

LGBTQI Terminology

These are terms commonly used by LGBTQ+ people and their Allies.

A note about these definitions: Each of these definitions has been carefully researched and closely analyzed from theoretical and practical perspectives for cultural sensitivity, common usage, and general appropriateness. 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 location.

Please note that each person who uses any or all of these terms does so in a unique way (especially terms that are used in the context of an identity label). If you do not understand the context in which a person is using one of these terms, it is always appropriate to ask. This is especially recommended when using terms that we have noted that can have a derogatory connotation.

Ace – See Asexual.

Abstinent – The act or practice of refraining from indulging a desire, such as sexual intercourse.

Ag / Aggressive – A term used by people of color to describe a masculine lesbian. Also known as ‘stud.’

Agender – A person without gender. An agender individual’s body does not necessarily correspond with their lack of gender identity. Often, agender individuals are not concerned with their physical sex, but some may seek to look androgynous. [**Related Terms:** neutrois, genderless, gender neutral]

Ally – **1.** Someone who educates themselves, advocates for and supports members of a community other than their own **2.** Someone who confronts heterosexism, anti- LGBTQ biases, heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves and others **3.** Has concern for the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, queer, and other similarly identified people **4.** Believes that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues. Allies often reach across differences to achieve mutual goals.

Androgyne – Person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman. Some androgyne individuals may present in a gender neutral or androgynous way while others express both masculine and feminine traits.

Affectional Orientation – The deep-seated direction of one's emotional, intellectual, and social affinity. It is on a continuum and not a set of absolute categories. Some aspects of affectional orientation tend to change over time,

while other aspects remain relatively consistent. Affectional orientation can be fluid.

Aromantic – Person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others.

Asexual – A person who does not experience sexual attraction. They may or may not experience emotional, physical, or romantic attraction. Asexuality differs from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation, not a choice. People who are asexual may call themselves “ace.”

Assigned at Birth – Commonly utilized by Trans* individuals, the term illustrates that the individual’s sex (and subsequently gender in early life) was assigned without involving the person whose sex was being assigned. Commonly seen as “Female Assigned At Birth” (FAAB or AFAB) and “Male Assigned At Birth” (MAAB or AMAB). [**Related terms:** Birth Sex]

Autoeroticism – A sexual gratification obtained solely through stimulation by oneself of one’s own body.

BDSM – (Bondage, Discipline/Domination, Submission/Sadism, and Masochism) The terms ‘submission/sadism’ and ‘masochism’ refer to deriving pleasure from inflicting or receiving pain, often in a sexual context. The terms ‘bondage’ and ‘domination’ refer to a safe exploration of power roles in both sexual and social context. These practices are often misunderstood as abusive, but when practiced in a safe, sane, and consensual manner can be a part of healthy sex life. [**Related terms:** Kink, Leather]

Bear/Bear Community – 1. A gay or bisexual man who generally has one or more of the following traits: a hairy chest and body, a beard, wide shoulders, husky build, beefy, more masculine and cuddly body. The exact definition of what a bear looks like varies from person to person. 2. An umbrella term that is often defined as more of an attitude and a sense of comfort with natural masculinity and bodies. A defining quality of a bear is that they do not fit into contemporary gay culture, or the stereotypical gay image. Cubs, Otters, Bears, Chasers, Ursophiles and Chubs are all members of the bear community.

Bias – An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

Bicurious – A person who identifies as gay or straight while showing some curiosity for a relationship or sexual activity with a person of a sex they do not usually engage with. [**Related terms:** heteroflexible, homoflexible]

Bigender – A person whose gender identity is a combination of male/man and female/woman. They may consciously or unconsciously change their gender-role behavior from masculine to feminine, or vice versa.

Binding – The process of flattening one’s breasts to have a more masculine or flat appearing chest.

Biphobia – The fear of, discrimination against, intolerance of, or hatred of individuals who identify as bisexual, which is often times related to the current binary standard. This fear may stem from a belief that bisexual identity is not an authentic Queer identity, a resentment at the bisexual’s heterosexual privileges. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQ community, as well as in general society.

