

Terminology

Building a Common Language

Every thorough discussion about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community starts with some affirming shared understanding of some basic, sometimes confusing, and always evolving terms. You may be surprised by some of the terms in this section. Please do not be afraid to ask for clarification.

Advocate: (noun) a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. (verb) to actively support or plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance or educate others.

AFAB: acronym meaning Assigned Female at Birth. AFAB people may or may not identify as female some or all of the time. AFAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to womanhood or femaleness.

Affirmed Gender: an individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. This term should replace terms like new gender or chosen gender, which imply that an individual chooses their gender.

Agender: a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

Ally: a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

AMAB: acronym meaning Assigned Male at Birth. AMAB people may or may not identify as male some or all of the time. AMAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to manhood or maleness.

Androgynous: identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

Aromantic: experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to "aro" (pronounced like "arrow").

Asexual/Ace: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to “ace.”

Bicurious: a curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

Bigender: a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).

Binder: an undergarment used to alter or reduce the appearance of one’s chest (worn similarly to how one wears a sports bra).

Binding: the (sometimes daily) process of wearing a binder. Binding is often used to change the way other’s read/perceive one’s anatomical sex characteristics, and/or as a form of gender expression.

Bioessentialism: short for biological essentialism. Reliance or weaponization of biology in an attempt to disprove trans people’s genders. Common bioessentialist arguments reduce people to their chromosomes (though there are more than 30 chromosome combinations that people have); their genitalia (though there are many natural variations; or their binary gender (though gender and sex are not binary).

Biological Sex: a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.”

Biphobia: a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society.

Biphobic: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward bisexual people.

BIPOC: acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It acknowledges the specific histories of Black, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islanders (API), and Native people within

the United States without collapsing them into a homogenous category of people of color.

Bisexual: a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with “pansexual”.

Bottom Surgery: surgery performed on an individual’s reproductive system as a part of gender-affirming surgery. (See Gender-Affirming Surgery.) Not all trans people undergo medical interventions as part of their transition. As with any other aspect of transition, trans people retain the right not to discuss their surgical history, and surgery does not define gender.

Butch: a person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally, or emotionally. ‘Butch’ is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but is also be claimed as an affirmative identity label.

Chosen Family: Also known as Found Family, people who support an LGBTQ+ person, who are not biologically related, and who often fill the role of the biological family if an LGBTQ+ person’s family is not supportive of them. PFLAG supports LGBTQ+ people in the pursuit of their Found Families through local chapter meetings.

Cisgender: a gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”

Cisnormativity: the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans’ identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.

Cissexism: behavior that grants preferential treatment to cisgender people, reinforces the idea that being cisgender is somehow better or more “right” than being transgender, and/or makes other genders invisible.

Closeted: an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.” When someone chooses to break this silence they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)

Coming Out: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). The process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

Constellation: a way to describe the arrangement or structure of a polyamorous relationship.

Culturally Queer: From the Queerspawn Resource Project: Living Language Guide, "Speaks to the feeling shared by many people with LGBTQ+ parents that they grew up immersed in queer culture, including traditions, celebrations, media, and language. Queerspawns are often raised in the queer community and learn about society primarily through a queer lens, and experience heterosexual culture and its norms as a secondary cultural influence."

Deadname/Deadnaming: the act of referring to a transgender person's birth name instead of their chosen name. Many consider deadnaming to be a form of transphobia.

Demiboy: a person whose gender identity is only partly male, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.

Demigirl: a person whose gender identity is only partly female, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.

Demiromantic: little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual connection is formed with someone, often within a sexual relationship.

Demisexual: little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

Disclosure: a word that some people use to describe the act or process of revealing one's transgender or gender-expansive identity to another person in a specific instance. Some find the term offensive, implying the need to disclose something shameful, and prefer to use the term coming out, whereas others find coming out offensive, and prefer to use disclosure.

Down Low: typically referring to men who identify as straight but who secretly have sex with men. Down low (or DL) originated in, and is most commonly used by, communities of color.

