed for them was the right one. We just happened to disagree because our experience of gender is trans, not cis.

The term *trans* has never just been a term describing women and men who are trans. The trans experience also includes those who are non-binary, genderqueer, or gender fluid, or any number of other beautiful and expansive ways people who aren't exclusively female or male claim or reclaim their gender/s.

We also mean [Sistergirls and Brotherboys](#), agender people, transsexuals, and anyone else whose gender is yet to be named, known or manifest.

Some trans people position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some connect strongly with their trans experience.

There will be some content on TransHub that is relevant to particular trans groups and experiences, and we will include the exact category required, e.g. all people with a cervix.

As a last resort, we have used the terms 'PMAB' and 'PFAB', which mean *presumed to be male/female at birth*.

## Affirming who we've always been

TransHub also uses the term *gender affirmation* instead of *transition* or *gender transition*, to reflect the breadth of actions and possibilities that can be involved in living and thriving as our gendered selves.

While *transition* is used both linearly and non-linearly by trans people, our use of *affirmation* is intentional - many people, trans and cis, observe the trans experience through a lens of medical intervention.

The word *trans* and *transition* are so similar that they are regularly used interchangeably. We challenge any idea that medicalises the genders of trans people. We are who are, end of story.

“ This definition [of trans] is not contingent on how we socially, medically or legally affirm our gender, it doesn't mean surgery, or birth certificates, or bathrooms.

*Being trans is about the relationship we have with ourselves and who we know ourselves to be, being trans is not about what we do about that.*

[Am I Trans Enough?](#)

## Bodies and genitals

Talking about bodies in a way that provides accurate and accessible information, and is affirming for everyone can be a difficult task. We've decided to sometimes use *medical words* to talk about our bits and bodies, because sometimes our communities use the same words for quite different things, and we want to make sure you know exactly what body part we're referring to.

Whenever we use this language, we will always preface it with the below warning box:



Hey! While talking about bodies on this page, we use medical terms like 'penis', 'vagina/front hole' and 'anus' to describe our bits. This is just so you know what we're talking about, as our communities often use similar words for quite different body parts - particularly our genitals.

When talking about yourself, or being referred to by others, we encourage you to use and request the language you feel most comfortable with instead! For more information about affirming language for our bodies and bits, [click here](#).

If you can't stand to see particular medical words, you can use a browser extension like [these ones for Firefox and Chrome](#) that allow you to search for and replace a word with a different word, so you don't have to read it on the page.

We encourage you to use whatever language feels best for you, e.g. clit, girdick, T-dick, cock, front hole, vag, bits, genitals, junk; back hole, arse, butt; breasts, chest, breast tissue; period, 'that time of the month', 'regular bleeding', the bloodening, Auntie / Uncle Flow, 'monthlies', or something totally different. It's your body, you-do-you.

## Writing about trans people

When writing about trans people, we recommend not only reading the comprehensive [glossary](#) below, and getting to know the language our communities use, but also making yourself familiar with these [Guidelines](#) from the Australian Press Council.

It is always important to use language that affirms, supports, and recognises the lives and identities of trans and gender diverse people,

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*Unfair or inaccurate reporting of persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics and issues related to them—including the use of prejudicial and/or offensive language—can have adverse mental health outcomes and harmful implications.*

no matter what you are writing or reporting about.

Check out our [Words Matter](#) resource on how to talk about trans people in an affirming way. We also love The Radical Copy Editor's [Trans style guide](#).

*Australian Press Council, [Guidelines for reporting on people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics](#)*

Our language is constantly evolving and changing. The language reflected on this page is correct for this current moment in time of early 2020, and will absolutely shift in the future. Reporting accurately about trans and gender diverse issues requires not only learning the correct language, but staying up to date as it evolves.

## Glossary

You can find a PDF of the TransHub glossary [here](#). We also developed, and use the [ACON Trans-Affirming Language Guide \[PDF\]](#).

When uncommon or technical language is used throughout TransHub, it will be linked to this glossary and look [like this](#).

Term	Definition
<b>AFAB/PFAB</b>	Assigned female at birth/Presumed female at birth.
<b>AMAB/PMAB</b>	Assigned male at birth/Presumed male at birth.
<b>Binary</b>	Something that is binary consists of two things, or can refer to one of a pair of things. When talking about genders, binary genders are male and female, and non-binary genders are any genders that are not just male or female, or aren't male or female at all.
<b>Birth assignment/presumption</b>	The attribution first made on a birth record where individuals are typically categorised as being either male or female, based primarily on visual inspection of the genitalia. Babies are generally presumed a



gender based on this attribution, most people agree with the presumptions made for them (cis) and some don't (trans).

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**Bisexual**

Attracted to two or more genders. Often framed as attraction to your own and other genders. Bisexuality isn't exclusive to binary genders.

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**Brotherboy**

A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community. Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity.

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**CD4 count**

A measure of the number of CD4 cells (or T-helper cells) in someone's blood. CD4 cells are a type of immune system cell in the body that HIV attacks and kills over time. The lower the CD4 count, the weaker the immune system.

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**Cisgender**

A term used to describe people who identify their gender as the same as what was presumed for them at birth (male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as.'

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**Cisgenderism**

Cisgenderism (sometimes referred to as cisnormativity and cissexism) is a structural stigma that denies, ignores, and pathologises the trans experience and trans people – binary and non-binary. Cisgenderism positions expansive expressions of gender as a problem, ignores the validity of non-binary genders and seeks to enforce traditional gender roles and inequalities.

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**Cross-gender**

A term sometimes used to describe historic figures who we may refer to by modern labels such as trans or non-binary, in lieu of those figures or communities having terminology that we rely on today.

