

## Glossary (adapted from Arrigotti et al., 2023).

A note: while it is usually best to avoid recursive definitions (i.e., definitions which include the word which is being defined), many identity terms cannot be defined otherwise. For example, a woman is a person who identifies as a woman.

### A. Terms used in SOGI data collection instrument

**Asexual:** A sexual identity describing a spectrum of experiences characterized by infrequent or no sexual attraction to others. Related terms include gray-asexual (rare sexual attraction) and demisexual (attraction only after an emotional bond has formed).

**Agender:** A gender identity which describes a person who does not identify as having a gender.

**Bisexual:** A sexual identity which describes a person who is attracted to people of multiple genders.

**Cisgender:** A gender modality in which a person's gender identity is aligned with the gender assigned to them at birth.

**Gay:** A sexual identity which describes a person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender—sometimes used specifically to refer to men who are primarily attracted to men

**Gender identity:** A person's internal or innate understanding of their own gender, often expressed through labels such as woman, man, nonbinary, agender, etc.

**Gender modality:** Describes an axis of experience with 'transgender' and 'cisgender' at either end, with 'questioning' being a middle option (Ashley, 2022). We use the word 'transgender' to describe the rejection of or expansion beyond one's gender assigned at birth, with 'cisgender' being the complementary notion of a sense of self in conformity with one's gender assigned at birth.

**Lesbian:** A sexual identity which describes women who are primarily attracted to women.

**Nonbinary (gender identity), also non-binary, non binary, EnBy, enby:** Some individuals identify neither as an exclusively feminine gender (e.g., woman, young woman, girl), nor as an exclusively masculine gender (e.g., man, young man, boy). For example, some specifically identify as a particular third gender (e.g., 'Two-Spirit', 'critter', 'unicorn', many others); some identify as agender (not all agender people identify as nonbinary); some identify as a non-specified third gender; some identify as multiple genders (e.g., 'woman and man', gender fluid) at the same time, or at different times or in different contexts.

**Pansexual:** A sexual identity which describes a person whose experience of attraction is not dependent upon gender. Where "bisexual" might be used to mean attraction to people of more than one gender, "pansexual" might be used to mean attraction to people of ALL genders.

**Queer:** A broad term used to describe people whose sex, sexual orientation, or gender are outside of normative (i.e., binary male/female sex, straight, cisgender) expectations. Historically, queer has been used as a derogative term, but has been reclaimed by many as a term of pride. For this reason, it may still be uncomfortable to hear for many people.

**Questioning (gender identity):** A gender identity that describes a person's state of exploring, developing, or changing gender identity.

**Questioning (gender modality):** A gender modality that describes a person's exploring, developing, or changing relationship between their gender identity and the gender assigned to them at birth.

**Questioning (sexual orientation):** A sexual identity that describes a person's exploring, developing, or changing sexual orientation.

**Same-gender loving\*:** A sexual identity describing attraction to people of the same gender.

**Same-sex loving\*:** A sexual identity describing attraction to people of the same sex.

\*For more on Same-gender and same-sex loving, see [What is Same Gender Loving, 2013](#)

**Sexual identity (or sexual orientation):** A person's internal or innate understanding of their own sexuality, often expressed through labels such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, straight, etc.

**Sex (anatomical):** The categorization of a vast diversity of people's bodies and their arrangements of primary (e.g., reproductive organs, genitals, chromosomes) and secondary (e.g., body or facial hair, body shape, musculature) sex characteristics. Often collapsed into two or sometimes three categories (female, male, intersex).

**Straight (or heterosexual):** A sexual identity describing a person who is primarily attracted to people with different genders than their own. Most commonly referring to cisgender men or women who are attracted to cisgender women or men, respectively.

**Transgender:** A gender modality in which a person's gender identity rejects or expands beyond the gender assigned to them at birth. This definition centers experiences of transition in gender identity or expression of gender identity, and contrasts with a definition of transgender as a 'conflict' between a current gender and presumed-binary sex assigned at birth.

## **B. Other useful terms**

When collecting SOGI data, you may find it helpful to understand experiences or terms related to SOGI that are not directly represented in OHA's SOGI demographic data recommendations. This is not an exhaustive list.

**Aromantic:** A romantic orientation describing a spectrum of experiences characterized by infrequent or no romantic attraction to others.

**Deadnaming:** Using a name that a person has previously used to identify themselves but no longer uses (i.e., their "deadname"), especially when the name change is the result of a change in a person's outward-facing gender identity or expression. Deadnaming is harmful.

