Examples of Good Usage

"David is a transgender man. He has never felt like a woman."

"Paula is a trans woman. She lives in Dublin."

"Padraig identifies as male. He will live full time as a man once he finishes school."

"Laura identifies as female. She is concerned she won't be allowed to play camogie with the other women."

"Sam identifies as genderqueer. They use gender-neutral pronouns."

"As a child, Lucy displayed gender variance."

"Caoimhe transitioned from male to female. She has a loving relationship with her children."

"Sean transitioned from female to male. He also identifies as gay."

"Transgender people face discrimination in Irish society."

Derogatory or Offensive Language

The following terms (context specifics in parentheses) are generally considered to be offensive to trans people.

- **Sex change**
- **Sex swap**
- **Tranny**
- **Transgenders**
- **Pre-op**
- **Post-op**
- **Shemale**
- **HeShe**
- **Transsexual** (when used as a noun, e.g., 'a transsexual')
- **Transgender** (when used as a noun, e.g., 'a transgender')
- **Gender-bender** (specifically when used in relation to a transitioning person as opposed to an individual who plays with their gender presentation)
- **Hermaphrodite** (this term is widely held to be offensive – the term now in use is 'intersex people')
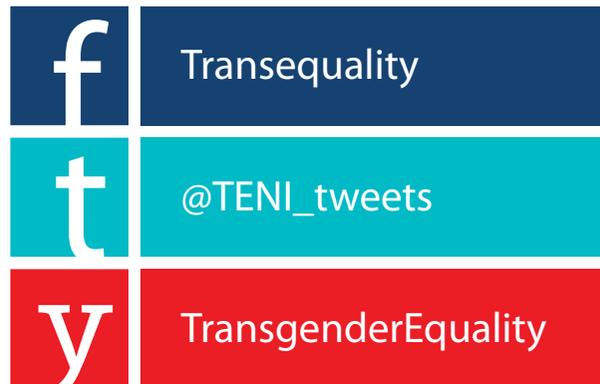
Inaccurate Usage

- ✕ Transgendered – not a synonym for transgender (similar to 'woman-ed' or 'Catholic-ed')
- ✕ Transsexuality – the correct medical term, where appropriate, is 'transsexualism'
- ✕ Gender identity confusion
- ✕ Born a man
- ✕ Born a woman
- ✕ Trapped in the wrong body (Some trans people find this phrase apt, many others feel it over-simplifies a more nuanced experience
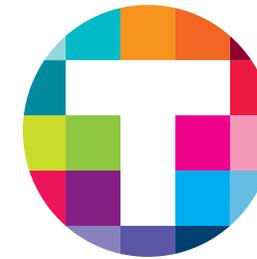
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y TransgenderEquality

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Transgender Equality Network Ireland

Media Style Guidelines

Stories involving transgender people are often sensationalised and contribute to negative stereotypes about the trans community. You can help make positive change by using language that is respectful and that protects the privacy and dignity of trans people.

The aim of these guidelines is to encourage respectful – not sensational – reporting on trans people and communities. Another aim is to help journalists feel comfortable when reporting on stories involving trans people.

Here you'll find:

- 6 Simple Guidelines
- A Note on Language (including glossary)
- Examples of Good Usage
- Derogatory or Offensive Language
- Inaccurate Usage

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6 Simple Guidelines

Below are some tips on reporting on trans people, with a focus on respecting privacy. Please be aware that revealing a person's trans status can compromise their personal safety and affect their mental health.

1 Respect the individual's wishes around their portrayal in the media (e.g. pronouns, names, etc.).

2 Refer to someone's trans identity only when it is relevant to the story.

3 Allow a trans person's medical history, anatomical makeup or genitals to remain confidential. These details are most likely not relevant to the story.

4 Leave history in the past. Reference somebody's previous name only if it is relevant to the story and if they have given their permission.

5 Take extreme care in dealing with subjects involving trans or gender variant children. Like all young people, they need to be protected and are a particularly vulnerable minority group.

6 Remember that sexual orientation and gender identity are separate characteristics. Trans people can be gay, straight, bisexual or asexual.

A Note On Language

Remember that gender and sex are distinct.

Sex generally refers to biological characteristics (e.g., genitals, hormonal makeup, internal sex organs).

Gender generally refers to a person's deeply felt identification as male, female or another gender. An individual's gender identity may or may not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Language surrounding trans issues is often complicated and focused on unnecessary private

medical detail. We suggest that, except in a piece reporting specifically on medical procedures for trans people, for example, or where an individual specifically wishes to elaborate on their gender identity, you use the terminology below.

Transgender or Trans (adj) describes an individual whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans* (with the asterisk) is a new term that is gaining currency and encompasses the diversity of experiences within trans communities.

Transition refers to the process of changing gender presentation. Transition may involve social, legal, medical and/or surgical changes (not necessarily all of the above).

Using the term 'transition' respects the privacy of medical detail. Refer to a person's gender (through pronouns and terms like 'woman' or 'man') rather than their medical or surgical status.

Gender variance refers to all variation from expected gender norms. This term acknowledges that many experience their gender in a way that does not fall within society's expectations of being a man or a woman.

Terms also in use within the trans and/or medical community

Other terms in use among the trans and medical communities are below. Please use them with care, and remember to prioritise the wishes of the individual being described.

Genderqueer or genderfluid (adj): describes a person who does not identify with the male/female binary but somewhere outside or between. Some genderqueer people use neutral pronouns like 'they' and 'them'.

Transsexual (noun or adj): describes a person whose gender identity is the opposite of the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g. male to female transsexual). It is often associated with those who are undergoing a medical transition. However, not all those who identify as transsexual undergo medical therapy.

Gender affirmation (or confirmation) surgery: any surgeries which may be part of transition. As with all medical therapy, these surgeries are a private matter between an individual and their doctor and should never be referred to without permission.

Transvestite (sometimes crossdresser) (noun): a person who wears the clothing of the gender opposite to the one they were assigned at birth, but does not usually wish to live permanently as that gender.

Drag queen/king: a person who performs for audiences as a gender that differs from their presentation in everyday life.

Intersex (adj): refers to a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive, chromosomal or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male. While some intersex people identify as trans, many don't. However, we include this term here to remind writers not to conflate intersex conditions with trans identities.

If you don't know how to refer to somebody, ask them. If you can't ask, use pronouns and gendered descriptors which most closely match their presentation. You may also be able to seek out accurate information from friends or their personal website if they are a public figure.

Cisgender is a term used to describe non-trans people. From the Latin 'on this side of', it is used in the same way as heterosexual is to mean non-homosexual.