

# Language Guide for Learning about the Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD) Community

This guide is not an all-inclusive or exhaustive list of words used in TGD communities across the world or their definitions. TransMascSA acknowledges that definitions can rapidly evolve and/or change as well as may differ depending on numerous social, cultural, and demographic factors. It is also acknowledged that not every person who belongs to a community will agree on definitions which is totally ok. This document is intended as a guide only and is written with the best of intentions to hopefully improve communication and wellbeing for everyone.

**A trans** – This is grammatically incorrect. Trans is an adjective, not a noun. For example, to say a person is “a gay” is also grammatically incorrect.

**AFAB/AMAB** – This acronym stands for Assigned Female (or Male) At Birth. Whilst this is commonly seen in the community, it is becoming more appropriate to use the word ‘presumed’ out of respect for the Intersex community who face ongoing human rights challenges of medical practitioners assigning a sex of a child with ambiguous genitalia. Therefore *PFAB/PMAB* is a more inclusive use of language. For further reading regarding Intersex issues in Australia refer to the Intersex Human Rights Australia at [www.ihra.org.au](http://www.ihra.org.au).

**Binders** – A chest compression garment designed to flatten breast tissue in a safer way.

**Bottom Growth** – A side effect of testosterone that results in the clitoris permanently increasing in size when a person commences testosterone therapy as part of transition. Some people may refer to this organ as their clitoris, clit, t-dick, dick, penis, peen etc.

**Breastforms** – A prosthetic, typically made of silicone, worn by a person seeking to create or enhance the breast shape on their chest.

**‘Broken Arm Syndrome’** – A term coined to describe the experience felt by some trans folk when they present to health services for unrelated issues and the practitioner defaults to blaming their gender affirming treatments. This often results in unnecessary and invasive questions unrelated to the primary presentation purpose, or the presentation purpose being ignored/overlooked.

**Brother Boy** – See ‘Trans Man’.

**Chasers** – A person who seeks out and, often fetishizes, trans folk because of their trans experience.

**Cis/cisgender** – A term used to describe people who identify with the sex they were presumed at birth. ‘Cis’ is a prefix which means “to be on the same side as”.

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**Deadnaming** – Using the birth name of the individual despite knowing they are using a different name. This could be accidental or deliberate.

**Dysphoria / Euphoria** – A feeling of distress or discomfort that may stem from an internal unease related to gender or be reactionary due to other people’s perceptions. Euphoria is the opposite, a strong sense of elation or happiness relating to gender.

**Estrogen (‘E’)** - A feminising hormone that may be used by those presumed at male at birth as part of medical transition.

**Female-to-Male (FtM)** – An older, typically medicalised, term for a person presumed female at birth who now identifies as male. Some TGDNB persons feel uncomfortable with this term, and others may self-identify with it. It is best not to use it unless the individual is ok with.

**Gender Affirmation** – A broad term that can be social, legal or medical where a person is acknowledged, and celebrated, for being their authentic self.

**Gender Dysphoria** – Commonly used as a general descriptive term that refers to an individual's discontent or discomfort with the way their body feels and/or is perceived. It is more specifically defined when used as a diagnosis in psychological and psychiatric health as listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorder 5th edition.

**HeShe / Shim / SheMale** – Unfortunately commonly still used in pornography, these words are a portmanteau of “he”, “she” and “him” and are usually referring to trans women who have not had genital surgery. It is also used as a slur and should not be used in common language. Shim can also refer to when a person appears androgynous is also used as an insult.

**LadyBoy** – In western culture this word is often used as an insult or slur toward trans women. The word originated in the Philippines and is more commonly used in Thailand to describe a homosexual man who appears female but has not had any genital surgeries. In these regions this group is not necessarily seen as a negative and in some places is even celebrated.

**Lower/Bottom Surgery** – Gender affirming surgery of the genital reproductive organs. It is important to remember that surgery may not be accessible for many reasons, or wanted, and that surgery is not a requirement for a trans person to be valid (see ‘Truscum/Transmed).