**Demi-boy and Demi-girl:** A meta category of gender identities used to describe that the gender categories 'boy' or 'girl' partially fit the person's identity. For example, an individual who is a demiboy may identify as part boy (or part masculine identity) and part agender. Individuals may

identify as demi-boys or demi-girls regardless of their sex or gender assigned at birth. Some people may use the term to indicate a transitional phase of identity development which is more focused than the ‘questioning/exploring’ category.

**Detransition:** See “Retransition”.

**Gender assigned at birth:** The presumed gender assigned by parents/caregivers, community, and society, typically but not always assigned on the basis of anatomical sex.

**Gender affirming care:** Medical (including psychological) care which helps affirm a person’s gender identity. This can involve counseling, hormones, and surgeries, among other treatments. People of all gender identities or modalities may seek gender affirming care, though it is most frequently associated with transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

**Gender expansive parenting:** A style of parenting that is open to and/or supportive of the idea of gender nonconformity emerging in their children. In addition, some parents do not assign binary genders to their children at birth, instead choosing to assign agender/not assigning gender and/or assigning nonbinary gender.

**Gender minority/majority:** A categorization of gender identities and modalities that identifies whether or not a person’s gender identity conforms to socially prescribed and privileged concepts of gender (these privileged concepts being primarily “cisgender man” and “cisgender woman” in Oregon).

**Inclusive practice/inclusion:** Welcoming all people and making explicit space for the full diversity of a population.

**Misgendering:** Referring to a person as a different gender than the one they identify as, or using incorrect pronouns to refer to a person, especially when aware of the person’s gender identity. “Misgendering a trans person is an act of violence” (Laverne Cox @LaverneCox, 2018)

**Polyamorous, also poly:** A sexual identity and/or behavior category used to describe individuals who have or are open to having multiple sexual and/or romantic relationships at the same time. Polyamory is a form of ethical, consensual non-monogamy. Polyamorous is not a synonym for ‘polygamous’ which refers to a single (presumably cisgender male) person simultaneously married to more than one (presumably cisgender female) person.

**Retransition, also detransition or de-transition:** Some gender minority experiences are characterized by a typically long period identifying as a gender different than the gender assigned at birth, including with outward expression of the different gender, and then shifting away from this second gender. This can happen because someone grows into accord with the gender they were assigned at birth (e.g., detransition back to gender assigned at birth). This can also happen because someone grows into still a third gender (e.g., detransition to a nonbinary gender identity and/or expression). Anti-transgender and anti-gender minority individuals sometimes try to use detransition in arguments against affirming care, and against the legitimacy of a detransitioning or detransitioned person’s history with gender.

**Romantic Orientation:** Describes a person’s experience of romantic attraction, which can be different from or similar to a person’s sexual orientation. Often, but not always, based upon a person’s gender or sex.

**Sex assigned at birth:** A static categorization of a person's reproductive biology into a limited number of stereotyped categories (male/female, occasionally intersex), typically based on visible features of reproductive anatomy present at or shortly after birth.

**Sex minority/majority:** A categorization of people's physiologic sex that identifies whether or not a person's body conforms to the normative stereotyped categories of reproductive physiology and anatomy (i.e., how well a person's body fits into the prescribed categories of "male" and "female"). There are many ways to have a body that does not conform to stereotyped sex categories, some examples include, intersex conditions, gender affirming therapy or surgery, injury or surgical intervention (e.g., hysterectomy, mastectomy, orchiectomy to treat cancers), etc.

**Sexual minority/majority:** A categorization of people's sexual identities that identifies whether or not a person's sexual orientation conforms to socially prescribed and privileged concepts of sexuality (cis-normative heterosexual monogamous).

**SOGI:** Stands for "sexual orientation and gender identity," Can also be used to reference anatomical sex and other aspects of sexuality (e.g., sexual behavior) and gender (e.g., gender modality, gender expression).

**SSGM:** Sex, sexual, and gender minority. Each of the aspects of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender modality involve privileged positions. The term "minority" indicates people occupying non-privileged positions (e.g., intersex people, asexual people, nonbinary people, transgender people).

### References

- Ashley, F. (2022). 'Trans' is my gender modality: A modest terminological proposal. In *Trans bodies, trans selves* 2nd ed. (p. 22). Oxford University Press.
- Arrigotti, M., Carpenter, N., Chase, K., Cox, A., Jeffries, I., & Dinno, A. (2023). *Final (Year 2) Report to OHA on SOGI Demographic Standards for Minors*.  
[https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/sph\\_facpub/528/](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/sph_facpub/528/)
- Laverne Cox @LaverneCox. (2018, August 13). *Many years ago when...* [Tweet]. Twitter.  
<https://twitter.com/Lavernecox/status/1029033594994360323>
- What is Same Gender Loving?* (2013).  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20131015005535/http://bmxnational.org/faqs/what-is-same-gender-loving/>