

Extended Glossary of LGBTQ+ Related Terms

Agender: Describes someone who does not have an internal sense of gender.

Androgyny: A combination of assumed male and female qualities.

Ally: A person who does not identify as LGBTQ+ and supports the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals

Asexual: Describes someone who does not experience sexual attraction to others.

Bigender: Describes an individual whose gender identity is both female and male.

Biological Sex: Describes our “packaging” determined by our chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external genitalia; the variance in biological sex indicates that male and female may not represent a true dichotomy.

Bottom Surgery: Surgery on the genitals designed to create a body in harmony with a person’s preferred gender expression.

Bisexual: Describes someone who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction to the same gender as himself and different gender(s) from himself. Known traditionally as attraction to men and women, but many bisexuals are distancing themselves from the gender binary.

Butch: Describes a person who identifies as masculine, whether it be emotionally, mentally, or physically; has both derogatory and affirmative usages.

Celibate: Making a choice not to engage in sexual behavior; separate from asexuality, as many celibate people are not asexual, just as not all asexual people are celibate.

Cisgender: Describes an individual who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expectations ascribed to them at birth.

Cissexism: Prejudice against gender non-conforming people or anyone who is not cisgender; the majority power to enforce that standard.

Cross-dresser: Describes an individual who wears clothing associated with another gender/sex.

Demisexual: An identity along the asexual spectrum; describes those who may only experience sexual attraction and/or engage in sexual behavior with another person in the context of a strong emotional or romantic attraction.

D/L or Down Low: Same gender relations between men who do not necessarily identify as gay or bisexual; may also signify discretion about a particular identity status.

Drag: The performance of one or more genders theatrically.

Drag King: An individual who performs masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen: An individual who performs femininity theatrically.

Exoticism: Seeing a person as special, beautiful, or intriguing due to their status as “other;” this process dehumanizes and emphasizes a person’s status as an object of novelty or intrigue.

Femme: Describes a person who identifies emotionally, mentally, or physically as feminine, regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

Feminism: A movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.

Fluidity: The notion that one’s identity may shift over time, thus defying rigid categorization.

FTM: Abbreviation used to describe a female-to-male transgender person. Such an individual may also be referred to as a transman or man.

Gay: Describes men who identify as experiencing romantic or sexual attraction to other men; may also be used as an umbrella term to describe all individuals who identify as experiencing same-gender attraction.

Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM): Abbreviation describing all people who are not gender or hetero normative; often regarded as more inclusive than abbreviations such as LGBTQIA+, though either is considered acceptable.

Gender Binary: The notion that there are only two genders and an individual must identify as either/or.

Gender Confirming Surgery: Medical surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity.

Gender-expansive: An umbrella term used for individuals that broaden their own culture’s commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender-expansive individuals include those with transgender and non-binary identities, as well as those whose gender in some way is seen to be stretching society’s notions of gender.

Gender Expression: The ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through social cues.

Gender Identity: A person’s inner sense of being feminine, masculine, or another gender.

Gender Normative/ Genderstraight: Describes an individual whose gender expression, presentation, identity, and behaviors conform to gender-based social expectations.

Gender Variant/Gender Non-Conforming: Describes individuals whose gender expression, gender presentation, gender identity, or behavior does not conform to traditional societal expectations; individuals who are gender variant may self-identify in a variety of ways.

Genderqueer: Describes a gender variant individual whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, is fluid, or is some combination of multiple genders.

Grey-A or Greysexual: An identity along the asexual spectrum; describes individuals who may only rarely experience sexual attraction to others.

Heteronormativity: The assumption, made by individuals or within institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to other sexual identities.

Heterosexism: Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice.

Heterosexual Privilege: The benefits or absence of negative consequences derived automatically from a heterosexual identity.

Homophobia: The irrational fear or hatred of persons perceived to be gay, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes; reinforces both sexism and heterosexism.

Homosexual: Describes a person who is primarily romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender; originated in clinical settings (the institutions of psychology and medicine), and is thus becoming dated language.

In the Closet: Not disclosing one's identity status; may be the result of external factors, such as fear of social consequences, as well as internal factors, such as internalized oppression.