Drag King: someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen: someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.

Dyke: referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is also reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians and gay women as a positive self-identity term.

Emotional Attraction: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in emotionally intimate behavior (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, inter-depending), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

Fag(got): derogatory term referring to a gay person, or someone perceived as queer. While often used derogatorily, it is also used reclaimed by some gay people (often gay men) as a positive in-group term.

Feminine-of-center/Masculine-of-center: a phrase that indicates a range in terms of gender identity and expression for people who present, understand themselves, and/or relate to others in a generally more feminine/masculine way, but don't necessarily identify as women or men. Feminine-of-center individuals may also identify as "femme," "submissive," "transfeminine," etc.; masculine-of-center individuals may also often identify as "butch," "stud," "aggressive," "boi," "transmasculine," etc.

Feminine-presenting/Masculine-presenting: a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way. Often confused with feminine-of-center/masculine-of-center, which generally include a focus on identity as well as expression.

Femme: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. Often used to refer to a feminine-presenting queer woman or people.

Fluid(ity): generally with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, bi and straight).

Folx: an alternative spelling to folks. The two words are pronounced the same way. Folx is viewed by some as a more inclusive version of the word folks, though both are gender-neutral ways of addressing a group of people. PFLAG National does not use folx because it is difficult for screen readers (for people with visual disabilities) to read.

FTM/F2M: an abbreviation of Female to Male; a transgender man.

FTX/F2X: a genderqueer or gender-expansive person assigned female at birth.

Gatekeeping: a broad term, not only used within the LGBTQ+ community, which describes the process by which an individual decides who does or does not belong to a

certain community, group, or identity. For example, a gay man telling a questioning man that he has to have sex with another man before he can call himself gay is an example of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping, which can come from inside or outside the LGBTQ+ community should be avoided, as it is painful and invalidating to the recipient in either instance.

Gayby: a person with one or more LGBTQ+ parent or caregiver. Typically, a term used for self-identification only.

Gay: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

Gender: broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate.

Gender Binary: the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

Gender Dysphoria: clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender Euphoria: a euphoric feeling often experienced when one's gender is recognized and respected by others, when one's body aligns with one's gender, or when one expresses themselves in accordance with their gender. Focusing on gender euphoria instead of gender dysphoria shifts focus towards the positive aspects of being transgender or gender expansive.

Gender Expansive: a person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender Expression: the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

Gender Identity: the internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

Gender Neutrois: see agender.

Gender Non-conforming: a gender expression descriptor that indicates a nontraditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). A gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as “GNC.”

Gender Normative/Gender Straight: someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society’s gender-based expectations.

Gender Performance Theory: coined by Judith Butler, gender performance theory is the concept that people do not have inherent genders based on their biological sex. According to this theory, people continually perform their genders, instead of relying on their assigned sexes to determine their genders for them.

Genderqueer: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. An umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

Gender Socialization: a process that influences and teaches an individual how to behave as a man or a woman, based on culturally defined gender roles (see Gender Roles). Parents, teachers, peers, media, and faith traditions are some of the many agents of gender socialization. Gender socialization looks very different across cultures, both inside and outside of the U.S. It is heavily impacted by other intersecting identities (see Intersectionality).

Gender Spectrum: the concept that gender exists beyond a simple man/woman binary model (see Gender Binary), but instead exists on a continuum. Some people fall towards more masculine or feminine aspects, some people move fluidly along the spectrum, and some exist off the spectrum entirely.

Gender Variant: someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to genderbased expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, crossdresser, etc).

Grey-romantic: a term to describe someone who may feel some romantic attraction for other people.

Grey-sexual: a term to describe someone who may feel some sexual attraction for other people.

Hermaphrodite: an offensive term for someone who is intersex (see Intersex). The term has valid uses within academic circles relating to the study of non-human animals and plants but should not be used to describe humans.

Heteroflexible: a straight person who is most often attracted to people of a different gender from themselves but sometimes experiences attraction to people of the same gender as them. It is distinct from bisexuality. The term can have negative connotations of experimentation or indecision.

