

LGBTQI+ Terminology

Please note these are not all the definitions within the LGBTQI+ community. These terms are constantly changing and could be outdated by the time you read this. We have done our best use the most updated and accurate definitions.

Ally- Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and genderstraight privilege in themselves and others.

Coming Out- May refer to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality or gender identity. Can refer to telling family, friends, and others who are in one's life.

Discrimination- 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.

In the Closet- (SLANG) Refers to someone who is a part of the LGBT+ community and will not or cannot disclose their identity.

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 starts to believe and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersectionality- Refers to an analytic framework which attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power and identity impact those who are most marginalized in society.

Intersex Person- Someone who has ambiguous genitalia categorized by a medical professional. A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sexual organs, and/or genitals differs from one of the two social patterns.

LGBTQI- (LGBT, GLBT, LGBT+) A common abbreviation for the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual, ally, queer and intersex.

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 benefits and practices.

Outing- (SLANG) Involuntary disclosure of one's sexual and/or gender identity status

Passing- (SLANG, MIDLY DEROGATIVE) Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their gender/sexual orientation or race/ethnicity in the social norm.

Queer- (SLANG, MIDLY DEROGATIVE) An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively majority. Can include gay, lesbian, trans, intersex, gender nonconforming people. Historically is a derogative term, some younger generations have reclaimed the word.

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

Asexual- Without sexual feelings or associations

BDSM (Bondage, Discipline/Domination, Submission, and Masochism) - This term refers to deriving pleasures from inflicting/receiving pain, often in a sexual context. The term further refers to playing with various power roles, in both sexual and social contexts.

Bear- (SLANG) A man who has facial/body hair and a cuddly body. However, the term can mean many different things depending on the culture. Can be seen as mildly derogative.

Bicurious- (SLANG) Interest in having sexual relations with the same gender.

Biphobia- The social construct of fear or discrimination against bisexuals.

Bisexual- A person emotionally, physically and/or sexually attracted to masculinity and femininity. This attraction does not have to be equally split and is the preference of the individual.

Bottom-(SLANG) A person who takes a more “submissive” role during sexual interactions.

Butch- (SLANG, MIDLY OFFENSIVE) A person who identifies themselves as masculine. This term is usually used derogatively towards lesbians.

Dyke- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) Derogatory term referring to a masculine lesbian.

Fag- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) Derogatory term referring to someone perceived as non-heterosexual.

Fag Hag- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) A term primarily used to describe women who prefer the social company of gay men. This term can also mean a woman pretending/playing the role of a gay man’s partner. Also known as “Beard”.

Gay- Term used in some cultural settings to represent male-identified people who are attracted romantically, sexually and/or emotionally to other male-identified people. Sometimes this term can be labeled people who do not identify as “straight”. Can be derogative depending on context.

Heteronormativity- The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and heterosexuality is superior to other sexualities.

Heterosexism- Prejudice against individuals and groups who display nonheterosexual behaviors or identities.

Heterosexual Privilege- Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to people of different sexualities.

Homophobia- The social construct of irrational fear or hatred of people who identify as homosexual or gay.

Homosexual- A historical term referring to a person attracted physically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to members of the same gender.

Lesbian- Term used in some cultural settings to represent female-identified people who are attracted romantically, physically and/or emotionally to other female-oriented people.

Lesbian Baiting- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) Derogative terms referring to women who prefer the company of other women who do not have male partners.

Lipstick Lesbian- (SLANG, MIDLY OFFENSIVE) Usually referring to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a derogative manner.

Metrosexual- Term referring to an urban, heterosexual male identified person with a strong aesthetic sense. This term can be used derogatively by reinforcing stereotypes of masculinity.

Pansexual- Not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity.

Polyamory- Refers to having relationships with multiple partners that can include but not limited to: open, polyfidelity (involving multiple romantic relationships with sexual contact restricted to those).

Sexual Orientation- The desire for intimate, emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the varying genders.

Sexuality- A person's exploration of sexual acts, orientations, pleasures, and desires.

Straight- Modern term for heterosexual.

Straight-Acting- (SLANG, MILDLY OFFENSIVE) A term usually applied to gay men who readily pass as heterosexual. This concept reinforces the stereotypes of masculinity.

Switch- (SLANG) A person who is a "top" and "bottom". Also referred as "versatile".