**Male-to-female (MtF)** – An older, typically medicalised, term for a person presumed male at birth (PMAB) who now identifies as female. Some TGDNB persons feel uncomfortable with this term, and others may self-identify with it. It is best not to use it unless the individual is ok with.

**Men, women and non-binary people** – Note that this does not differentiate trans or cis men and women. Trans men are men, and trans women are women. Whilst this may be ok, try using more inclusive language such as “everyone/everybody”.

**Misgendering** – Using the wrong pronouns or treating a person as their assigned/presumed sex rather than the gender they identify with. This could be accidental or deliberate.

**Non-Binary or Enby (not NB – This refers to non-black and is related to race issues)** – Some people identify outside the gender binary of male or female, or as having no gender (agender). Sociology recognises that gender is a social construct which differs for many reasons such as class, geography, time period etc, and which can also be deconstructed or adapted by

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both individuals and collective community groups. It is also important to note that some non-binary folk may not identify as 'trans' and that this is also valid. Other language used may be gender non-conforming (GNC), gender diverse (GD). Some non-binary individuals use the term 'non-binary' as an umbrella term for anyone who does not identify with the gender binary.

**Outing** – An act of violence that could endanger a trans person. This is disclosing a person's transgender experience to someone else without consent. This may be accidental or deliberate.

**Packers** – A prosthetic, or self-constructed item, that projects the look of a penile bulge under clothing.

**'Passing'** - A word used to describe a person who is perceived by others as their expressed gender identity. Also infers that a person is not seen as transgender and is assumed to be cisgender.

**PFAB/PMAB** – This acronym stands for Presumed Female (or Male) At Birth. This is becoming a more appropriate revision of the previously used "Assigned..." (see AFAB/AMAB) out of respect for the Intersex community who face ongoing human rights challenges of medical practitioners assigning the sex of a child with ambiguous genitalia. Therefore *PFAB/PMAB* is a more inclusive use of language when referencing TGDNB folk who are not also part of the Intersex community. For further reading regarding Intersex issues in Australia refer to the Intersex Human Rights Australia at [www.ihra.org.au](http://www.ihra.org.au).

**Pre-op/post-op** – This language may be used for self-definition but may be interpreted if used by others as defining a person by their surgical status which is not ok.

**Puberty Blocker ('Blocker/s', Puberty Inhibitor)** – These are medications that prevent, or delay, the onset of pubertal development. They work by blocking the sex hormones — testosterone and estrogen — that lead to puberty-related changes in your body. This stops things such as menstruation and breast growth, or voice-deepening and facial hair growth. These medications are reversible and are colloquially referred to as a "puberty pause button".

**Sex Change** – An older clinical term often referring to genital surgery as part of gender transition. The term is incorrect and dated. Other language to use instead may include "bottom/lower surgery", "genital affirming surgery" etc.

**Sister Girl** – See 'Trans Woman'.

**Social, legal and medical** – The different ways a person may refer to their transition. One is no more valid than the other, and none of them are requirements to be trans. 'Social' refers to a person who discloses their gender identity to the people around them (this may be all, or some people). 'Legal' refers to when a person may change their name and/or gender marker on legal documents. 'Medical' refers to when a person may commence gender affirming hormone therapy and/or have a gender affirming surgical procedure.

**Stealth** – A person who is trans but does not want to be seen, or treated, as such for their own reasons. They also may not disclose their trans experience to others unless they feel it is needed.

**StP** – A "Stand to Pee" prosthetic that allows a person (typically PFAB) to urinate standing up as many cis men do.

**TERF (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism)** – A term coined to define those claiming to be feminists but who exclude trans women. A common argument used by this cohort is that trans women are men trying to access women's spaces and are not really women. Some will even place conditions on this based on medical/surgical status. In humour, some TGD folk have

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changed this to FART (Feminist Appropriating Reactionary Transphobe) inferring people who exclude trans women are not true feminists at all and are appropriating the definition of 'feminist'.

**Testosterone ('T')** – A masculinising hormone that may be used by those presumed at female at birth as part of medical transition.

