Terms to Avoid: Examples & What You Can Say Instead

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Avoid Saying	What You Can Say Instead	Notes
“Casey is a transsexual.”	“Casey is transgender.”	This is an outdated term.
“Riley and Taylor are transgenders.” “Riley is a transgender.” “This policy would let the transgenders use the restroom based on how they identify.”	“Riley and Taylor are transgender people.” “Riley is a transgender man/woman/person.” “This policy would let transgender people use the restroom consistent with their gender identity.”	Avoid using “transgender” as a noun.
“Leo’s biological sex is female.” “Leo was born a woman.”	“Leo was assigned female at birth.”	If the birth sex detail isn’t needed, you can just say, “Leo is a trans man.” Similarly, if his trans status isn’t relevant, you can just say: “Leo is a man.”
“Gabe identifies as a man.”	“Gabe is a trans man” or “Gabe is a man.”	“Identify as” can imply that gender identity is a choice.
“Sophia is a biological male.” “Sophia is a natal male.” “Sophia is genetically male.”	“Sophia was assigned male at birth” or “Sophia is a trans woman.”	You may see these problematic phrases in ads, legislation, and even judicial opinions.
“Logan is a biological female.” “Logan is a natal female.” “Logan is genetically female.”	“Logan was assigned female at birth” or “Logan is a trans man.”	Same as previous note.

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“Avery is a biological male who identifies as a female.” “Aiden is a biological female who identifies as a male.”	“Avery is a trans woman.” “Aiden is a trans man.”	Same as previous note.
“Ethan transitioned from female-to-male.” “Grace transitioned from male-to-female.”	“Ethan is a trans man.” “Grace is a trans woman.”	Some trans men use “FTM” or “female-to-male.” It is typically ok to mirror the language someone uses to describe their own gender.
“Taylor is a transgender individual.”	“Taylor is a transgender man/woman/person.”	LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations have found that referring to trans people as “individuals” can contribute to dehumanizing them.
“Dylan’s preferred pronouns are they/them.”	“Dylan’s pronouns are they/them.”	If you get someone’s pronouns wrong, don’t dwell on it! Just quickly apologize and move on. The most important thing is your intention and not making the same mistake again.
“Blake has a difference/disorder of sex development (DSD).”	“Blake is an intersex woman/man/person” or “Blake is intersex.”	Many intersex people reject the term “DSD” because it supports the idea that their bodies are wrong, or up to doctors to “fix.” *(See interACT for more info.)*

Visit the ACLU of Missouri's **Show-Me My Rights Guide** for more information about the legal rights of TGNCI (transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and intersex) Missourians and how allies can support the community.

Scan the QR code of visit the link below:

https://www.aclu-mo.org/know-your-rights/your-rights-as-a-trans-person

For any questions or suggestions, email us at:

showmemyrights@aclu-mo.org

This information is not intended as legal advice.