

Definitions on Gender – Student Handout

sex – refers to a person’s biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female). There are a number of indicators of biological sex, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and external genitalia. (APA, 2011)

gender – refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person’s biological sex. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviors that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity. (APA, 2011)

transgender – an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity (internal feeling of being male, female or transgender) and/or gender expression differs from that usually associated with their birth sex. Transgender people can identify as transsexual, genderqueer, agender or another gender identity.

cisgender – a person for whom their gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth

gender identity – refers to “one’s sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender” (APA, 2006).