Birth Sex – The sex (female, male or intersex) an individual is assigned at birth by the doctor based on external genitalia. One’s birth sex is on multiple legal documents such as birth certificate and drivers license. **[Related terms:** Assigned at Birth]

Bisexual – An identity of a person who is 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. This term becomes problematic in cross-cultural studies.

Boi (pronounced boy) – 1. A female-bodied person who expresses or presents themselves in a culturally/stereotypically masculine, particularly boyish way. 2. One who enjoys being perceived as a young male and intentionally identifies with being a “boy” rather than a “man.” 3. In the gay male community, a young gay man. 4. In BDSM, a butch who is a submissive or sexual bottom. 5. In butch-femme community, a chronologically or behaviorally young butch.

Bottom – A person who is the receiving or penetrated partner during sexual activity.

Bottom Surgery – Surgery on the genitals designed to create a body in harmony with a person’s preferred gender expression. **[Related Terms:** Gender Confirming Surgery, Sexual Reassignment Surgery]

Brown Boi – A masculine of center person of color.

Butch – 1. A person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally 2. Sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but it can also be claimed as an affirmative identity label.

Choice – When an individual refers to another person’s non-heterosexual identity as a choice. This is often used by opponents of the LGBT community who think that being LGBT is a choice and, consequently, think LGBT people should choose to be straight or cisgender.

Cisgender – someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex. This term was created to challenge the privileging of such people relative to those who are transgender. Also known as “cissexual.”

Cisgender Privilege – The set of privileges conferred to people who are believed to be Cisgender. (**Examples:** having one’s preferred pronouns used, no harassment in public restrooms, no denial of expected access to health care, etc.)

Cissexism – A pervasive and institutionalized system that others transgender people and treats their needs and identities as less important than those of Cisgender people.

Cissexual – People who are not transsexual and who have only ever experienced their subconscious and physical sexes as being aligned.

Coming Out – **1.** The internal process of accepting one’s own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersex person (to “come out” to oneself). **2.** The external process of disclosing sexual orientation, gender identity and/or intersex status to friends, family, co-workers, etc. **3.** This can also describe the process for allies as they share their allyship with friends, family, co-workers, etc due to the consequences for supporting the LGBTQ+ community. **4.** A life-long process for individuals in the LGBTQ+ community.

Cross-dressing – Individuals who regularly or occasionally wear the clothing socially assigned to a gender not their own, but are usually comfortable with their anatomy and do not wish to change it (i.e. they are not transsexuals). Cross-dresser is the preferred term for men who enjoy or prefer women's clothing and social roles. Contrary to popular belief, the overwhelming majority of male cross-dressers identify as straight and often are married. Very few women call themselves cross-dressers. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression, is not necessarily tied to erotic activity, and is not indicative of sexual orientation. The older term transvestite is considered by many to be offensive.

Demisexual – A person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone. It's more commonly seen in but by no means confined to romantic relationships.

Discrimination – Prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for the affected group.

Domestic Partner – One who lives with their beloved and/or is at least emotionally and financially connected in a supportive manner with another. Another word for spouse, lover, significant other, etc.

Down Low – Typically used by men of color to describe men who identify as heterosexual, but who have sex with men. Many avoid sharing this information even if they have female sexual partners. [**Related terms:** Men who sleep with men (MSM)]

Drag – The act of dressing in gendered clothing as part of a performance. Drag may be performed as a political comment on gender, as parody, or simply as entertainment. Drag performance does not indicate sexuality, gender identity, or sex identity.

Drag King – A person who performs masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen – A person who performs femininity theatrically.

DSM-IV – The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association, is the handbook used most often in diagnosing mental disorders in the United States and other countries. It was published in 1952, 1968, 1980 and 1994. December 15, 1973, the board of the American Psychiatric Association voted 13-0 to remove homosexuality from its official list of psychiatric disorders.

Dyke – 1. Sometimes adopted affirmatively by lesbians (not necessarily masculine ones) to refer to themselves as a symbol of pride to empower lesbian communities. 2. Derogatory term referring to (often masculine) lesbians.

Fag/Faggot – 1. Derogatory term for a gay or effeminate man. 2. Derogatory term for any individual who does not match their assigned gender role. 3. Sometimes reclaimed by gay men as a self-identifier. 4. This term came into use in times of witch burnings. Male homosexuals were thought to be the assistants of witches, and their bodies were used as fuel for the fires that burned witches.

