



## COMMON LGBTQ TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### **ALLY:**

Any person who actively supports LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual and/or Ally) individuals and causes, and speaks out in support of justice for LGBTQIA+ communities.

### **ASEXUAL:**

The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.

### **BIPHOBIA:**

The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to more than one gender.

### **BISEXUAL:**

A person emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

### **CISGENDER/ GENDER NORMATIVE:**

Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

### **COMING OUT:**

The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

### **FTM:**

Female-to-male. Indicates a transgender individual who was originally assigned the sex of female at birth, but has claimed a male identity through clothing, surgery, hormones, and/or attitude changes.

### **GAY:**

A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women, and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

### **GENDER:**

Gender refers to that which society deems "masculine" or "feminine". Gender is socially constructed and is not necessarily the same as an individual's biological sex.

### **GENDER BINARY:**

A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

### **GENDER DYSPHORIA:**

The American Psychiatric Association defines it as "persistent discomfort about one's assigned sex or a sense of belonging to the other sex...[and]...a desire to be...of the other sex." It is important to note that not all transgender people experience gender dysphoria.

### **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:**

Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other gendered characteristics. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation.

### **GENDER-FLUID:**

A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

### **GENDER IDENTITY:**

One's innermost concept of self as male or female or both or neither. This conviction is not contingent on the individual's biological sex. (If you were alone in a room, how would you see yourself?)

### **GENDER NON-CONFORMING:**

A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do.

### **GENDERQUEER:**

A rejection of the male/female gender binary in favor of a more fluid, nontraditional identity.

### **GENDER ROLE:**

Refers to the sets of activities, thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors traditionally considered normal for men or women within a culture.

### **GENDER TRANSITION:**

A process some transgender people undergo to match their gender identity more closely with their outward appearance. This can include changing clothes, names, or pronouns to fit their gender identity. It may also include healthcare needs such as hormones or surgeries.

### **HOMOPHOBIA:**

The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

### **INTERSEX:**

Having hormones, chromosomes, and/or primary sex characteristics, including genitalia and/or internal sex organs, that are different from what is typically considered to be biologically male or female. This term is not the same as the term "hermaphrodite," which is an antiquated and offensive term to intersex folks and their allies.

### **LESBIAN:**

A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

### **LGBTQ:**

An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer." Other forms of the acronym include LGBT, LGBTQIA, and/or LGBTQ+.

### **MTF:**

Male-to-female. Indicates a transgender individual who was originally assigned the sex of male at birth, but has claimed a female identity through clothing, surgery, hormones, and/or attitude changes.

### **NON-BINARY:**

An adjective describing 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. This category can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer, or gender-fluid.

### **OUTING:**

Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or gender non-binary identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, and religious or family situations.

### **PANSEXUAL:**

Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way, or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

### **QUEER:**

Not heterosexual. Originally used with negative connotations but is currently being reclaimed by many within the LGBTQIA+ community. It is sometimes used as an umbrella term for many non-heterosexual identities.

### **QUESTIONING:**

A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **SAME-GENDER LOVING:**

A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

### **SEX (ANATOMICAL/ BIOLOGICAL):**

Separate from gender, the physical structure of one's reproductive organs that are used to assign sex at birth. Biological sex is determined by chromosomes (XX for female, XY for males); hormones (estrogen/progesterone for females, testosterone for males); and internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for females, penis, and testicles for males). Given the potential variation in all of these, biological sex must be seen as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options.

### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:**

An inherent emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

### **TRANSGENDER:**

Used both as an umbrella term and as an identity. Broadly, it refers to those who do not identify with or are uncomfortable with their assigned gender and gender roles. As an identity, the term refers to anyone who transgresses traditional sex and gender boxes.

### **TRANSITION:**

The process by which a transgender individual strives to have physical presentation more closely aligned with identity. Transition can occur in three ways: social transition through non-permanent changes in clothing, hairstyle, name, and/or pronouns; medical transition through the use of medicines such as hormone "blockers" or cross hormones to promote gender-based body changes; and/or surgical transition in which an individual's body is modified through the addition or removal of gender-related physical traits.

### **TRANSSEXUAL:**

Individuals who do not identify with their birth-assigned sex and physically alter their bodies surgically and/or hormonally. This physical transition is a complicated, multi-step process that may take years and may include, but is not limited to, sex reassignment surgery.