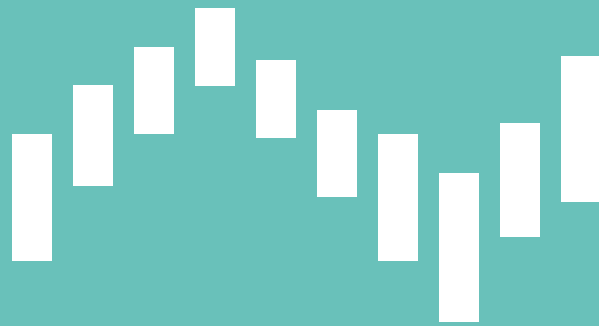


# DEFINITIONS



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## Useful Definitions

**Gender:** The internal felt sense of one's gender(s). Gender labels include woman, trans, man, genderqueer, and many others as described below.

**Gender expression:** The external display of one's gender through a combination of dress, demeanor, and social behavior, often measured on spectra of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

**Sex assigned at birth:** Assigning an infant as male, female, or intersex based on the appearance of external genitalia at birth. In our colonial cultural context, the gender of a person (i.e. "boy" or "girl", "man" or "woman") and the associated behaviours and expectations for those genders is often assumed and socially enforced based on our perception of their sex assigned at birth.

**Cis or cisgender:** A person whose gender and sex assigned at birth align according to dominant social narratives. Someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man could use the term "cis man", "cisgender man", or "man" to describe themselves. Someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman could use the term "cis woman", "cisgender woman", or "woman" to describe themselves. "Cis" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side of" and is useful in naming one's position of power and privilege.

**Trans or transgender:** A person whose gender and sex assigned at birth do not align according to dominant social narratives. Someone who is assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman/feminine-of-centre may use the terms "trans woman", "transgender woman", "transfeminine", "MtF", "woman", or other options to describe themselves. Someone who is assigned female at birth and identifies as man/masculine-of-centre may use the terms "trans man", "transgender man", "transmasculine", "FtM", "man", or other options to describe themselves. Trans people may also identify outside of the gender binary. "Trans" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the 'opposite' side of", "between", or "beyond."

**Gender diverse:** A person whose gender and/or expression, whether by nature or by choice, does not align with the gender-based expectations for their sex assigned at birth. A gender diverse person may use the words non-binary, gender variant, gender non-conforming, gender creative, genderqueer, agender, multigender, pangender, trans, demigender, or other self-determined terms to describe their gender(s).



**Two-spirit\*:** Pre-contact, many Indigenous communities acknowledged more than two genders and had terms in their own languages to describe these identities and experiences. Through the residential school system, colonialism violently erased these roles and the language that described them by enforcing a Western European patriarchal gender binary. Today the term “Two-spirit” or “Two-spirited”, which describes the presence of both a masculine and feminine spirit in one person, is used by some Indigenous people to identify their queer sexual orientation, transgender/non-binary identity, and/or intersex status. The term “Two-Spirit” allows the Indigenous person to speak to their experience in the context of their cultural identity, and to resist the colonial definitions of gender and sexuality.

\*Adapted from The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity:

<http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/1-who-are-two-spirit-people/>

**Sexual orientation:** the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Examples of descriptors for sexual orientations include “queer,” “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “heterosexual” or “straight,” “asexual,” “demisexual,” and “pansexual,” among others.

**LGBT2SQIA+:** an abbreviation that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, two-spirit, queer, intersex, agender/asexual community. The + symbol acknowledges that there are many more genders, sexes, and orientations beyond those captured in the acronym.

**Transition:** Some individuals will seek some form(s) of medical treatment such as counseling, hormone therapy, electrolysis, and gender-affirming surgery/ies that enable the person’s body to be more congruent and in harmony with their felt sense of self, or for social safety reasons, among others. Transition may also include changes in presentation, pronouns, name, and gender markers. Trans identities and experiences are valid and complete regardless of what steps (if any) are taken to ‘transition.’