

## Position Statement: Gender associated language

### Diversity

Queensland Clinical Guidelines (QCG) acknowledges, values and respects the diversity of peoples' genders, bodies, and relationships.

QCG recognises that LGBTQIA+ people may experience health disadvantage, challenges accessing appropriate health care, and social and medical discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, QCG recognises that transgender, gender diverse and non-binary people may experience distress or gender dysphoria with changes in their body associated with gynaecological conditions, pregnancy, birth, or feeding their baby.

QCG supports for all people who access healthcare<sup>2</sup>:

- A clinical environment that is inclusive, respectful, affirming and welcoming<sup>2-5</sup>
- A trauma-informed approach to care<sup>3</sup>
- Individualised and inclusive language<sup>2,5</sup>
- The use of people's names and pronouns<sup>3,4</sup>
- The terms an individual prefers for their own body parts<sup>6</sup>

### The terms *woman* and *woman*

Although QCG use the terms *woman* and *women* in written material, the guidelines, documents and other resources are inclusive of people who are assigned female at birth and who do not identify as female. QCG use the terms *woman* or *women* for the following reasons.

- The absence of an alternative single term that is acceptable to everyone<sup>7</sup>
- The absence of evidence supporting a particular term or terms in preference to others<sup>3,8,9</sup>
- The evolving nature of gendered and sexed language<sup>3</sup>
- Women are also a marginalised group who experience oppression, and represent the majority requiring care<sup>10,11</sup>
- Potential dehumanising nature of some alternative terms<sup>6</sup>
  - For example, alternative terms for “women” often involve references to body parts or physiological processes (e.g. “gestational carrier” or “birther”) which may be seen as dehumanising, disembodiment and mechanistic<sup>6</sup>
- Alternative terms may unintentionally include people who should be excluded<sup>6</sup>
  - For example, using “parents” and “families” as a replacement for “women” can inappropriately include other family members<sup>6</sup>
- Multiple and alternative terms may introduce inaccuracy and confusion<sup>6</sup>
  - For example, replacing “women” with “people” when describing the risk of a condition may be inaccurate (e.g. 1 in 7 people have endometriosis is not the same as 1 in 7 women)
- For ease of reading and brevity
  - The use of additive and multiple terms (e.g. “women and birthing parents”) increases length and may make clinical guidance more difficult to read and understand

## Other inclusive language

QCG preferentially uses the following terms.

QCG uses the term	To mean and/or include
<b>Partner/s</b>	A person in a shared relationship with another. For example, spouse, husband, wife, support person, de facto partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, support person, primary emotional relationship, significant other.
<b>Parents or baby's family</b>	The individual(s) who has/have the primary responsibility for the emotional and physical care of a baby. For example, mother, father, parent, caregiver, legal guardian, primary care giver, kinship relationship, surrogate parent, birth parent.
<b>Anatomic body part</b>	Used when referring to human body parts and related actions to enhance accuracy and shared understanding. For example, uterus, breasts, vagina, penis, cervix, perineum.
<b>Pronouns</b>	Pronouns are avoided in guidelines, but if required, the pronouns they/them are used. In consumer information resources, you/your are used in a question and answer format to maximise applicability and inclusion

## Definition of terms

Term	Definition
<b>Cisgender</b>	When gender corresponds to sex recorded at birth. <sup>3,12,13</sup> Not all cisgender people are aware of this term or use it to describe themselves. <sup>14</sup>
<b>Gender</b>	Part of a person's personal and social identity independent of sex. <sup>13,15</sup> It refers to the way a person feels and sees themselves. <sup>14</sup> Gender can be binary (e.g. male or female) or non-binary (e.g. agender, gender diverse or gender fluid).
<b>Gender dysphoria</b>	Psychological distress sometimes experienced as a result of incongruence between one's sex recorded at birth and one's gender identity. <sup>12,16</sup>
<b>LGBTQIA+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual plus. The '+' reflects the identities and sexual orientations not listed and is not intended to be limited or exclusive of certain groups. <sup>13,17</sup>
<b>Pronouns</b>	Words used to talk about a person when not using their name (e.g. he/him, she/her, they/them) <sup>18</sup>
<b>Sex</b>	A person's biological sex characteristics (e.g. sex chromosomes, sexual and reproductive organs, sex hormones). <sup>13,14</sup> Historically understood as either 'female' or 'male' however some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics (e.g. intersex people). Also referred to as "sex recorded/assigned at birth". <sup>13</sup>

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