

LGBT Glossary

There are many terms used to understand sex, gender, sexuality, and identity. Below is a glossary adapted from one compiled by the University of California at Los Angeles. We have done our best to represent the most popular uses of the terms listed; however there may be some variation in definitions depending on individual context. Please note that each person who uses any a term does so in a unique way. If you do not understand the context in which a person is using a term, you can respectfully ask them.

- **Agendered** — Person is internally ungendered.
- **Ally** — Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and genderstraight privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.
- **Androgyne** — Person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.
- **Asexual** — Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.
- **Bigendered** — A person whose gender identity is a combination of male/man and female/woman.
- **Bisexual** — A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.
- **Cisgender** — describes someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex.
- **Drag** — The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically.
- **Dyke** — Derogatory term referring to a masculine lesbian. Sometimes adopted affirmatively by lesbians (not necessarily masculine ones) to refer to themselves.
- **Gay** — 1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in “homosexual behavior” identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQI community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.
- **Gender Expression** — How a person represents or expresses one’s gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, etc.
- **Gender Identity** — A person’s internal sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered, which may or may not be visible to others.
- **Genderqueer** — A person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders.
- **Heteronormativity** — The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.
- **Heterosexual Privilege** — Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual (straight) that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals. Also, the benefits homosexuals and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.
- **Homophobia** — The irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes. It is this fear that enforces sexism as well as heterosexism.
- **Homosexual** — A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex

- **Intergender** — A person whose gender identity is between genders or a combination of genders.
- **Intersex** — People who are born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome patterns that do not seem to fit typical definitions of male or female. Also known as differences of sex development.
- **Lesbian** — Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people. The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African-Americans and other non-European ethnic groups.
- **LGBTQI** — A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community.
- **Pansexual** — A person who is sexually attracted to all or many gender expressions.
- **Passing** — Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual.
- **Queer** — An umbrella term that includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, and radical sex communities. This term is sometimes used instead of 'bisexual' as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to. For decades 'queer' was used solely as a slur for gays and lesbians, but was reclaimed by activists as a term of self-identification. However, some still hold 'queer' to have a negative connotation, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive.
- **Sex** - A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female', this category does not recognize the existence of intersexed bodies.
- **Sex Identity** – How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither.
- **Sexual Orientation** – The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes.
- **Transgender** – An individual whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. The term "trans" is often used as shorthand. Note: the terms "transgenders" or "transsexuals" are often viewed as disrespectful
- **Transgender Man** or **FTM** – "Female to male"; a person who was assigned female at birth, but identifies and lives as a male.
- **Transgender Woman** or **MTF** – "Male to female"; a person who was assigned male at birth, but identifies and lives as a female.
- **Transition** – The time when a person begins to live as the gender with which they identify rather than the gender they were assigned at birth. Transition often includes changing one's first name and presenting differently. Transition can include medical and legal steps, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery, and changing identification papers.
- **Transphobia** – The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.
- **Two-Spirited** – Refers to the historical and current First Nations people whose individual spirits are a blend of male and female spirits. Recently reclaimed by some in Native American LGBTQI communities as an alternative to Western labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.
- **Ze / Hir** – Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here,/ they replace "he"/"she" and "his"/"hers" respectively.