Top-(SLANG) A person who is said to take a more dominant role during sexual interactions.

Agender- Denoting or relating to a person who does not identify themselves as having a particular gender.

Androgyne- Person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman, or both; presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.

Berdache- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) Term used to refer to a third gender person, was assigned by European settlers to differently gendered Native people.

Bigender- A person whose gender identity is a combination of masculinity and femininity.

Binding- The process of flattening one's upper genitals to have a more masculine or flat appearing chest.

Bottom Surgery- (SLANG) Surgery on genitals designed to create a body in affirmation with a person's gender. See "Sexual Reassignment Surgery"

Cisgender- Describes someone who feels comfortable/affirmed with the gender identity and expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex at birth.

Cross-Dresser- (SLANG, MIDLY OFFENSIVE) Someone who wears clothes of another gender, can be for performance drag. Typically used as a derogatory term for transgender and gender nonconforming people.

Drag- The performance of one/multiple genders theatrically.

Drag King- A person who performs masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen- A person who performs femininity theatrically.

Femme- (SLANG) Feminine identified person of any gender.

FTM- Abbreviation for a female-to-male transgender person.

Gender Binary- The idea that there are only two genders- male and female and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or. See "Identity Sphere".

Gender Cues- What people use to attempt to tell the gender of another person. Examples include hairstyle, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture.

Gender Dysphoria- Is a condition where a person experienced discomfort and/or distress from their gender identity and societal expectations given at birth and conditioning in life.

Gender Fluid- A phrase that describes a mix/blend of gender characteristics or identities.

Gender Identity- A person's own personal experience of one's own gender.

Gender Nonconforming- Experience of a person whose behavior/appearance does not conform to societal expectations.

Gender Normative- A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society. Also known as Genderstraight.

Gender Oppression- The societal, institutional and individual beliefs and practices that privilege cisgender individuals.

Gender Variant- A person who does not conform to gender-based expectations of society.

Genderqueer- A gender variant person whose gender identity is between or beyond genders.

Hermaphrodite- (OFFENSIVE) An out-to-date and derogatory term for someone who is intersex.

Identity Sphere or Spectrum- The idea that gender identities and expressions do not fit on a linear scale, but rather on a sphere.

Misgender- Refers to someone (especially to someone who is transgender) using a word, phrase, pronouns, and/or question that does not correctly reflect the gender or experience the other person identifies with.

MTF- Abbreviation for a male-to-female transgender person.

Packing- (SLANG) Wearing a phallic device on/around the groin and under clothing for any purpose of their own.

Pangender- Is a nonbinary gender defined as being more than one gender.

Sex- A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external genitalia, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances to subdivide people into dichotomous categories. This does not include intersex.

Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS) or Gender Affirming Surgery- A term used by medical professional to refer to a group of surgical options that align a person's physical state with their gender identity.

Stealth- (SLANG) This term refers to when a person chooses to be secretive in the public sphere about their gender identity and history. See "Passing".

Top Surgery- (SLANG) This term typically refers to surgeries for the upper chest area. Can also be a term to describe breast augmentation.

Trans- An abbreviation that typically refers to a gender variant person, someone who does not fit into the gender binary.

Transactivism- The political and social movement to create equality for gender variant people.

Transhate- The irrational hatred of those who are gender variant, usually expressed through violent and often deadly means.

Tranny Chaser- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) A derogatory term used to describe people who prefer or actively seek transpeople for sexual or romantic relations.

Transition- This term is used to refer to the process of a gender variant person who undergoes the change of bodily appearances to be in affirmation with their gender identity.

Transman-(SLANG) An identity label sometimes adopted by transgender males.

Transphobia- The socially constructed irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to comprehend gender ambiguity.

Transsexual- (OFFENSIVE) An outdated term for someone who is gender variant and often wishes to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically. This term is very derogatory to the transgender community.

Transvestite- (SLANG, OFFENSIVE) A term for someone who dresses in clothing generally identifies with the opposite gender. This term is typically incorrectly and derogatorily used for transgender people. See "Cross Dresser".

Transwoman- (SLANG) An identity label sometimes adopted by transgender females.

Two-Spirited- Native Americans who have attributes of both genders, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes and are often involved with mystical rituals.

Ze/Hir- Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant people.