Family – Colloquial term used to identify other LGBTQQIA community members. For example, an LGBTQQIA person saying, “that person is family” often means that the person they are referring to is LGBTQQIA as well.

Family of choice (chosen family) – Persons or group of people an individual sees as significant in his or her life. It may include none, all, or some members of his or her family of origin. In addition, it may include individuals such as significant others, domestic partners, friends, and coworkers.

Family of origin – The family into which a person is born. Family of origin often refers to biological or adoptive parents, siblings, and extended family.

Femme – An individual of any assigned sex who identifies with femininity as dictated by traditional gender roles. A femme identity may be intimately connected to assigned sex such as the case of cisgender female femmes who may be read simply as straight or gender normative. A femme gender identity may also be constructed independently of assigned sex.

Femmephobia – 1. A woman who refuses to date feminine women because "they just don't look gay enough." 2. A woman who suffers from an irrational fear, hatred or intolerance of women who wear dresses and carry handbags, because only straight girls do those things.

Fluidity – A notion or understanding that sexual orientation, sexuality, and gender are dynamic identities that may change over time as individuals discover more about themselves. Fluidity can be an identity, such as sexually fluid or gender fluid.

FTM (Female to Male) – Abbreviation for a female-to-male transgender person. This term reflects the direction of gender transition. Some prefer the term *MTM* (Male to Male) to underscore the fact that though they were biologically female, they never gender identity. [**Related terms:** transgender man, trans* man]

Gay – 1. Used in some cultural settings to represent someone who is male-identified who seeks to be emotionally, romantically, erotically, spiritually and/or physically involved with other people who are male-identified. Not all men who engage in "homosexual behavior" identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution [**See:** Down Low]. 2. An umbrella term for the LGBTQ+.

Genderfuck – Someone whose gender expression is a political commentary on the conventions of a gender binary system.

Gender – 1. A socially constructed system of classifications that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristic can change over time and vary between cultures. 2. The expression and/or presentation of some combination of socially constructed ideas defining masculine and/or feminine characteristics. 3. Someone's innate sense of being masculine and/or feminine regardless of external genitalia. 4. Words that refer to gender include: man, woman, transgender, masculine, feminine, and gender queer. Gender is often conflated with sex. This is inaccurate because sex refers to bodies and gender refers to personality characteristics.

Gender Binary – The idea that there are only two genders – man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or. [**See also:** Identity Sphere]

Gender Conformity – When your gender identity, gender expression, and sex “match” (i.e. fit social norms). For example, a male who is masculine and identifies as a man.

Gender Confirming Surgery – Medical surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity. Also known as ‘Sex Reassignment Surgery,’ especially within the medical community. In most states, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender status. [**See also:** Sex Reassignment Surgery]

Gender Dysphoria – Discomfort or distress caused by one’s assigned sex and the desire to change the characteristics that are the source.

Gender Expression – How one presents oneself and one’s gender to the world via dress, mannerisms, hairstyle, facial hair etc. This may or may not coincide with or indicate one’s gender identity. Many utilize gender expression in an attempt to determine the gender/sex of another individual. However, a person’s gender expression may not always match their gender identity.

Gender Identity – A person’s sense of self as masculine, feminine, both, or neither regardless of external genitalia. Gender identity does not cause sexual orientation. For example, a masculine woman is not necessarily a lesbian.

Gender Non-Conforming – A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, butch, cross-dresser, etc.). [**See also:** Gender Variant]

Gender Normative – A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society.

Gender Oppression – The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege Cisgender and subordinate and disparage transgender or gender non conforming people.

Gender Role – 1. Socially defined expectations regarding behavior, mannerisms, dress, etc. as related to socially assigned gender. 2. How “masculine” or “feminine” an individual acts. Societies commonly have norms regarding how males and females should behave, expecting people to have personality characteristics and/or act a certain way based on their biological sex.

Gender Variant – Displaying gender traits that are not normatively associated with a person’s biological sex. “Feminine” behavior or appearance in a male is gender-variant as is “masculine” behavior or appearance in a female. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific. [**See also:** Gender Non-Conforming]

Gender-neutral – Nondiscriminatory language to describe relationships—e.g. “spouse” and “partner” are gender-neutral alternatives to the gender-specific words “husband,” “wife,” “boyfriend” and “girlfriend.”

