

Term	Definition
Assigned sex at birth, AMAB, AFAB	Referring to a person's initial designation as male ("assigned male at birth" – AMAB) or female ("assigned female at birth" – AFAB) at birth, this label is based on the child's genitalia and other visible physical sex characteristics
Cisgender	Individuals whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth
Gender-affirming care	Care provided to an individual to support their gender identity; this care may be medical, surgical, social, and/or psychological
Gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT)	Hormones prescribed to induce the development of secondary sex characteristics associated with an individual's experienced gender: testosterone for those who seek masculine features, and 17 β -estradiol for those seeking feminine features
Gender-affirming surgeries	Also called 'transition-related surgeries' or 'gender-confirming surgeries', this term refers to a range of surgical options that individuals may pursue as a component of transitioning
Gender-diverse	A broad term used to describe people with gender expressions or identities that are different from their assigned sex at birth. The term acknowledges and includes the vast diversity of existing gender identities. It replaces terms such as gender-nonconforming, gender-incongruent, and gender-variant, all of which have pathologizing or exclusionary connotations. Not all transgender individuals identify with this term
Gender dysphoria	Refers to the distress that can arise from the incongruence between an individual's experienced gender and their sex assigned at birth. Gender dysphoria is a formal diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)
Gender expression	The way a person portrays gender to others through external means, such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms; this may or may not reflect gender identity
Gender identity	Also called 'experienced' or 'affirmed' gender, this is an individual's internal, psychological sense of their own gender
Gender incongruence	Refers to a person's marked and persistent experience of an incompatibility between their gender identity and the gender expected of them based on their sex assigned at birth. Gender incongruence is a diagnostic term used in the International Classification of Diseases Eleventh Revision (ICD-11). Use of this term should be limited to diagnostic contexts.

Key terms relevant to gender-affirming care

Gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonist (GnRHa)	A long-acting pharmacological analogue of naturally produced gonadotropin-releasing hormone that is prescribed to inhibit production of pituitary gonadotropins (LH and FSH), thereby inhibiting gonadal production of sex steroids (i.e., testosterone or estrogen)
Medical transition	The process of undergoing medical treatment to align one's physical experiences with one's gender identity (e.g., by using hormone blockers or gender-affirming hormones)
Non-binary	A gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female
Social transition	The process of expressing one's gender identity outwardly to others through such actions as changing name, pronouns, and/or gender expression (e.g., clothing, hair style)
Transgender	An umbrella term used to describe all individuals with a gender identity that differs from their sex assigned at birth and physical sex characteristics. Not all gender-diverse individuals identify with this term
Transgender female, transfeminine, trans girl, trans female, formerly 'MTF'	These terms describe an individual assigned male at birth but who identifies along the feminine spectrum
Transgender male, transmasculine, trans boy, trans male, formerly 'FTM'	These terms describe an individual assigned female at birth but who identifies along the masculine spectrum
Two-Spirit	Referring to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit, this term is used by some Indigenous communities and can encompass cultural, spiritual, sexual and/or gender identity

**Note that terminology is sure to evolve with time.*

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Source: An affirming approach to caring for transgender and gender-diverse youth, Adolescent Health Committee, June 2023. Available at www.cps.ca