

LGBTQ Glossary

Below we have compiled a list of terms related to both the LGBTQIA community as well as general social justice terms. Many of the terms and definitions below are ever-evolving and changing and often mean different things to different people. They are provided below as a starting point for discussion and understanding.

Ableism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities.

Ageism: Any attitude, action, or institutional structure, which subordinates a person or group because of age or any assignment of roles in society purely on the basis of age (Traxler, 1980, p.4).

Allosexism: The system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses asexual people.

Allosexual: A sexual orientation generally characterized by feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality.

Androgyne: A person with physical traits of male and female

Asexual: A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.

Bigender: Having two genders, exhibiting cultural characteristics of masculine and feminine roles

Biphobia: fear or hatred of people who are bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, or nonmonosexual. Biphobia is closely linked with transphobia and homophobia.

Bisexual: A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender.

Butch: A gender expression that fits societal definitions of masculinity. Usually used by queer women and trans people, particularly by lesbians. Some consider “butch” to be its own gender identity.

Cisgender: a gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person’s assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgender.

Coming Out: “Coming out" describes voluntarily making public one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It has also been broadened to include other pieces of potentially stigmatized personal information. Terms also used that correlate with this action are: "Being out" which

means not concealing one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and "Outing, " a term used for making public the sexual orientation or gender identity of another who would prefer to keep this information secret.

Cross Dresser (CD): A phrase to describe a person who dresses, at least partially, as a member of a gender other than his/her assigned sex; carries no implications of sexual orientation. Has replaced "Transvestite"

Demisexual: Demisexuality is a sexual orientation in which someone feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond. Most demisexuals feel sexual attraction rarely compared to the general population, and some have little to no interest in sexual activity. Demisexuals are considered to be on the asexual spectrum, meaning they are closely aligned with asexuality

Drag King: A person (often a woman) who appears as a man. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

Drag Queen: A person (often a man) who appears as a woman. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

Dyke: A word used to refer to Lesbians. Originally meant to be a slur, it has been "reclaimed" by many Lesbians who might use it to identify themselves or other Lesbians. It is considered rude to use the word "Dyke" unless you self-identify as one.

Femme: A (traditionally) feminine woman. Mainly used to refer to a feminine lesbian, and especially a feminine lesbian who is attracted to masculine, or butch lesbians.

Gay: A sexual and affectional orientation toward people of the same gender; can be used as an umbrella term for men and women.

Gender: The classification of a species into male and female, as differentiated by social and cultural roles and behavior. It is the range of characteristics pertaining to masculinity and femininity.

Gender Expressions: How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors that society characterizes as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous."

***Gender Identity:** The sense of "being" male or "being" female. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. It is important to note that gender identity, biological sex, and sexual orientation are not necessarily linked.

Gender Nonconforming (GNC): people who do not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of them by society.

Gender Queer: A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.

Gender Variant: A person who varies from the expected characteristics of the assigned gender.

Heteronormativity: A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.

Heterosexism: The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and invisibility.

Heterosexuality: A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.

Homophobia: The irrational hatred and fear of lesbian, gay, and queer people. It can also impact the lives of bisexual, pansexual, transgender, intersex and asexual people. In a broader sense, any disapproval of LGBTQIA people at all, regardless of motive. Homophobia includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence brought on by fear and hatred. It occurs on personal, institutional, and societal levels. Homophobia is closely linked with transphobia and biphobia.

Homosexual/Homosexuality: An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. Historically, it was a term used to pathologize gay and lesbian people.

Internalized oppression: The fear and self-hate of one's own target/subordinate identity/ies, that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about their target/subordinate identity/ies throughout childhood. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex: People who naturally (that is, without any medical intervention) develop primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Many visibly Intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make the individual's sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like. Intersex people are relatively common, although the society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Hermaphrodite is an outdated and inaccurate term that has been used to describe intersex people in the past.

Lesbian: A woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.

LGBT: Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term that is used to refer to the community as a whole. Our center uses LGBTQIA to intentionally include and visibilize the Queer, Intersex and Asexual communities under our umbrella.

LGBTQIA Allyship: The practice of confronting heterosexism, sexism, genderism, allosexism, and monosexism in oneself and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. Is founded on the belief and believes that dismantling heterosexism, biphobia, transphobia and genderism/cis-sexism is a social justice issue.

MOGAI: An acronym that stands for “marginalized orientations, gender alignments, and intersex.” Is used by some in a similar way to the umbrella acronym: LGBTQIA.

Monogamy: Having only one intimate partner at any one time.

Monosexism: The belief in and systematic privileging of monosexuality as superior, and the systematic oppression of non-monosexuality.

Monosexual: People who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for one gender only. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are the most well-known forms of monosexuality.

MSM: An abbreviate for men who have sex with men; they may or may not identify as gay.

Neutrois: A non-binary gender identity that falls under the genderqueer or transgender umbrellas. There is no one definition of Neutrois, since each person that self-identifies as such experiences their gender differently. The most common ones are: Neutral-gender, Null-gender, neither male nor female, Genderless and/or Agender.

Nonmonosexual: people who are attracted to more than one gender.

Omnigender: Possessing all genders. The term is used specifically to refute the concept of only two genders.

Oppression: exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit.

Individual Level: beliefs or behaviors of an individual person; conscious or unconscious actions or attitudes that maintain oppression.

Institutional Level: institutions such as family, government, industry, education, and religion are shapers of, as well as shaped by, the other two levels. The application of institutional policies and procedures in an oppressive society run by individuals or groups who advocate or collude with social oppression produces oppressive consequences.

Societal/Cultural Level: society’s cultural norms perpetuate implicit and explicit values that bind institutions and individuals; cultural guidelines, such as philosophies of life, definitions of good, normal, health, deviance, and sickness, often serve the primary function of providing individuals and institutions with the justification for social oppression.