Heteronormativity: the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

Heterosexism: behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than queerness, and/or makes other sexualities invisible.

Heterosexual/Straight: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

Homoflexible: A gay person who is most often attracted to people of the same gender as themselves but sometimes experience attraction to people of other genders or engage in sexual behavior with people of different genders from their own. It is distinct from bisexuality.

Homophobia: an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

Homophobic: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

Hormone Blockers (also referred to as Puberty Blockers): medical treatment which allows young trans and gender-expansive people to prevent the potentially negative outcomes of going through a puberty that does not match their gender identity.

House-Ballroom Community: the underground subculture consisting of mainly Black and Latinx members of the LGBTQ+ community who 'walk' to earn recognition and awards within their community. 'Houses' are chosen families that individuals compete with and often live with (see Chosen Family). These categories represent the barriers that Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC) face in accessing formal employment, housing, and public services.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): treatment which allows trans and gender-expansive people to medically transition or feel more at home in their bodies. Those

taking testosterone (masculinizing hormones) may grow more facial/body hair and notice their voices deepening. Those taking estrogen (feminizing hormones) may see some breast growth and decreased libido. Many intersex people take HRT to balance the naturally occurring levels of estrogen and testosterone in their bodies. Benefits of such therapy can include improved mental and physical wellness, and reduced anxiety and dysphoria, for those who experience it.

Hyperfemininity: term for the exaggeration of stereotypically female behavior, based on so-called gender roles (see Gender Roles). Hyperfeminine behavior is often expected of trans women in order to be seen as “real” women.

Hypermasculinity: term for the exaggeration of stereotypically male behavior, based on so-called gender roles (see Gender Roles). Hypermasculine behavior is often expected of trans men in order to be seen as “real” men. Heterosexual men may display hypermasculine behaviors to “prove” that they are not gay, even though gay men have many understandings of their own masculinity.

Intersectionality: Coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, this term refers to the overlap of social categorizations or identities such as race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, geography, and class which exist in an individual or group of people that can contribute to discrimination or disadvantage.

Intersex/Difference of Sexual Development (DSD): term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

Kinsey Scale: a scale developed in the 1940s by Alfred Kinsey which places an individual’s sexual orientation on a spectrum from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual). The scale included the measurement “X” which indicated an absence of sexual behavior. The scale was an early recognition of fluid sexual orientation and was credited with challenging the heterosexual/homosexual binary.

Latinx: an inclusive, gender-neutral term--sometimes used in place of the gendered, binary terms Latino or Latina--used to describe a person of Latin-American origin or descent. While many in the progressive space use this term, 2019 Pew research shows that, while one-in-four U.S. Hispanics have heard the term, only 23% of U.S. adults who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino have heard the term, and just 3% say they use it to describe themselves .

Lesbian: women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG: shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a nonnormative

(or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people add a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

Lifestyle: a previously used and offensive term used to describe LGBTQ+ people's sexual orientation and gender expression/identity as a "choice."

Lipstick Lesbian: Usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way. Is sometimes also used to refer to a lesbian who is assumed to be (or passes for) straight.

Lived Experience: to value the personal experiences of individuals as much as quantitative data. For example, believing narratives of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people persisting even if they counter larger narratives of acceptance. The concept of lived experience as a criterion on meaning was coined by Patricia Hill Collins.

Living Openly: a state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them.

Misgender: to refer to someone using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, which does not correctly reflect their gender. This may be unintentional and without ill intent or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering has a harmful impact.

Misogynoir: a term coined by queer Black feminist Moya Bailey to describe misogyny directed towards Black women where race and gender both play roles in bias.

Mispronoun: similar to misgendering, mispronouncing is to refer to a person with the incorrect pronouns. This term is less common than misgendering, as pronouns are often an important aspect of people's genders. This may be unintentional and without ill intent, or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, mispronouncing has a harmful impact.