Genderism – Holding people to traditional expectations based on gender or punishing or excluding those who do not conform to traditional gender expectations.

Genderqueer/Gender Queer – 1. Someone whose gender expression is consciously not consistent with conventional standards for masculine and/or feminine behavior. 2. A person who redefines or plays with gender, or who refuses gender altogether. 3. A label for people who bend/break the rules of gender and blur the boundaries. 4. Sometimes this includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system. Genderqueer individuals may or may not pursue any physical changes, such as hormonal or surgical intervention, and may not identify as trans*.

Grey Ace – Someone who identifies as part of the asexual community but does not identify as completely asexual. This differs from demisexuality in that being demisexual is a specific orientation and a gray ace is used as a catch all for any unspecified identity under the Ace umbrella.

GSRM – Gender, Sexual, and Romantic Minorities

Hate crime – Hate crime legislation often defines a hate crime as a crime motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.

Heteronormativity – The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality, bisexuality, and other sexual orientations.

Heteroromantic – Someone who has romantic feelings for someone of the opposite sex or gender.

Heterosexual – Someone who is emotionally, physically, romantically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite gender and/or sex. Also known as ‘straight.’

Heterosexism – Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by institutional power – that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual Privilege – Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual or being perceived as heterosexual that are denied to homosexual and bisexual people. Also, the benefits homosexual and bisexual people receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.

HIV/AIDS – HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. The original transmission of HIV came through the infected blood of a chimp that was butchered for consumption. HIV is only communicable through direct contact with blood, semen, cervical/vaginal secretions, breast milk, but CANNOT be transmitted through bronchial fluid and sweat. HIV is also not communicable through social kissing, tattooing, inanimate objects, workplace settings or hugs. An estimated 5 million people are infected with HIV throughout the world.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Whereas a disease is a pathological condition with a single identifiable cause, a syndrome – like AIDS - is a group of symptoms that together are characteristic of a specific condition. In its history, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) defined AIDS five different times. Since 1993 the CDC recognizes an individual with AIDS as someone who has HIV antibodies and a T-cell count of less than 200 per liter of blood or one opportunistic infection. A healthy T-cell count ranges between 500 and 1600 cells per liter of blood. Kaposi's sarcoma, cervical cancer, pneumonia and herpes are all examples of opportunistic infections, or organisms and viruses that are normally present but do not cause disease unless the immune system is damaged. An estimated 40 million people are infected with AIDS.

HIV-phobia – The irrational fear or hatred of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Homophobia – The irrational fear, hatred, and/or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as non-heterosexual, including the fear of being read as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, homophobia assumes that heterosexuality is superior. Homophobic behavior can range from telling gay jokes, to verbal abuse, to acts of physical violence.

Homoromantic – Someone who has romantic feelings for members of the same sex or gender.

Homosexual – An out of date term for a person who is primarily emotionally, romantically, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. Many people view this term as offensive in that it is excessively clinical and sexualizes members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Hormone Replacement Therapy – The process of taking hormones to achieve the secondary sex characteristics of the desired sex. "T" is common short hand for the male hormone testosterone.

Hermaphrodite – An offensive word. See Intersex.

Identity Sphere – The idea that gender identities and expressions do not fit on a linear scale, but rather on a sphere that allows room for all expression without weighting any one expression as better than another.

In the Closet – Refers to an individual who identifies within the LGBTQ+ spectrum who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family.

Institutional Oppression – Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

Internalized Oppression – The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to believe, accept and/or live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex – Intersexuality is a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. That is, intersex people are born with "sex chromosomes," external genitalia, gonads, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female. The existence of intersexuals shows that there are not just two sexes and that our ways of thinking about sex (trying to force everyone to fit into either the male box or the female box) is socially constructed. Intersex people are sometimes defined as having “ambiguous” genitalia.

Invisible minority – A group whose minority status is not always immediately visible, such as some people with disabilities and LGBTQQIA people. This lack of visibility may make organizing for rights difficult.