**Top Surgery** – Referring to a person having a gender affirming surgical intervention to reduce dysphoria. For an PFAB person this may include removal of breast tissue, masculine contouring, and/ or realigning or removal of nipples. For PMAB persons this may include breast implants or augmentation. Not all TGDNB people will want or feel they need this, and it is not a requirement to be valid as a TGDNB person (see 'Truscum/Transmed').

**Trangenderism** – This is an older pathologized term that has been commonly used in the medical and academic community when describing being transgender as an illness.

**Tranny** – This is generally acknowledged as a slur. Some TGDNB folk may have reclaimed it for self-use but should not be used by others.

**Trans** - Trans is an adjective umbrella word. The definition of who falls under this umbrella will differ in different social and cultural groups. It can be summarised as a self-descriptor for a person who does not identify with the sex they were presumed as birth. Note that trans as written with the asterisk is generally unnecessary.

**Trans Fem/inine** – A person presumed male at birth (PMAB) who identifies as leaning more toward a feminine identity. This may include binary and non-binary persons.

**Trans Man** – A person presumed female at birth who identifies with the male gender and may present as masculine in appearance and behaviour. Note it is not written "transman" to indicate trans as the adjective just as it is incorrect write "asianman" or "tallwoman". Not all men who transition will identify as trans men. 'Trans' is an adjective which some may use to describe being 'a man of trans experience', or may not use the word trans at all in their identity and simply identify as a man; all of these are valid. Amongst First Nation's (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) communities, the word 'Brother Boy' may also be used with, or in place of, trans man.

**Trans Masc/uline** – A person presumed female at birth (PFAB) who identifies as leaning more toward a masculine identity. This may include binary and non-binary persons.

**Trans Woman** - A person presumed male at birth who identifies with the female gender and may present as feminine in appearance and behaviour. Note it is not written "transwoman" to indicate trans as the adjective just as it is incorrect write "asianman" or "tallwoman". Not all women who transition will identify as trans women. 'Trans' is an adjective which some may use to describe being 'a woman of trans experience', or may not use the word trans at all in their identity and simply identify as a woman; all of these are valid. Amongst First Nation's (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) communities, the word 'Sister Girl' may also be used with, or in place of, trans woman.

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**Trans, gender diverse, and non-binary (TGDNB)** – This is an example of inclusively acknowledging the diverse identities outside the cisgender spectrum.

**Transsexual/Transsexual** - An older word that was thought to be the difference between social and medical transition. This is incorrect. Some, generally older people, may still use it as a self-describing word. It is generally suggested not to use this word for a person unless they use it first.

**Transgendered** – This is grammatically incorrect. For example, it is incorrect to say a person is 'gayed' either.

**Transition** – A process, or processes, a person may take to address gender dysphoria and align their internalised self-identity with their body. (See also 'Social, legal and medical')

**Transvestite** – The practice of dressing in the clothing of a different gender that is not related to identity, also known as a cross-dresser. For some, this is for the purpose of sexual arousal or pleasure, for others it can be cultural or ceremonial. It is not typically linked to gender identity but for some may be an early sign of exploring gender identity and expression.

**Trap** – Appearing to have stemmed from anime, the word 'trap' was coined to refer to a trans woman engaging men who are unaware they are transgender and have a penis and therefore the man believing he has been tricked. This word has links to violence and is both homophobic and transphobic. It is also no longer used in reference toward trans woman only.

**Truscum/TransMed** – A person, trans or cis, who believes you must have dysphoria to be valid as a trans person. This person may also believe that you must need medical and/or surgical transition to be valid also and will attempt to delegitimise others who do not/cannot.

**Tucking** – A technique used to flatten the space between the legs. The opposite of "packing".

**Voice Training** – Exercises, usually set by a professional such as a vocal coach or speech pathologist, to help a person achieve their desired vocal pitch and tone.

As noted, this document is not intended to be an all-inclusive or exhaustive list of words used in the TGD community across the world or their definitions. This document is intended as a guide and is written with the best of intentions to hopefully support people in improving communication with, and for, TGDNB people.

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