

LEXICON

The Consortium on Female Sport

Language is how we communicate with one another. With this lexicon we establish a basis for clear communication by providing words and setting definitions that will allow women to clearly articulate the objective reality of our physical bodies, so that sex-based discrimination cannot be ignored or obfuscated, whether this is done purposefully or inadvertently. We will also alert the user to words embedded in some sports policies that we choose to avoid, because they serve to undermine the rights of women and girls to be accurately represented in our fight against sex based discrimination in sport. Accurate words and language are necessary in order for women and girls to be able to articulate their biology and the impacts of sex in sport and in life. This language, like the biology of sex, is not hateful or hurtful. It is a necessary acknowledgment of reality and must take precedence over language of personal identification and beliefs in order to preserve the rights and safety of female athletes.

“Sex” - Either of the two categories (male and female) into which humans are divided on the basis of their reproductive and biological functions as usually observed at or before birth and recorded on their birth certificate. Sex is immutable and unchangeable from conception and throughout the lifespan.

“Woman” - An adult human female. An individual that has reached maturity, is of the human species and a member of the female sex.

“Girl” - An immature human female. An individual that has not yet reached maturity, is of the human species and a member of the female sex.

“Female” - A member of the female sex, of any animal species. When discussing sport, it is an implied reference to the sex of a human.

“Man” - An adult human male. An individual that has reached maturity, is of the human species and a member of the male sex.

“Boy” - An immature human male. An individual that has not yet reached maturity, is of the human species and a member of the male sex.

“Male” - A member of the male sex, of any animal species. When discussing sport, it is an implied reference to the sex of a human.

“Biological Female” - A term sometimes used for clarity; redundant, as it refers to a member of the female sex.

“Biological Male” – A term sometimes used for clarity; redundant, as it refers to a member of the male sex.

“**DSD**” (disorders or differences of sexual development), sometimes termed “**VSD**” (variations of sexual development) or “**CCSD**” (congenital conditions of sexual development) – A condition in which a person’s sex-related anatomy appears to be atypical for their biological sex. These conditions are sometimes referred to as “**intersex**”, but this term is contested by some with these conditions given it signals that they are neither female nor male. Contrary to the implication that “**intersex**” refers to an intermediate status, individuals with DSD still fit the binary: one is either a biological male with a DSD or a biological female with a DSD. [Note: Many people with DSD object to the inclusion of “I” in the LGBTQI+ acronym.]

“**Gender**”

- i. an alternative word/vernacular term for the noun definition of biological sex.¹
- ii. an evolving set of social roles, expectations, and stereotypes that are ascribed to biological sex and vary with time and culture. [Note: Given the ongoing, shifting meaning(s) ascribed to this word, using “gender” to mean “biological sex” should be avoided.]

“**Gender Identity**” - For some people: A personal, internal perception, subjective feeling, preference or belief of belonging to, or associating with, a particular gender, that may change with time and circumstance. [Note: Many people do not feel they have a ‘gender identity’ given this may be perceived as accepting the sociocultural stereotypes of what it means to be a woman or a man.]

“**Gender Dysphoria**”- A term used to describe an intense dislike or discomfort with one’s biological sex.

“**Medical Practitioner**” – A person licensed to practice medicine, having obtained a medical school diploma (“MD”) and is registered as a physician in their respective country.

¹ USA Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG), was the first to use the word “**gender**” in place of “**sex**” in a legal document. She credits her secretary for this linguistic choice. The following excerpt makes it clear that in her mind “gender” meant “biological sex.” Here is the story as told by [NPR](#): “One strategy Ginsburg adopted was to use the phrase “gender discrimination” in her arguments, not “sex discrimination.” Decades later, on a panel honoring her at Columbia University, her law school alma mater, Ginsburg explained how she arrived at that linguistic choice: *“I owe it all to my secretary at Columbia Law School, who said ‘I’m typing these briefs and articles for you and there’s the word sex, sex, sex on every page!’”* Ginsburg told the audience. *“She said, ‘Don’t you know that those nine men to whom you are arguing, when they hear that word, their first association is not what you want them to be thinking about?!’”*”

“Gender Reassignment” – An intentional act to facilitate “gender transitioning”. Usually this implies intervention by a “medical practitioner”; the most common forms of medical treatment include (but are not limited to) hormone therapy and surgery in order to amend secondary sex characteristics. But the usage and/or definition of this term is not uniformly applied across the globe. For example, “gender reassignment” is a term used in the UK Equality Act to mean claiming a different gender identity, which does not necessarily involve medical intervention or body modification. [Note: Even in the UK, however, the original intent was that this term would refer to some form of medical intervention.²]

“Transgender” person – A male or female person who identifies as the opposite sex and/or with the sex stereotypes associated either with the opposite sex or neither sex due to either ‘gender dysphoria’ or personal preference. We use these phrases:

- **“Males who identify as transgender”** A transgender person who was born male and self-identifies as “non-binary”, “gender fluid”, or a member of the opposite sex.
- **“Females who identify as transgender”** A transgender person who was born female and self-identifies as “non-binary”, “gender fluid”, or a member of the opposite sex.

“Non-binary” person – A male or female person who does not identify with either biological sex or the sex stereotypes associated with either biological sex; or a person who declares themselves to have an internal perception of not belonging to or associating with either the male or female sex category.

“Transathlete” – A transgender person participating in sport & recreation.

²Original intentions of gender reassignment legislation in the UK resulting in the GRA (2004) assumed a three-stage transition process where stage 1 is self-identification, stage 2 involves hormones and stage 3 surgery for most transsexual people and refers to physical transition throughout (Home Office 2000, 28). Further, UK Government GRC guidelines (2021) state ‘If you have not had any treatment or surgery yet, you must send a report that includes details of any planned treatment or surgery’ and GIRES (2014) explains ‘If you have not had any surgery then the report must explain clearly as to the reason why. This could be because you are currently still waiting for surgery on a waiting list, or you aren’t medically able to or for any other reasons, but an explanation has to be included as to why this is so.’

TERMS TO AVOID

“Cis Gender” - A prefix added to words like “woman”, “man”, “girl” or “boy” that purports to denote “opposite of trans,” but that many find to be insulting because it effectively reduces a person or group to being merely a subset of their particular sex category. It implies that males can claim the language of females and vice versa. It also implies that the user believes in “gender identity” and/or believes in conforming to sociocultural stereotypes, roles, presentations, and expectations of what it means to be a man or a woman. Individuals should not be required to adhere to the societal or stereotypical expectations of their sex to be a member of their sex. Using the word “*cis gender*” allows for the obfuscation of the relevance of sex to female persons and serves to further their discrimination and subjugation.

“Male-to-Female” (M2F) or “Female-to-Male (F2M) – Since it is impossible to literally change one’s sex from male to female or from female to male we will not use these words.

STATEMENT ON TERMINOLOGY

The terms listed above are those that will be used by members of **The Consortium on Female Sport** whenever any one of us engages in conversation or presentation on behalf of the group. The following principles will dictate usage of these terms:

Principle 1. In order to protect the female athlete category, language and concepts of biology take precedence over language and concepts that represent gender self-identification.

Principle 2. We agree that the usage of biological terms is not “hateful.”

Principle 3. When the language of engagement is not English, members of **The Consortium** must seek to use words in their respective language that clearly and unequivocally make reference to biological sex and the sex-based right of the female athlete to have her own category in sport.