MLM: Men Loving Men, refers to gay, bisexual, pansexual or otherwise same-gender loving men. Used most commonly within the Black community, the term is more often written than used in conversation.

Monogamous: a term referring to individuals who are intimate or involved romantically with one person at a time.

Monolith: refers to a large single upright block of stone, formally, and a group or organization with unified and unchanging attributes, informally. In context, the term monolith is used to show that “[group of people] are not a monolith.” It means that members of a group have varying experiences, and the voice of one member of the group should not be taken as a representation of the experiences of all members of that group.

Monosexism: the opinion that being attracted to one gender is superior to being attracted to multiple genders.

Monosexual: people who only experience attraction to one gender. Examples of monosexual groups include gay men, lesbians, and straight people.

MSM/WSW: men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviors from sexual identities: because a man is straight, it doesn’t mean he’s not having sex with men. Often used in the field of HIV/Aids education, prevention, and treatment.

Mx./“Mix” or “Schwa”: an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Smith is a great teacher.

MTF/M2F: a trans woman/trans feminine person assigned male at birth.

MTX/M2X: a genderqueer or gender-expansive person assigned male at birth.

Nibling: a gender-neutral term for niece/nephew.

Nonbinary: a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

Nonbinary Lesbian: a term to describe a nonbinary person whose primary romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction is to women. Lesbianism has historically included people of varying gender expressions and people with varying relationships to the lesbian community (before bisexual and pansexual came into common use, any woman who felt romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction to women was considered a lesbian). This combination of terms came about due to the lack of a specific term for a nonbinary person who is only attracted to one gender.

Omnisexual: refers to a person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people of any gender, and who notice their partner's gender. This term differs from

pansexual, in that people who are pansexual are also emotionally, romantically, and physically attracted to people of all genders, but do not notice their partner's gender.

Opposite Sex: inaccurate descriptor of gender, implying that there are only two genders that oppose one another. Also an inaccurate descriptor of sex, as biological sexes are also not opposites. Better terms include different gender or AMAB/AFAB, depending on context.

Out: a term which describes people who openly self-identify as LGBTQ+ in their private, public, and/or professional lives. There are many states of being out; individuals can be out only to themselves, close friends, or everyone. Some transgender people prefer to use the term disclose.

Outing: involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

Pansexual: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

Passing: trans people being accepted as, or able to "pass for," a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

PGPs: preferred gender pronouns. Often used during introductions, becoming more common as a standard practice. Many suggest removing the "preferred," because it indicates flexibility and/or the power for the speaker to decide which pronouns to use for someone else.

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP): This is an emergency prescription antiretroviral medication to be taken within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV. Possible exposure includes during sex, sharing needles to inject drugs, or if you have been sexually assaulted. Though PEP is highly effective in preventing HIV, it should not be taken in place of other HIV prevention measures, such as taking PrEP (see PrEP) or practicing safe sex.

Polyamory (polyamorous): refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to "poly."

Polysexual: a term for a person who may be attracted to multiple genders, including those outside the gender binary.

Positive: shorthand for being HIV+. In context, "I'm positive" is a disclosure of a person's HIV status. It is never appropriate to share a person's HIV status without their

explicit consent. Refrain from discussing a person's HIV status unless they bring up the topic.

Pre-, Post-, or Non-Operative (or -Op): the terms used to describe the surgery status of a transgender person. Pre-Op means that a person has not had gender-affirming surgery (See Gender-Affirming Surgery) and may or may not plan to. Post-Op means that an individual has had gender-affirming surgery. Non-Op means that a person does not plan to have gender-affirming surgery. The choice to have gender-affirming surgery is highly personal and does not affect the validity of a person's gender identity. Refrain from discussing a trans person's surgical history or future unless they bring up the topic.

