



Glossary of Terminology:

Gender Identity:

When we are born, we are assigned a gender by a clinician examining us and determining whether we are male or female. Many people live their lives in line with that medical assessment from that first day of our life and these people are what are referred to as **Cis gender**. However, there are others where their gender identity is a more complex situation. Some of the more frequently encountered terminologies include:

Agender: People who do not identify as having no gender at all would often identify as being Agender. Another term you may well have come across would be gender neutral.

Intersex: When an individual has biological characteristics of both sexes, or alternatively when their biological attributes do not conform with the societal assumptions of what is male or female.

Gender Fluid: Where an individual does not have a fixed gender expression and can change over time. For example, some people who are gender fluid may have two core identities and go about their lives in both identities.

Non-binary: These are individuals whose gender identity does not fit the societal assumptions of being male or female (a binary construct of being either A or B). Some people who are Non-binary may identify with some elements of binary identities and/or reject the construct in its entirety.

Transgender: This is a term which describes where someone who identifies and/or lives their life as the opposite gender to the one they were assigned at birth. These does not mean that every Transgender (or Trans) person will have had surgery to transition towards their identified gender but may well be exploring how they can live their lives in their authentic gender. There are two important things to understand. Transgender is never used in the past tense (such as transgendered). People who are trans have a continuing identity which is transgender. Secondly, it is important to make sure that you do not call them by their "deadname" or the name they lived by until the point where they transitioned to their trans identity. There was a great advert which was a collaboration between the Youth Trans charity Mermaids with Starbucks which you can watch [here](#).

With all gender identities, people can choose to use pronouns which best describe them. The more common ones are: she/her, he/him, they/them. There are others that some non-binary people prefer to use such as ze/zir or ey/em.

Ethnicity and upbringing:

Ethnicity can be complex. For some reason, we tend to think of this as again something of a binary construct – you can be Thai, or Ghanaian. At a push, we tend to consider mixed race or mixed ethnicities but often when you look at the categorisation of this on forms, you can be White and Black, White and Asian, or White and Other. It very rarely allows for you to be for example, Black and Asian. Let alone the fact that you may have one parent who has multiple ethnicities in their heritage. Please feel free to put as many different ethnicities that you have in your heritage that are important to you and/or you identify with.

In addition to this, there are numerous communities who have settled in other countries. An example of this would be the South Asian community who moved to East Africa and Southern Africa from the 1890s and many of whom stayed until the 1970s when many of them were expelled. Alternatively, the people whose heritage is not White British but grew up here in the UK. It's also really insightful to understand whether people class themselves by their ethnicity, or by where they grew up and the significance of that culture they were raised in forming certain values and beliefs and attitudes.

Sexual Orientation:

This is how people tend to identify not their own gender, but the gender of the people they are attracted to. For those who identify outside of the heteronormative assumptions of attraction and/or gender, we often hear the abbreviation LGBT (which can often be expanded to include other letters such as Q for Queer or Questioning, I for Intersex, A for Asexual, or the + symbol that includes all other identities). Some of the main ones are:

Asexual / Ace: Someone who may well have little or no sexual attraction to other people but may well (not always) still have an emotional or romantic attraction to another person or persons.

Bisexual: People who are attracted to people of both binary sexes (being male and female). It is also often used as an umbrella term for people who are attracted to multiple gender identities (including people who are trans, gender fluid, non-binary etc) which is often also where people could describe themselves as pansexual.

Gay: People who are attracted to people of the same gender and can be used by both men and women in their identification.

Lesbian: Someone who identifies as a woman and is attracted to other women.

Queer: This term was initially used as a derogative term for gay people in the late 19th Century. However, it was reclaimed by the LGBT+ community and since the early 2000s, is how some people choose to identify their sexuality, their gender, or their political beliefs. Because of the negative historical connotations of it, I would always advise you (like any other term) to ask how the other person identifies and not just assume that because it is OK for one person to use it that it is OK to use it across the board.

Disability:

For me this is not a term I particularly like as it includes a negative through the prefix Dis, which continues to confirm the bias that people who are differently abled (both physically and mentally) are not as effective as those without disabilities. It is important to know that a person's condition can in fact make them even more exceptional than those without. An example of this would be a neurodiverse person with a condition such as Autism will often be able to analyse data much more quickly and

effectively than someone who is neurotypical. There are certain conditions which cross more than one impairment type but will often have a primary lean.

Physical Impairments primarily affect an individual's physiology and/or mobility. This can present with someone uses a wheelchair, has a condition such as arthritis which affects their manual dexterity, or has differences in their speech.

Cognitive Impairments are conditions that generally affect people's neurological processing. More common in older people, more familiar cognitive impairments include Dementia, Parkinson's and Aphasia. What people often refer to as mental ill health conditions (such as Depression, Stress and Anxiety) also fall under the banner of Cognitive Impairments

Sensory Impairments are where one of the key senses do not function at their optimal level. This may well be a blind person (partially blind or partially sighted), a deaf person (or partially deaf / partial hearing) and sometimes people can have lower functional levels of both senses. Again, some people may well identify with a particular community strongly so where we think we are being inclusive by saying somebody has partial hearing, they may well object to this as this does not allow themselves to identify as being deaf. Again, the easiest way is to ask someone what they identify as and use that term for them going forward.

Neurodiverse (or neurodivergent) Impairments include conditions which mean the brain processes things in different ways. These conditions include Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Tourette's Syndrome and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

There may be certain things which help you to perform at your best. For example, if your neurodiverse diagnosis of Dyslexia means you struggle to process written information, have you been given technologies which can assist you and make your role easier to function by reading things out or being able to dictate speech that converts to text.

Caring Responsibilities:

This question is also sometimes framed as having dependents. Many people may only think of dependents as children. But now it is becoming more common for people to care for others outside of this relationship, especially with older people, whether they are a relative or not. This question is more about whether there is someone who relies on you to undertake activities for them on a regular basis, whether that be personal care, emotional care, or companionship for another person.

Class, socioeconomics and education:

Many people who come from what are assumed to be lower class structures, more regional locations, family incomes whilst growing up and less prestigious education backgrounds will often have to work longer and harder to be perceived as of equally skilled or experienced in the workplace.

Looking at these individually, the Great British Class Survey defined the UK class structure in broader range than we were used to hearing (instead of Upper, Middle and Working classes) and account more than just one's economic capital, but also their social and cultural capital too. Your socio-economic background was more about your parents' income, education levels and professions when you were growing up as a determinant of the access you had to types of schooling, whether the government paid for your meals at lunchtime in school etc, and what type of university you were able to access due to these criteria.