Lambda – λ The Gay Activist Alliance originally chose the lambda, the Greek letter "L", as a symbol in 1970. Organizers chose the letter "L" to signify liberation. The word has become a way of expressing the concept "lesbian and gay male" in a minimum of syllables and has been adopted by such organizations as Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Leather Community – A community which encompasses those who are into leather, sado-masochism, bondage and domination, uniform, cowboys, rubber, and other fetishes. Although the leather community is often associated with the queer community, it is not a "gay-only" community.

Lesbian – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people.

LGBTQ – A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and community. The acronym is used as an umbrella term when talking about non heterosexual and non-cisgender identities, and does not always reflect members of the community. The acronym may be expanded to LGBTQ₂A₂ to include questioning, intersex individuals, allies, and/or asexual people, or shortened to LGBTQ when discussing only sexual orientation. [**See also:** LGBTQQAAPPO2S]

LGBTQQAAPPODGGQ2S – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Pansexual, Polyamorous, Omnisexual, Demisexual, Gender Queer, and Two-Spirit.

Legal Sex – The sex assigned on an individual’s legal documentation.

Lifestyle – This word is often used to indicate that an LGBT person in choosing a way of living as opposed to simply living.

Lipstick Lesbian – Usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way, depending on who is using it. Is sometimes also used to refer to a lesbian who is seen as automatically passing for heterosexual.

Marginalized – Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

Masculine of Center – a term used by people of color to describe lesbian/queer/womyn who tilt toward the masculine side of the gender scale and includes a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, trans masculine, etc.

Men who have sex with Men (MSM) – Men who engage in same-sex behavior but who may not necessarily self-identify as gay.

Monosexual – Attracted to one gender. May be used for individuals who identify as straight, heterosexual, gay, lesbian, etc.

MTF (Male to Female) – Abbreviation for a male-to-female transgender person. This term reflects the direction of gender transition. Some people prefer the term FTF (female to female) to underscore the fact that though they were biologically male, they never had a male gender identity. [**Related terms:** transgender woman, trans* woman]

Nonbinary – Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man; used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (though rarely), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender person.

Nonmonosexual – Attracted to more than one gender. May be used for individuals who identify as fluid, bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, ambisexual, etc.

Neutrois – A person who identifies as being neither male nor female. This differs from androgyne, in that an androgyne sees themselves as a mix of two genders and neutrois individual sees themselves as not having a gender. [**Similar terms:** genderless, agender, or non-gendered.]

Omnigender – Possessing all genders; exhibiting cultural characteristics of male and female. The term is specifically used to refute the concept of only two genders.

Omnisexual – A person who is attracted to one or more genders regardless of the other person's sexual orientation.

On E – When a MTF takes the hormone estrogen.

On T – When a FTM takes the hormone testosterone.

Oppression – The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Oppression Olympics – Although it is imperative to acknowledge all of the various identities we encompass as individuals; it is equally important that we do not allow this to devolve into a competition of who is oppressed more.

Outing – When someone discloses information about another's sexual orientation or gender identity without their knowledge and/or consent.

Packing – Wearing a phallic device on the groin and under clothing for any purposes including: (for someone without a biological penis) the validation or confirmation of one's masculine gender identity; seduction; and/or sexual readiness (for one who likes to penetrate another during sexual intercourse).

Panromantic – Someone who has romantic feelings for a person regardless of their sex or gender.

Pansexual – A person who is fluid in sexual orientation and is attracted to others regardless of gender. A common phrase used with this community is “hearts not parts.”

Passing – Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or to be seen as heterosexual.

Perceived Gender – What another person assumes one's gender is in a given interaction. Some people's gender expressions can be misinterpreted or confused and perceived as different from the person's identity.

Gender Pronouns –The following pronouns offer alternatives to those people who identify outside of the gender binary of man and woman and prefer pronouns that are not masculine or feminine:

Gender Binary	Gender Neutral
He/She	Ze (zee)
Him/Her	Hir (hear), Zir (zeer)
His/Her	Hir (hear)
Himself/Herself	Hirself (hear-self)

Polyamory – Refers to having honest, non-monogamous relationships with multiple partners and can include: open relationships, polyfidelity (which involves multiple romantic relationships with sexual contact restricted to those), and sub-relationships (which denote distinguishing between a 'primary' relationship or relationships and various 'secondary' relationships).