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**Deadname**

A term used by some trans people to describe the name they were given and known by prior to affirming their gender and/or coming out.

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**Dysphoria**

The distress or unease sometimes experienced from being misgendered and/or when someone's gender and body personally don't feel connected or congruent. Many trans and gender diverse people do not experience gender dysphoria at all, and if they do, may cease with access to gender affirming healthcare and/or peer support. With or without the presence of gender dysphoria, being trans and/or gender diverse is not a mental illness. Gender dysphoria does not equal being trans or gender diverse.

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**Endogenous**

Being of internal origin.

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**Endosex**

A word used to describe people who are not intersex.

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**Exogenous**

Being of external origin.

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**Front hole**

A term preferred by some trans men and non-binary people to describe their genitals, instead of vagina.

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**Gender**

Who you know yourself to be. This may be called gender identity, or simply gender. (e.g. Man or male/woman or female/non-binary/agender/genderqueer/etc)

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**Gender affirmation (aka Gender transition)**

The personal process or processes a trans or gender diverse person determines is right for them in order to live as their defined gender and so that society recognises this. Gender affirmation may involve social, medical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender. Affirming our gender doesn't mean changing gender, 'having a sex change' or 'becoming a man or a woman', and transition isn't the same as being trans. A trans or gender diverse person who hasn't medically or legally

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affirmed their gender is no less the man, woman or non-binary person they've always been.

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**Gender Dysphoria (diagnosis)**

A DSM-5 diagnosis characterised by a marked incongruence between one's experienced gender and physical characteristics, and a strong desire for medical affirmation

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**Gender dysphoria (experience)**

The experience of distress or unease from being misgendered or not treated as the gender someone is.

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**Gender euphoria**

The experience of comfort, connection and celebration related to our internal sense of self and our gender. The pride of feeling and being affirmed as who we are.

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**Gender expansive**

Refers to anyone (trans or cis) whose gender expression differs from what is expected, typically based on their gender identity.

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**Gender incongruence**

Refers to a marked and persistent incongruence between an individual's presumed and experienced gender.

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**GRS**

Genital reconfiguration surgery, sometimes also known as sexual reassignment surgery (SRS), 'bottom surgery', 'lower surgery', and a range of other names.

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**Heterosexual**

Exclusively attracted to people of other genders. Also known as straight.

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**Homosexual/gay**

Attracted to people of the same gender to you.

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**HRT**

Hormone Replacement Therapy, sometimes also known as GAHT or Gender Affirming Hormonal Therapy. This consists of taking new hormones and/or blocking existing hormones in the body.

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**Inappropriate curiosity**

Intrusive and invasive questions and examinations that seem irrelevant to the medical care of a trans individual. Inappropriate curiosity occurs when something is done not to provide care to a trans patient but to satisfy the curiosity of the healthcare practitioner.

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**Insertive sex**

Sex acts where part of your body (hands, genitals, tongue) are being inserted into another person's body.

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**Intersex**

Intersex people are born with naturally occurring and very normal differences of chromosomes, gonads (ovaries and testes), hormones, and/or genitals. There are more than 40 different ways to be intersex. People may find out they are intersex at many different points including when they are born, during puberty, when trying to conceive a pregnancy, by random chance, and some people never find out. For more information about intersex, visit IHRA.

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**Legal gender marker**

The classification recorded when a child's birth is registered. In NSW, this is either M or F at birth and can later be amended to either M, F or X.

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**Misgendering**

Referring to someone by words or language that is not affirming for them, such as using a former name or pronoun, or making assumptions about their appearance.

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**Monogamy**

An umbrella term for people who have one romantic or sexual partner at a time.

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**Monosexual**

Sexual attraction to people of one gender only. This may be attraction to people of any gender, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

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**Natal / Neo (prefix)**

Natal and neo are prefixes used by some trans people to talk about the genitals of themselves and others. Natal means at birth, and neo means new. An example of use might be by talking about how neo-vaginas are similar and different from natal-vaginas.

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**Non-binary**

This is an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender etc.

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**Non-monogamy**

An umbrella term for people who are not monogamous (see above). Non-monogamy can take many forms, but generally includes people who are, have been, or plan to have romantic or sexual relationships with more than one person. Can include/cross over with polyamory (poly / polyam).

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**Pansexual**

Attracted to all genders.

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**Presumed at birth**

The gender one is presumed at birth is what the doctor says you are when they see you after being born. We use this term rather than "assigned at birth" or similar terms because those genders are a presumption made about everyone, even if many of those people grow up to have that gender fit them just fine.

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**Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria**

A term that originated on a number of blogs to describe children seemingly coming out suddenly and due to external influence. However, the term has no scientific basis, and has been thoroughly disproven. Read more here.

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**Receptive sex**

Sex acts where parts of someone else's body (hands, genitals, tongue) are being inserted into your body.

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**Sex characteristics**

Physical parts of the body that are related to body development/regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics emerge at puberty and can include the development of breast tissue, voice pitch, facial and pubic hair etc. The term ‘sex characteristics’ is more accurate than ‘biological sex’, ‘biologically male’ or ‘biologically female’. Physical organs and chromosomes should not be gendered as male or female, the gendering of body parts is a significant source of stigma, discrimination and pathologisation.

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**Sistergirl**

A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people that have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community. Including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds.

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**Tanner Stages**

A scale of sexual maturation used by doctors to describe stages in the development of secondary sex characteristics.

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**Trans and gender diverse**

These are inclusive umbrella terms that describe people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth.

Trans people may position ‘being trans’ as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person’s life.

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**Transsexual**

Definition from GLAAD: An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike trans, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many trans

people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word trans. It is best to ask which term a person prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

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