Intergender: Describes an individual whose gender identity is between genders or a combination of genders; this identity can fit under the genderqueer umbrella.

Intersectionality: The interplay of various identity types and forms of privilege and/or oppression in the context of a given time and place; the notion that all types of privilege and oppression are interdependent.

Institutional Oppression: The arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another; maintained through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, and other social patterns or habits.

Internalized Oppression: The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex: The condition of being born with biological aspects of both female and male sexes to varying degrees (may be determined through biological structure, hormones, DNA, or other physical factors).

Kyriarchy: Extends the notion of patriarchy to acknowledge intersectionality and the complex dynamics of oppressor/oppressed in a system or systems of domination.

Lesbian: Describes individuals who identify as women and experience romantic and/or sexual attraction to other women.

LGBTQIA+: A common abbreviation used to identify communities that have been marginalized in terms of sexuality and/or gender.

Monosexism: Prejudice against those who are attracted to more than one gender, such as bisexual and pansexual people, and the majority power to enforce that standard.

MSM: Men who have sex with Men. Medical or health documentation terminology.

MTF: Abbreviation used to describe a male-to-female transgender person; such an individual may also be referred to as a transwoman or woman.

Oppression: The systematic domination of one group by another group with access to social power; maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Outing: Involuntary disclosure of another person's identity status.

Pangender: Describes an individual whose gender identity is comprised of all or many genders.

Pansexual: Describes individuals who identify as having a romantic and/or sexual attraction to all or many gender expressions; also considered romantic/sexual attraction to others regardless of gender.

Passing: Describes a person's ability to be perceived by society as their sexual, gender, or racial identity.

Patriarchy: A social organization in which power structures are male-dominated.

Postmodern: A critique of the notion of a single valid universal perspective. The notion that multiple, varying perspectives may constitute truth; queer ideology tends to interpret identity in a postmodern context.

Polyamory: Refers to having honest relationships with multiple individuals; these relationships may have multiple configurations.

Prejudice: A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members.

Queer: A widely used umbrella term used to describe those individuals whose sexual or gender identities have been marginalized; also can describe a non-hetero/gender normative identity, and is often used by those with more fluid identities; may also be used to indicate a particular subversive gender/sexual politic; a reclaimed term that had been used as a slur and can still be considered offensive to some people; should be used carefully by allies, though it is considered acceptable for gender and sexual minority-identified individuals to use it, as well as in academic settings.

Reading: Describes society's ability to accurately perceive an individual's sexual, gender, or racial identity.

Romantic Orientation: Who someone desires to form romantic and/or deep emotional connections with; separates sex out from intimate relationships; though romantic and sexual orientations are often the same, they are not always, and is often a label used by asexual people to express who they are attracted to, even though they are not necessarily sexually attracted to another.

Same Gender Loving: Sometimes used by members of the Black community to express an alternative sexual identity without relying on terms and symbols of European origin.

Sexuality: An individual's exploration of sexual acts, sexual identity, sexual pleasure, and desire.

Stealth: Refers to not disclosing one's gender history in the public sphere.

Stereotype: A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences.

Straight: Slang term for heterosexual.

Top Surgery: Refers to surgery for the construction of a conventionally masculine chest or breast augmentation surgery.

Trans*: A new umbrella term for all transgender-identified people that was created out of internet culture to be more inclusive of non-binary individuals, as many felt that "trans" or "transgender" was being used only for binary-identifying transgender people; asterisk comes from a search engine command to search for all related information.

Transgender: A broad term used to describe all gender variant people, or any person who identifies as a gender not assigned at birth according to anatomical sex

Transphobia: The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

Transmisogyny: A form of oppression; the intersection of transphobia and misogyny experienced by those individuals on the trans-feminine spectrum.

Transsexual: Synonym to transgender, but often denotes a more binary notion of gender; previous definition of the term denoted medical transition, but this definition has largely been discarded as classist; considered dated terminology and/or offensive.

Two-Spirit: Term sometimes used by some Native American peoples to describe those who are not gender or hetero normative that calls back to traditional respect of alternate gender roles; most often used to describe gender non-conforming identities (is not applicable to all Native American groups).

Ze/Hir/Hirself: Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral; there are many other forms of gender neutral pronouns as well.