Preference – This word is often used to indicate that being LGBT is an inclination as opposed to an identity.

Prejudice – A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members. Anyone can be prejudiced toward another individual or group.

Queer – 1. An umbrella term which includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans* people, intersex persons, radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive communities. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label or gender identity label used to denote a non-heterosexual or cisgender identity without have to define specifics. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been reclaimed by some folks in the LGBTQ+ community. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold 'queer' to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexual people is often considered offensive.

Questioning – An individual who is unsure of and/or exploring their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Rainbow Flag – The Rainbow Freedom Flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker to designate the great diversity of the community. It has been recognized by the International Flag Makers Association as the official flag of the LGBTQQIA civil rights movement.

Same Gender Loving (SGL) – A term used by members of the African-American / Black community to express same sex/ gender attraction. Note that it is often used as an alternative to words that do not culturally affirm the history of people of African descent.

Sex – A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Sex is ascribed by the birth doctor based on genital anatomy at birth. Because 'sex' is usually subdivided into a binary of 'male' and 'female,' this category does not recognize the existence of intersex bodies. Although sex is considered to be based on the above characteristics, rarely are babies tested for their specific genetic make up therefore ones sex is usually socially constructed to reflect whether a baby has a vagina or penis and ascribed 'male' and/or 'female'.

Sex Identity – How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither. This can include refusing to label oneself with a sex.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) – Surgery for the purpose of having a body more consistent with one's gender identity. Sex reassignment surgery can be quite costly and not everyone who desires sex reassignment surgery has equal access. [**See also:** Gender Confirming Surgery]

Sexual minority – Refers to people whose sexual orientations are not heterosexual or people who engage in sexual activities that are not part of the mainstream notions of sexuality.

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. It is on a continuum and not a set of absolute categories. Sometimes referred to as affectional orientation or sexuality. Sexual orientation can change over time through a multistage developmental process.

Sexuality – Refers to a person's exploration of sexual behaviors, practices and identities in the social world.

Sexual behavior – any activity—solitary, between two persons, or in a group—that induces sexual arousal, how individuals experience and/or express their sexuality.

Standards of Care – Organizational professional consensus about the psychiatric, psychological, medical, and surgical management of gender identity disorders. Professionals may use this document to understand the parameters within which they may offer assistance to those with these conditions. Persons with gender identity disorders, their families, and social institutions may use the SOC to understand the current thinking of professionals. Outlines hormone therapy, the real-life test, etc. <http://www.hbigda.org/socv6sm.pdf>

Stealth – This term refers to when a person chooses to be secretive in the public sphere about their gender history, either after transitioning or while successful passing. Also referred to as ‘going stealth’ or ‘living in stealth mode.’

Stem – A person whose gender expression falls somewhere between a stud and a femme. [**See also:** Femme and Stud]

Stereotype – A preconceived, exaggerated or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. Some stereotypes can be positive. However, they can have a negative impact, simply because they involve broad generalizations that ignore individual realities.

Stonewall Riots – On June 28th, 1969, New York City Police attempted a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, a working-class gay and lesbian bar in New York’s Greenwich Village. Unexpectedly, the patrons resisted, and the incident escalated into a riot that continued for several days. Many people attribute this event as the catalyst for the American Gay Liberation Movement. It is often left out that the more frequent patrons of this bar were trans women, drag queens and butch lesbians.

Straight – A person who is attracted to a gender other than their own. Commonly thought of as “attraction to the opposite gender,” but since there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition is inaccurate.

Straight-Acting – A term usually applied to gay men who readily pass as heterosexual. The term implies that there is a certain way that gay men should act that is significantly different from heterosexual men. Straight-acting gay men may be critiqued by members of the LGBTQ community for seemingly accessing heterosexual privilege.

Stud – A term used by people of color to describe a masculine lesbian. Also known as ‘aggressive.’

Switch – A person who is both a ‘Top’ and a ‘Bottom;’ there may or may not be a preference for one or the other. Also known as ‘Versatile.’

Top – A person who is the giving or penetrating partner during sexual activity.

Top Surgery – This term usually refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest, but may also refer to breast augmentation.

Tokenize – The policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort. For example, you are the only (out) Queer student in your class. Your professor, to create the illusion of a diverse discussion, asks you to fill in the gay parts of a discussion on Oscar Wilde.