Preference: a preference is a specific set of desires people have in romantic, emotional and/or sexual partners. People's sexual orientations are not preferences, but they can have preferences (e.g. having a "type") in the people they become involved with. Preferences can be logistical (e.g. lives within a certain distance, not looking for a relationship) and interest based (e.g. likes to stay in, enjoys long walks on the beach). They can also be influenced by personal and systemic prejudices (e.g. not considering people whose gender expressions do not conform to conventional standards of that gender, people whose bodies are not conventionally attractive, or people with other marginalized identities). People can have their own preferences but should consider examining why they hold these preferences in order to make sure they are not reproducing inequalities.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): a prescription medication those at higher risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. Though PrEP is highly effective in preventing HIV, it should not be taken in place of other HIV prevention measures, such practicing safe sex and not sharing drug-related injection equipment.

Pronouns: the words used to refer to a person other than their name. Common pronouns are they/them, he/him, and she/her. Neopronouns are pronouns created to be specifically gender-neutral including xe/xem, ze/zir and fae/faer. Pronouns are sometimes called Personal Gender Pronouns, or PGPs. For those who use pronouns--and not all people do--they are not preferred, they are essential.

PTP: acronym for Person with a Transgender Parent (see Transpawn)

Queer: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. A slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur in many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term "queer" can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTQ people").

Questioning: an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

QPOC/QTPOC: initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

Queerbaiting: a marketing technique in which media creators or executives allude to the presence of LGBTQ+ characters or relationships within their content, but fail to include actual representation so as not to lose non-LGBTQ+ viewers.

Queerspawn: a person with one or more LGBTQ+ parents or caregivers. Typically a term used for self-identification.

Romantic Orientation: an inherent or immutable enduring romantic or emotional attraction to others.

Same-Gender Loving (SGL): sometimes used by some members of the African-American or Black community to express a non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

Sapphic: drawn from the Greek lesbian poet Sappho's name, a term used to refer to lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or otherwise same-gender loving (see SGL) women.

Sex Assigned at Birth (SAAB): a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called "designated sex at birth" (DSAB) or "sex coercively assigned at birth" (SCAB), or specifically used as "assigned male at birth" (AMAB) or "assigned female at birth" (AFAB): Jenny was assigned male at birth, but identifies as a woman.

Sexual Attraction: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

Sexual Orientation: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

Sexual Preference: the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with "sexual orientation," creating an illusion that one has a choice (or "preference") in who they are attracted to.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS): used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex. "Gender confirmation surgery" is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as "top" surgery and "bottom" surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

Skoliosexual: being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or non-binary people.

SOGI: acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It is typically used as a shorthand in writing and is rarely pronounced out loud.

Spectrum: the gender spectrum at its simplest is a line of possibility drawn between "male" and "female" and at its most complex is an infinite dimensional vector space. The term is often used to validate that there are more than two genders and that there are infinite ways to express yourself and your identities.

Stealth: a trans person who is not "out" as trans, and is perceived/known by others as cisgender.

Straight: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

Stud: most commonly used to indicate a Black/African-American and/or Latina masculine lesbian/queer woman. Also known as 'butch' or 'aggressive'.

TERF: acronym for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist (pronounced "turf"). The term TERF originated online in 2008 from trans inclusive cisgender radical feminist blogger Viv Smythe; however exclusion of trans people--especially trans women--from feminist organizing spaces has been gaining traction since the 1970s. TERFs primarily believe that trans women are men trying to invade women's spaces, and work aggressively to deny the existence and identity of transgender people.

TGNC: initialism for trans and gender nonconforming. An umbrella term for people who are not cisgender. It is pronounced T-G-N-C, but is more commonly written than spoken.

Third Gender: for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognize three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

Top Surgery: this term refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

Trans: an umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

Trans-antagonistic: active hostility towards trans and gender-expansive people with the goal of enacting harm.

Trancestors: an informal term for trans elders, coming from a combination of the words “transgender” and “ancestors.” The term highlights the fact that many trans people do not get to grow old, and celebrates intergenerational relationships. Trancestors can be well-known within the movement or personal to a community, filling a parent or grandparent-like role (see Chosen Family). Trancestors can make an impact during and after their lives, and prove that there is a long history of transgender people throughout the world.

