**Definitions Relating to Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Identities**

The evolution of terminology related to t**ransgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC)** people has been especially rapid in the last decade and is constantly evolving. The awareness of gender identity has increased as the voice of TGNC people has strengthened. Two cautions: 1) Some terms or definitions are not universally accepted, and there is some disagreement as to the correct word or definition. 2) Terminology varies across culture, generation, and geographic region. Some common concepts are seen as affirming and others are seen as outdated or demeaning.

**Assigned Sex at Birth**: The sex recorded on a person’s birth certificate, generally derived from an inspection of external genitalia. Assigned sex is not synonymous with a person’s gender identity and may be incongruent with other biological markers of sex, such as chromosomes and internal reproductive structures.

**Cisgender:** Describes a person whose gender identity and gender expression align with their assigned sex; a non-TGNC person.

**Cross Dressing:** Wearing clothing, jewelry, and/or make-up and/or adopting a gender role not associated with a person’s assigned sex. Cross-dressing is not always reflective of gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Drag:** The act of dressing in gendered clothing, often as part of a performance. Drag kings express gender in a range of men’s gender roles and drag queens in a range of women’s gender roles. Drag may be enacted as a political comment on gender, as parody, or as entertainment and is not necessarily reflective of gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Female-to-Male (FTM):** Individuals who are assigned female at birth and wish to change, are changing, or have changed their body and/or gender role to a more masculine body or gender role. FTM persons are also often referred to as **transgender men or transmen**.

**Gender Binary:** The classification of gender into two dichotomous, fixed categories of male/man/boy and female/woman/girl.

**Gender Dysphoria:** A diagnosis of the American Psychiatric Association characterized by “a marked incongruence between” a person’s assigned sex and gender identity.

**Gender Expression:** An individual’s presentation, including physical appearance, clothing choice and behavior that communicates aspects of gender or gender role. Gender expression may or may not conform to a person’s gender identity.

**Gender Identity:** A person’s deeply-felt, inherent sense of being a man; a woman; or an alternative gender (e.g. genderqueer, gender non-conforming) which may or may not correspond to a person’s primary or secondary sex characteristics or assigned sex. Since gender identity is internal, a person’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** An adjective and umbrella term to describe individuals whose gender expression, gender identity, and/or gender role differs from gender norms related to their assigned sex.

**Gender Questioning:** An adjective to describe individuals who may be questioning or exploring their gender identity and who may suspect that their gender identity does not fully align with their assigned sex.

**Genderqueer:** A term to describe a person whose gender identity and/or gender role does not align with a binary understanding of gender (i.e., a person who does not fully identify as a man or a woman). Genderqueer people may redefine gender or decline to define themselves as gendered altogether. For example, they may think of themselves as both man and woman (bigender, pangender, androgyne); neither man nor woman (genderless, gender neutral, neutrois, agender), moving between genders (genderfluid); embodying a third gender; or having a unique gender construction.

**Intersex:** Intersex refers to individuals born with variations in sex chromosomes, gonads, or genitalia that do not conform to traditional norms. A person may have elements of both male and female anatomy or have anatomy that is inconsistent with chromosomal sex (e.g., Klinefelter or Turner Syndrome). Some may not become aware of having intersex conditions until the development of secondary sex characteristics during puberty. Intersex conditions may be considered as natural variations in biological diversity; therefore, some prefer the terms intersex or intersexuality rather than disorders of sexual development.

**Male-to-Female (MTF):** Individuals assigned male at birth who wish to change, are changing or have changed their body and/or gender role to a more feminized body or gender role. MTF persons are also often referred to as **transgender women or transwomen**.

**Sexual Orientation:** A component of identity that includes a person’s sexual, romantic, and emotional attraction to another person and the behavior that may result from this attraction. An individual’s sexual orientation may be lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, or asexual. A person may be attracted to people who are men, women, both, neither, genderqueer, androgynous or have other gender identities. Sexual orientation is distinct from sex, gender identity, gender role, or gender expression.

**Trans:** A common abbreviation for the terms transgender and/or gender nonconforming. While the term “trans” is commonly accepted, not all transgender or gender nonconforming people identify as trans.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender role do not conform to what is typically associated with their assigned sex. While the term “transgender” is commonly accepted, not all TGNC people identify as transgender.

**Transgender Man, Trans Man or Transman:** An individual who was assigned female at birth but whose gender is male. (see FTM).

**Transgender Woman, Trans Woman or Transwoman:** An individual who was assigned male at birth but whose gender is female (see MTF).

**Transition:** A process some TGNC individual’s progress through when they change to a gender role that differs from the one associated with their assigned sex. The length, scope, and process of an individual’s transition are unique to their life. A transition typically occurs over a period of time, and may involve disclosing their TGNC identity to members of their family, friends, co-workers, and other social networks. TGNC people may proceed through a medical (e.g., hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgery, and/or other interventions) and/or social transition (e.g., name changes, gender marker change, and/or changes in one’s attire).

**Transprejudice (Transnegativity, Transphobia):** Prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that result in the devaluing, dislike, hatred or attack of people whose gender identity and/or gender expression do not conform to what is traditionally associated with their sex assigned at birth. Anyone may experience transprejudice. When a TGNC person holds these negative attitudes about themselves and their gender identity, it is termed internalized transphobia.

**Transsexual:** A term still used by some trans people, but which is generally considered dated and even offensive. Some individuals distinguish between transsexual and transgender, with “transsexual” denoting a strong, unambiguous identification with the other gender, and “transgender” denoting a gender *variant* identity that does not have a strong identification with the other gender.

**Transvestite:** An older term for someone who wears clothing, jewelry and/or make-up and/or adopts a gender role expression not traditionally associated with a person’s assigned sex. The term is now considered pejorative by many, and “cross dresser” is generally preferred instead.

--*New Ways Ministry*