

Glossary of SOGI Terms

(Adapted from Arrigotti et al, 2023).

A few notes:

1. This document defines terms used in Oregon’s SOGI data collection guidelines and provides definitions of terms that people collecting or providing SOGI data may find useful to understand. These definitions represent our *current* understanding of how people in Oregon communicate about their experiences and the experiences of others. Identity and language are both social and individual, so these definitions may be different than ones you have encountered or from how you use these terms. Similarly, language evolves over time, so these definitions may not correspond with how they are used in the future.
2. While it is usually best to avoid recursive definitions (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 guidelines

Asexual Spectrum: “Asexual” describes 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/No Gender: “Agender” describes a person who does not identify as having a gender or with any gender in particular. Agender is also known as “neutrois”, “gender neutral”, or “genderless.”

Bigender: A gender identity which describes a person who has two or more gender identities.

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

Boy or Man: A gender identity which describes a person who identifies as a boy or a man.

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

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Demiboy: A gender identity in which the label “boy or man” may describe some but not all parts of a person’s experience of gender.

Demigirl: A gender identity in which the labels “girl or woman” may describe some but not all parts of a person’s experience of gender.

Female: While “female” is sometimes used to mean “girl or woman”, Oregon’s guidelines use “female” only to describe a person’s sex versus their gender. “Female” describes primary sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, genitalia, or hormones) and secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts, hair, or Adam’s apple). Sex characteristics are not binary and not all of a person’s sex characteristics must be female for their body to be described as such.

Gay: A sexual identity which describes a person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender—often used specifically to refer to men who are primarily attracted to people who identify as men or male.

Genderfluid: A gender identity which describes a person whose gender is not fixed or static, i.e., it changes over time or changes frequently.

Genderqueer: “Genderqueer” describes a person whose gender identity falls between or outside of the man/woman binary. It can also refer to someone who recognizes that gender is a social construct, and their gender identity is to push back on the norms created by that construct.

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’ describing a sense of self that conforms with one’s gender assigned at birth.

Genderqueer: A gender identity of which describes a person who does not identify as either a man or a woman. Some genderqueer people describe their identity as being situated outside of the man-woman or masculine-feminine continuum.

Girl or Woman: A gender identity which describes a person who identifies as a girl or a woman.

Intersex: “Intersex” describes a person whose primary sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, genitalia, or hormones) and/or secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts, hair, or Adam’s apple) do not neatly fit into the categories of “male” or “female”. These conditions are present at birth whether the parents or

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doctor realize it. Intersex people may not have “intersex” listed on their birth certificate or other documents and may not be aware of their intersex status.

Lesbian: A sexual identity which describes women who are primarily attracted to people who identify as women or female.

Male: While “male” is sometimes used to mean “boy or man”, Oregon’s guidelines use “male” only to describe a person’s sex versus their gender. “Male” describes primary sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, genitalia, or hormones) and secondary sex characteristics (e.g., breasts, hair, or Adam’s apple). Sex characteristics are not binary and not all of a person’s sex characteristics must be male for their body to be described as such.

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. Nonbinary is often seen as an umbrella term which can encompass other identities such as genderqueer and genderfluid.

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, gender, or relationship dynamics are outside of normative (i.e., binary male/female sex, straight, cisgender, monogamous) 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/exploring (gender identity): A gender identity that describes a persons’ state of exploring, developing, or changing gender identity.

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

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Same-gender loving: A sexual identity describing attraction to people of the same gender. For more on same-gender 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, musculature) sex characteristics. Often collapsed into two or 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.

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 gender identity which describes a person for whom the gender categories ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ partially, but not completely, 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.

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.

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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 describes 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 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 alignment with the gender they were assigned at birth (e.g., retransition back to gender assigned at birth). This can also happen because someone grows into a third gender (e.g., retransition to a nonbinary gender identity and/or expression).

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 categorization of a person’s reproductive biology into two or three categories (male, female, intersex), typically based on visible features of reproductive anatomy present at or shortly after birth.

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Sex minority/majority: A categorization of people’s anatomical sex that describes whether or not a person’s body fits into the 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, and injury or surgical intervention (e.g., hysterectomy, mastectomy, orchiectomy to treat cancers).

Sexual minority/majority: A categorization of people’s sexual identities that describes whether or not a person’s sexual orientation conforms to privileged or normative concepts of sexuality (i.e., 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

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