

Glossary of Terms

Terms Related to Gender Identity

Gender (vs. sex)

A person’s self-identity ranging from male to female, regardless of their biological characteristics. Sex generally refers to biological characteristics that define men and women, such as women having breasts, men having a penis.

Gender Identity

The deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, or some other gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex the person was assigned at birth.

Gender Expression

The various ways that people present their gender to society, such as clothing, grooming, mannerisms, and speech patterns. Gender expression alone is not indicative of a person’s gender identity or sexual orientation.

Transgender

Having a gender identity that is different from one’s assigned sex at birth.

Gender dysphoria

A medical diagnosis for distress caused by the difference between one’s assigned sex at birth and their gender identity.

Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS)

A range of surgical procedures to make a person’s body more closely match their gender identity.

Gender transition

Process through which some transgender people begin to live as the gender with which they identify rather than the sex assigned at birth.

Gender Identity Categories Used in Death Investigations

Man, not Transgender

Assigned male sex at birth; identified as a man, or male, at time of death.

Woman, not Transgender

Assigned female sex at birth; identified as a woman, or female, at time of death.

Transgender Man

Assigned female sex at birth; identified as a man, or male, at time of death (related terms include trans man, female-to-male, FTM).

Transgender Woman

Assigned male sex at birth; identified as a woman, or female, at time of death (related terms include trans woman, male-to-female, MTF).

Transgender Other

Assigned male or female sex at birth; identified as a gender other than completely male or completely female at the time of death (related terms include genderqueer, non-binary, gender fluid).

Terms Related to Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation

A person’s sexual attraction to other people, usually defined by sexual behavior (or sexual attractions, if the person is not sexually active) and sexual identity as straight, lesbian or gay, or bisexual.

Sexual Orientation Categories Used in Death Investigations

Lesbian or Gay

Only same-sex sexual partners (or sexual attractions) in the 12 months before the death; identified as gay, lesbian or a related term.

Bisexual

Both same-sex and different-sex sexual partners (or sexual attractions) in the 12 months before the death; identified as bisexual or a related term.

Heterosexual

Only different-sex sexual partners (or sexual attractions) in the 12 months before the death; identified as heterosexual, straight or not gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Sexual Behavior Inconsistent with Identity

Identified one way but behaved in another in the 12 months before the death; for example, identified as heterosexual but had recent same-sex sexual partners.