What’s the Difference

Between Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

Gender is a set of traits that society defines as masculine or feminine—it is the way that someone identifies themselves.

Note: Gender is not just male or female; it’s a spectrum including male, female, and non-binary.

Sex refers to our physical “packaging”—it is determined by our combination of X and Y chromosomes, our hormones, and our internal & external sex organs.

Note: XX (female) and XY (male) don’t tell the whole story, there are other possible.

Sexual Orientation refers to the deep, internal sense of who we are attracted or “oriented” to in terms of our sexual attractions.

Want to learn more?

Contact the Center for Diversity and Inclusion
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Check out for more information