Transfeminine: an AMAB person who is closer to femininity than masculinity but is not a binary woman. Often abbreviated to transfem or transfemme.

Transgender: a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. An umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

Transition/Transitioning: referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).

Transman/Transwoman: an identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transgender people to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as assigned female sex at birth. (sometimes referred to as transguy) Identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as assigned male sex at birth.

Transmasculine: an AFAB person who is closer to masculinity than femininity but is not a binary man. Often abbreviated to transmasc.

Transmedicalism: also known as transmedicalism, transmedicalists are people, both trans and cisgender, who believe gender dysphoria and the desire to medically transition are criteria to being legitimately trans.

Transmisogyny: misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive women that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.

Transmisogynoir: misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive Black women, that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.

Transphobia: the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans people, the trans community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

Transphobic: a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans people.

Transpaw: a person with one or more transgender or non-binary parent or caregiver. Typically, a term used for self identification only.

Transsexual: a term which refers to people who consider or use medical interventions such as hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgeries, also called sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or pursue medical interventions as part of the process of expressing their gender. A less frequently used—and sometimes misunderstood—term (considered by some to be outdated or possibly offensive, and others to be uniquely applicable to them). Some transsexual people do not identify as transgender and vice versa. Like the term queer, due to its varying meanings, use this term only when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as transsexual.

Two-spirit: is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.

T4T: Abbreviation of Trans 4 Trans. A trans or gender-expansive person who is only interested in emotional, romantic, intimate, and/or sexual partnerships with other trans people. It centers the beauty of being trans by celebrating the diversity of trans experience. T4T relationships allow trans people space from having to explain their genders or experiences to cisgender partners.

WLW: Women Loving Women, refers to lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or otherwise same-gender loving women (pronounced “W-L-W” or “wuh-luh-wuh”). Often used in communities of color, this specification grew from the historical notion that any woman who had emotional, romantic, intimate, and/or sexual partnerships with women as lesbians. As more understandings of sexuality have come to light, WLW has largely replaced lesbian as a unifying term to describe these women.

WSW: an abbreviation for Women Who Have Sex with Women. Reports on STIs and in public health commonly use this term, although those who identify as WSW may or may not identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Ze/Zir/“Zee”, “Zerr” or “Zeer”: alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

Citations

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Glossary of LGBTQ Terms

Antidiscrimination Laws: Federal, state, and local laws that prohibit the government and/or private organizations from discriminating against someone based on certain personal characteristics, such as race, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Cyberbullying: Harassment or intimidation conducted through electronic communications methods such as the internet and text messages.

Day of Silence: A national observance founded by GLSEN, usually occurring in April and organized by student groups, during which students take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest discrimination against LGBTQ students.

Discrimination: The different and unfair treatment of certain groups of people based on specific characteristics, such as race, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Equal Protection: A constitutional guarantee that the government will treat one person or group of people the same way that it would treat any other person or group of people under the same circumstances.

First Amendment: A provision of the U.S. Constitution that guarantees freedoms of association and expression, including freedom of speech.

Freedom of Speech: The constitutional right to express your thoughts, ideas, and opinions without interference from the government.

Gay-Straight Alliance: A student club for LGBTQ students and their straight allies, designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for social interaction, education, and advocacy.

Gender Expression: The outward manifestation of internal gender identity, through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms and other characteristics.

Harassment: Actions or words that harm or distress a person, and do not otherwise serve a legitimate purpose. Harassment often interferes with the ability to take full advantage of educational opportunities.

Hate Crime: A crime that is motivated by personal characteristics such as race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Under federal law and some state and local laws, hate crimes may be investigated by additional law enforcement personnel and can carry additional penalties.

Lgbt History Month: A month-long celebration of the LGBT rights movement and of historical LGBT figures, celebrated in October in the United States.

Pride: The idea, and events celebrating the idea, that people should be proud of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Title IX : A federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that receives assistance from the federal government.

Citations

Glossary of Terms. (2021). Human Rights Campaign. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>