



HAW
HAMBURG

Respecting one another

SELF-DESIGNATIONS

Why is it important to respect people's chosen terms for their identities?

Many people who belong to socially marginalised groups are frequently referred to with demeaning and exclusionary terms. They may resist this by choosing particular terms to describe themselves and their identities.

People experiencing marginalisation can choose to call themselves whatever they want. It is important that others respect and use these self-designations for individuals and social groups.

intersex

Our society defines particular physical and biological characteristics (e.g. X and Y chromosomes) as female or male. The term 'intersex' describes the experience of being born into a body which calls these binary oppositions into question. Intersex people have **sex characteristics which are on a spectrum or continuum between those defined as unambiguously female or male.**

Intersex people may use various self-designations, such as intersex or herm, and may identify as male, female, intersex or non-binary.

trans

All people are registered with a sex at birth, but later on, some people may not identify with the assigned gender.

Someone may call themselves trans if they do not identify, or identify very little, with the sex assigned to them at birth. 'Trans' may be short for 'transgender' or 'transsexual', among other terms.

[Cis is the counterpart to 'trans' and means that someone identifies with the sex assigned to them at birth.]

queer

People may refer to themselves as queer if they experience their sexuality and/or gender identity as not being in line with predominant societal notions. In this way, queer people [critique binary categorisations regarding gender, sexuality or sexual desire](#).

Similarly, [non-binary](#) or [genderqueer](#) people identify as neither male nor female, as agender, or as genders beyond the traditional categories.

People of colour (POC)

People of colour is a political self-designation used by people who experience racism. It is a response to racist terms used by others.

People who refer to themselves as POC identify in various ways – for instance, as Black, Sinti, Roma or Romani, or Asian-German.

**Please also
read our flyer
on names and
pronouns.**


Black

Many people of African origin or heritage refer to themselves as Black. In capitalising the term, Black people give voice to their shared experience of racism. It's a political term in this context and not a word signifying an ethnic group or a skin tone.

Sometimes, people may italicise the word *white* to highlight its unnoticed status as the societal norm and the frequently unconscious way white people may benefit from racism.

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