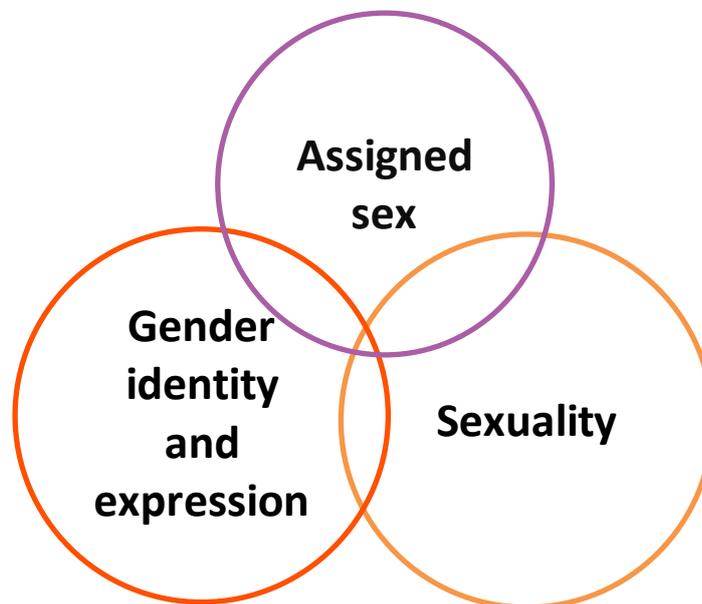


Key concepts

Assigned sex at birth, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation are words that are often used interchangeably. It is important to understand that these concepts are interrelated but they are not the same.



Sex Assigned at Birth

At birth, a person is usually assigned and classified with either male or female as their sex. This classification is based on physical, hormonal and chromosomal characteristics. A person's sex assigned at birth is considered their "legal sex" because it is reflected on legal documents such as birth certificates. However, some people may not fit easily into these two classifications due to natural variations in their sex characteristics. The umbrella term for this is intersex.

Key Terminology

Intersex: Intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics that don't fit medical norms for female or male bodies. We have many different kinds of bodies and life experiences.ⁱ

Gender Identity and Expression

Gender refers to socially created categories assigned to us on the basis of our assigned sex at birth. While some cultures recognise multiple genders, gender norms within any given culture define gender roles and how people are expected to dress, act, and behave. When gendered norms and expectations are rejected there can be violent repercussions for individuals or community groups.

Many people do not fit into narrowly defined and rigid gender norms. Some women may feel masculine, some men may feel feminine. Some people may not feel either feminine or masculine. Some people may not connect with any concept of gender.

Gender expectations, identity and expressions vary greatly across cultures. Many cultures include unique spaces for trans and gender diverse people. Understandings of gender are unique to a person's own specific cultural lens.

Key Terminology

Agender: someone who does not have a gender. Other terms may also include genderless or neutrois.

Brotherboys: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gender diverse men (assigned female at birth). Brotherboys have a male spirit and a distinct cultural identity. Brotherboy's cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs are pivotal to their lives and identities.

Cisgender: when a person's gender does align with sex assigned at birth.

Gender diverse is an umbrella term. It reflects gender identities and expressions that do not conform with gender norms or expectations.

Gender identity: a person's individual and strongly held sense of a/gender. A person's gender identity may or may not align to their assigned sex at birth. Gender expression is the outward signs of how people express and relate their gender to the world around them.

Non-binary: an umbrella term or an individual identity for people whose gender exists outside of the gender binary.

Sistergirls: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gender diverse women (assigned male at birth) who have a distinct cultural identity and often take on women's roles within the community, including looking after children and family. Sistergirls cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs are pivotal to their lives and identities.

Trans or transgender: are umbrella terms for people whose gender does not align with their assigned sex at birth.

Sexual Orientation

Relates to people's sexual identity, who they are attracted to, and what behaviour or experiences they may or may not have with others. It is important to note that a person's identity, behaviour and attraction do not have to align.

Within sexual diversity there are many different identities. The most commonly known identities are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual and heterosexual.

Key Terminology

Asexual: people who experience little or no sexual attraction. Asexual people may experience other forms of attraction but may not need to express that attraction sexually.

Bisexual: people who experience sexual and/or romantic attraction to more than one gender.

Gay: people who primarily experience romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of the same gender.

Heterosexual: a person who is sexually attracted to people of a gender other than their own, most commonly sexual attraction between men and women.

Lesbian: women who experience romantic and/or sexual, to other women.

Pansexual: an orientation for which gender is not a boundary to attraction. Pansexual people can experience sexual attraction to a person of any or no gender.

Queer: an umbrella term or individual identity for non-normative sexualities, gender identities/expressions and/or bodies.

Whilst it is easy to find definitions of these words, they can mean different things to different people. Someone who identifies as heterosexual might have sex with people of the same gender.

Visit www.true.org.au or contact info@true.org.au for further information.

** LGBTIQ+ is often viewed as a single category which can be spoken about in broad generalisations, however, it is vital to understand that within 'LGBTIQ+' there are several distinct, sometimes overlapping, demographics each with their own histories, experiences, social, education and health needs. Not all identities may be captured in these definitions and that sexual and gender identities can change throughout the lifetime of a person and across cultures. In addition, some languages and cultures may have their own language or no language for many of these identities.*

References

i. Intersex Human RightsAustralia, 2018.