Pansexual, Omnisexual: Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.

Privilege: a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. The concept has roots in WEB DuBois' work on "psychological wage" and white people's feelings of superiority over Black people. Peggy McIntosh wrote about privilege as a white woman and developed an inventory of unearned privileges that she experienced in daily life because of her whiteness.

Queer: Anyone who chooses to identify as such. This can include, but is not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and asexual people. Not all the people in the above subcategories I.D. as queer, and many people NOT in the above groups DO. This term has different meanings to different people. Some still find it offensive, while others reclaim it to encompass the broader sense of history of the gay rights movement. Can also be used as an umbrella term like LGBT, as in "the queer community." Some transgender people express concern that "queer" only applies to sexual orientation.

Questioning: The process of exploring one's own gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Some folks may also use this term to name their identity within the LGBTQIA community.

Racism: The systematic subordination of targeted racial groups (Black, Latino, Native American/Indigenous, Chicano, API, etc.) who have relatively little social power in the United States, by members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (White).

Sex: The classification of a species into male or female, as differentiated with reference to reproductive functions and genitalia.

Sexism: The cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue ways of being that are associated with women.

Sexuality: The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual Orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their sexual orientation.

Sizism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people based on size or stature. Specifically, this system of oppression subordinates people of short stature and people with large bodies.

SOGIE: An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression. EVERYBODY has one!

Trans man: A transgendered person who was born female but has transitioned to masculinity through hormones, chest surgery, bottom surgery, and/or simply by identifying as male.

Transphobia: The fear or hatred of transgender people or people who do not meet society's gender role expectations. Transphobia is closely linked with homophobia and biphobia.

Trans woman: A transwoman is a male-born human who followed their heart and soul and left the company of the men to become one of the ladies. This includes: complete name changes and receive hormonal treatments (HRT), hair removal treatments, plastic surgery, and may or may not include SRS (Sex Reassignment Surgery, or sex change). Transwomen are, always were, and always will be women.

Transgender: Adjective used most often as an umbrella term, and frequently abbreviated to "trans" or "trans*" (the asterisk indicates the option to fill in the appropriate label, ie. Trans man). It describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Some commonly held definitions:

1. Someone whose determination of their sex and/or gender is not universally considered valid; someone whose behavior or expression does not "match" their assigned sex according to society.
2. A gender outside of the man/woman binary.
3. Having no gender or multiple genders.
4. Some definitions also include people who perform gender or play with it.
5. Historically, the term was coined to designate a trans person who was not undergoing medical transition (surgery or hormones).

Transition: An individualized process by which transsexual and transgender people "switch" from one gender presentation to another. There are three general aspects to transitioning: social (i.e. name, pronouns, interactions, etc.), medical (i.e. hormones, surgery, etc.), and legal (i.e. gender marker and name change, etc.). A trans* individual may transition in any combination, or none, of these aspects.

Transsexual (TS): A person who lives full-time in a gender different than their assigned birth sex and gender. Many pursue hormones and/or surgery. Sometimes used to specifically refer to trans* people pursuing gender or sex confirmation.

Transvestite: This is an outdated and problematic term due to its historical use as a diagnosis for medical/mental health disorders. Cross Dresser has replaced transvestite, see above definition.

Womyn/Womxn: some womyn spell the word with a "y" or an "x" as a form of empowerment to move away from the "men" in the "traditional" spelling of women.

Non-Western LGBTQ Terms and Definitions

***Aikane** (*Hawaiian*): Same sex relationships; male lovers of ancient Hawaiian kings and royalty. A Hawaiian word for “friend.” this word describes the special same-sex relationship between an ali’i and his or her chosen companion. Male and female ali’i had such relationships.

***Aiwahine**: It is understood that female Hawaiian royalty had same-sex lovers as well, but they were not written about by the historians.

***Mahu** (*Hawaiian*): A Hawaiian term that describes a man who has chosen to live as a woman and in the ancient (pre-missionary) culture, such individuals were respected and regarded as important members of the community.

***Mahukane**: A newly coined term of empowerment among Hawaii’s transgender community signifying female-to-male (FTM) transgender. Present scholars note that the mahu gender expression is considered to be very fluid.

***Mahuwahine**: A newly coined term of empowerment among Hawaii’s transgender community signifying male-to-female (MTF) transgender. Present scholars note that the mahu gender expression is considered to be very fluid.

***Bakla** (*Filipino*): General term in Tagalog; gay. **Binabae** (*Filipino*): Politically correct term for gay; used to describe a feminine male. From the word babae, meaning woman.

***Binalaki** (*Filipino*): For lesbians; to describe a masculine female. From the word lalaki, meaning man.

***Fa’afafine** (*Samoa*): Literally translates as ‘in the manner of a woman’. Fa’afafine are biological males who express feminine gender identities in a range of ways.

***Fakaleiti** (*Tonga*): Like a lady; feminine.

***Mahuti** (*Tahiti*): **Rae-rae** – is the term that is most commonly used to describe transvestites.

***Katoey** (*Thailand*): A Thai term that refers to a transgender or effeminate gay male. The accepted definition of a Katoey is a female soul trapped inside a male body.

***Two-Spirit** (*Native American, First Nations*): The umbrella term used in Native American tribes and First Nations communities to describe someone who is thought to possess both male and female gender qualities. Two-Spirit people were traditionally known to be healers with important roles in the tribal community. Two-Spirit individuals in the various Native American languages – including Lakots: winkte, Navajo: nadleehe, and Mohave: hwame.

***Heidras** (*India*)

***Caspillas** (*Marshall Islands*)

(Source: Mental Health America of Hawaii *)

(Source: <http://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary.html> “LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary”)