Tranny – Slang word used by the transgender in-crowd to refer to themselves. Ask your transgender friend if you can use it. That's a joke. See Tokenize.

Trans Man – An identity label sometimes adopted by female to male trans people to signify that they are men while still affirming their transgender history.

Trans Woman – An identity label sometimes adopted by male to female trans people to signify that they are women while still affirming their transgender history.

Trans* – An abbreviation that is used to refer to a transgender/gender queer/gender non-conforming person. This use allows a person to state a gender variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the whole gender non-conforming community that might include (but is not limited to) transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderf*ck, transsexual, agender, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, trans man, trans woman, gender non-conforming, masculine of center, and gender questioning.

Transfeminine – 1. A term used to describe those who were assigned male at birth, but identify as more female than male.. 2. Those who identify as transfeminine, as opposed to simply as MTF or a woman, trans or otherwise, often place themselves feminine of center. That is, they identify more closely with femaleness than maleness, and generally desire a physical appearance that reflects this identification, but do not identify as wholly female or as a woman. It should be noted that transfeminine is not a descriptor of gender expression but of identity. Transfeminine people do not necessarily have to be stereotypically feminine in their interests or even presentation.

Transgender – 1. An umbrella term for transsexuals, cross-dressers (transvestites), gender queers, and people who identify as neither female nor male and/or as neither a man nor as a woman. Transgender is not a sexual orientation; transgender people may have any sexual orientation. It is important to acknowledge that while some people may fit under this definition of transgender, they may not identify as such. 2. Transgender (sometimes shortened to trans or TG) people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex with which they were born. To understand this, one must understand the difference between

biological sex, which is one's body (genitals, chromosomes, etc.), and social gender, which refers to levels of masculinity and femininity. Often, society conflates sex and gender, viewing them as the same thing. However, gender and sex are not the same thing. For example, a female with a masculine gender identity or who identifies as a man.

Transition – This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex with which they identify and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression. This process may ultimately include sex reassignment surgery (SRS), or it may not include any surgical procedures.

Transmasculine – 1. A term used to describe those who were assigned female at birth, but identify as more male than female. 2. Those who identify as transmasculine, as opposed to simply as FTM or a man identify more closely with maleness than femaleness, and generally desire a physical appearance that reflects this identification, but do not identify as wholly male or as a man. It should be noted that transmasculine is not a descriptor of gender expression but of identity. Transmasculine people do not necessarily have to be stereotypically masculine in their interests or even presentation.

Transphobia – The irrational fear, hatred and/or intolerance of those who are or are perceived to be transgender or gender non-conforming. Transphobia is manifested in a number of ways, including but limited to violence, harassment and discrimination, and sometimes deadly.

Transsexual – A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. A transsexual person may undergo medical treatment to change his/her physical sex to match his/her sex identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically. Not all transsexuals can have or desire surgery and may not be able to afford surgery.

Triangle – A symbol of remembrance. Gay men in the Nazi concentration camps were forced to wear the pink triangle as a designation of being homosexual. Women who did not conform to social roles, often believed to be lesbians, had to wear the black triangle. The triangles are worn today as symbols of freedom, reminding us to never forget.

Twink – originally, was an acronym for T.W.I.N.K - Teenage, White, Into No Kink. Referring to young or youthful, homosexual males, with little or no body hair, and semi-athletic or thin build.

Two Spirit – A contemporary term that references historical multiple-gender traditions in many Native and indigenous cultures. Many Native/indigenous people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming identify as Two-Spirit; in many Nations, being Two-Spirit carries both

great respect and additional commitments and responsibilities to one's community.

Versatile – A person who is both a 'Top' and a 'Bottom;' there may or may not be a preference for one or the other. Also known as 'Switch.'

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.

This terminology sheet was originally created by Eli R. Green and Erica Peterson of the LGBT Resource Center at the University of California, Riverside © 2003-2004 and has been revised using resources from the following organizations: University of California, Riverside; MIT; University of California, Berkeley; George Washington University; California State University, San Marco; University of California, San Diego; Bowling Green State University; The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), and Wikipedia. Updated May 2015. It was further updated by University of California, Merced in Dec 2015.