

LGBTQI Glossary

There are many terms used to understand sex, gender, sexuality, and identity. Below is a definition list compiled by the University of California at Los Angeles¹ that may be helpful as you seek to educate yourself.

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 individual context. Please note that each person who uses any a term does so in a unique way. If you do not understand the context in which a person is using a term, you can respectfully ask them.

- **Agendered:** Person is internally ungendered.
- **Ally:** Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and genderstraight privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.
- **Androgyne** - Person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.
- **Asexual** - Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.
- **Bicurious** - A curiosity about having sexual relations with a same gender/sex person.
- **Bigendered** - A person whose gender identity is a combination of male/man and female/woman.
- **Bisexual** - A person 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.
- **Cisgender** – describes someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex.
- **Drag** - The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically.
- **Drag King** – A person who performs masculinity theatrically.
- **Drag Queen** – A person who performs femininity theatrically
- **Dyke** – Derogatory term referring to a masculine lesbian. Sometimes adopted affirmatively by lesbians (not necessarily masculine ones) to refer to themselves.
- **FTM / F2M** - Abbreviation for female-to-male transgender or transsexual person.
- **Gay** – 1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in “homosexual behavior” identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with

¹ <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>

caution. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQI community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

- **Gender Binary** – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.
- **Gender Confirming Surgery** – Medical surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity. See “Sex Reassignment Surgery.”
- **Gender Identity** – A person’s sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.
- **Gender Variant** – A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.).
- **Genderqueer** – A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Often includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.
- **Heteronormativity** - The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.
- **Heterosexual Privilege** –Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals. Also, the benefits homosexuals and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.
- **Homophobia** – The irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes. It is this fear that enforces sexism as well as heterosexism.
- **Homosexual** – A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex
- **Intergender** – A person whose gender identity is between genders or a combination of genders.
- **Intersexed Person** - Someone whose sex a doctor has a difficult time categorizing as either male or female. A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from one of the two expected patterns.
- **Lesbian** – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people. The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African-Americans and other non-European ethnic groups. This being said, individual female-identified people from diverse ethnic groups, including African-Americans, embrace the term ‘lesbian’ as an identity label.
- **LGBTQI** – A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersexed community.
- **MTF / M2F** – Abbreviation for male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.
- **Pansexual** - A person who is sexually attracted to all or many gender expressions.

- **Passing** – Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual.
- **Queer** – 1. An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive (underworld) explorers. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of 'bisexual' as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride. 'Queer' is an example of a word undergoing this process. For decades 'queer' was used solely as a derogatory adjective for gays and lesbians, but in the 1980s the term began to be used by gay and lesbian activists as a term of self-identification. Eventually, it came to be used as an umbrella term that included gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold 'queer' to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive. Similarly, other reclaimed words are usually offensive to the in-group when used by outsiders, so extreme caution must be taken concerning their use when one is not a member of the group.
- **Sex** - A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female', this category does not recognize the existence of intersexed bodies.
- **Sex Identity** – How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither.
- **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.
- **Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS)** – A term used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's "sex". In most states, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Also known as "Gender Confirming Surgery."
- **Sexuality** – A person's exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.
- **Straight** – Another term for heterosexual.
- **Top Surgery** - This term usually refers to surgery for the construction of a maletype chest, but may also refer to breast augmentation.
- **Trans** - An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a gender variant 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 gender variant community as a whole.

- **Transgender** – A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.
- **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 they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.
- **Transman** - An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as females. Also referred to as ‘transguy(s).’
- **Transwoman** - An identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as males
- **Transphobia** – The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity
- **Two-Spirited** – Native persons who have attributes of both genders, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans). Their dress is usually mixture of male and female articles and they are seen as a separate or third gender. The term ‘two-spirit’ is usually considered to specific to the Zuni tribe. Similar identity labels vary by tribe and include ‘one-spirit’ and ‘wintke’.
- **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.