

QUEER GLOSSARY

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The following definitions are short, working definitions to create a basic understanding of LGBTQIA2S+ identities. Please seek additional information beyond this worksheet, and with identity terms, trust the person who is using the term and their definition of it, above any dictionary. (LGBTQIA2S+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two Spirit. Allies and Advocates are not included in this acronym, but some acronyms include a variety of additional identities under the queer umbrella.)

Advocate or Ally: A person who actively works to end intolerance, educates others, and not only supports, but nurtures and celebrates LGBTQIA+ persons.

AFAB, AMAB, AXAB: Acronyms meaning assumed female/male/X at birth (also: female/male/X assumed at birth [FAAB, MAAB, XAAB] or female/male/X assigned at birth [FAAB,MAAB.XAAB]). No one, whether cis or trans, gets to choose what sex they're assigned or gender they're assumed at birth. This term is preferred to "biological male/female", "male/female bodied", "natal male/female", and "born male/female" which are inaccurate.

Agender: An umbrella term encompassing many different genders of people who commonly do not have a gender and/or have a gender that they describe as neutral. Many agender people are trans. As a new and quickly-evolving term, it is best you ask how someone defines agender for themselves.

Androgyne: An androgynous person; having the characteristics of both masculine and feminine.

Aporagender: Both an umbrella term and nonbinary gender identity that describes the experience of having a specific gender that's different from male, female, or any combination of the two.



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Asexuality (sometimes referred to as non-sexuality): Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction to others, or a low interest in sexual activity. Some people consider asexuality to be their sexual orientation, and others describe it as an absence of sexual orientation.

Bigender: Refers to those who identify as two genders. Can also identify as multigender (identifying as two or more genders). This term should not be confused with Two-Spirit, which is specifically associated with Indigenous and First Nations cultures.

Bisexuality: A romantic attraction, sexual attraction, or sexual behavior toward both males and females, or to more than one gender.

Butch: An identity or presentation related to masculinity. Butch can be an adjective (ex: she's a butch woman), a verb ("butch up"), or a noun (ex: "they identify as butch"). Although commonly associated with masculine queer/lesbian women, it's used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman or not.

Cisgender: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their sex assigned/assumed at birth. Cisgender can be abbreviated to "cis" as in a "ciswoman." Also frequently combined with heterosexual as "cishet." There are many derivatives of the term in use including cismale, cisfemale, and cissexual.

Dead name: The name given to a transgender person at birth who has changed their name as part of their gender transition. Ask for a person's name and use their name, because that is **not** their preferred name; **their name just is their name.**

Demigender: An umbrella term for nonbinary gender identities that have a partial connection to a certain gender. Demigender is not necessarily a partial connection to gender (like male or female) and a partial connection to agender, instead it is more commonly referred to as a partial connection to a third gender that possibly can't be described by the term agender or is just not the absence of a gender. Demigender people may feel that partial connection is a gender, but it cannot necessarily be described.

Demigirl, demiwoman, demilady, or demifemale: A gender identity describing someone who partially, but not fully, identifies as a woman or girl, whatever their assigned gender at birth. They may or may not identify as any other gender in addition to feeling partially a girl or woman.

Demifemale: Term for demigirls who don't feel comfortable with having a gendered term (female, woman, girl; etc.) in their gender label, possibly from being agender, but it doesn't have to be.

Demiboy, demiguy, demiman, demimale, demidude: A gender identity describing someone who partially identifies as a man or boy, regardless of their assigned gender at birth. In addition to feeling partially like a boy or man, demiboys also feel partly outside the binary. That can include anything under the non-binary umbrella like agender, genderqueer, or xenogenders for example.

Demiandrogynous: A gender identity describing someone who partially or slightly relates to being androgynous. Usually, but not always, people who identify as demiandrogynous feel that their identity is a blending of male and female, along with another third gender cannot be explained.], non-binary, transgender, and/or others. Demiandrogynous people may not always comply to presenting as androgynous. Demiandrogynous people may also choose to identify as demigender, non-binary, transgender.

Demisexual: A heterosexual or LGBTQ person who feels sexual attraction only with an emotional bond.

Down Low: A term used to describe behaviors someone does not want others to know about; often used to describe individuals who are queer but are closeted. Also sometimes referred to as “being on the DL.”

Drag: *Queen*, a person who consciously performs femininity, sometimes in an exaggerated/theatrical manner, usually in a show or theatre setting; *King*, a person who consciously performs masculinity, sometimes in an exaggerated/theatrical manner, usually in a show or theatre setting; *Genderfuck*, a term used to describe a gender-bending drag performance in which the performer disrupts or bends gender roles.

Dyke: Derogatory slang term used to identify lesbians. This term has been embraced and reinvented as a positive, proud, political identifier when used by some lesbians among and about themselves. See: faggot, queer.

Faggot: Derogatory slang used to identify gay men. This term has been embraced and reclaimed as a positive, proud, political identifier when used by some gay men among and about themselves. See dyke, queer.

Femme: A term used in queer subculture to acknowledge a person of any gender being traditionally feminine presenting.

Gay: Usually, but not always, refers to men who have emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual attraction to other men. Also used as an umbrella term for the LGBTQ community.



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Gender Binary: The classification of sex and gender into two distinct, opposite, and disconnected forms of masculine and feminine. The binary is a socially constructed concept with the ability to increase gendered behaviors and encourage gendered value systems in various cultures.

Gender Dysphoria: A term that describes a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. This sense of unease or dissatisfaction may be so intense it can lead to depression and anxiety.

Gender Expansive: An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people who expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond perceived or expected societal gender norms. Some gender-expansive individuals identify as a mix of genders, some identify more binarily as a man or a woman, and some identify as no gender (see agender). Gender-expansive people might feel that they exist among genders, as on a spectrum, or beyond the notion of the man/woman binary paradigm. Sometimes gender-expansive people use gender-neutral pronouns, but people can exist as any gender while using any pronouns.

Gender Identity: How a person perceives themselves and what they call themselves; this may or may not agree with the societal gender roles outlined for their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Role(s): The societal and cultural expectations of people based upon their biological sex—typically masculine or feminine. Gender roles impact autonomy and agency in individuals and for whole groups of people based on their sex assigned at birth. It is a myth that gender roles only oppress women. Gender roles shape all genders so that masculinity is centered, but also limiting.



Gender Variance/Gender Non-Conformity or Gender Non Conforming (GNC): A person who does not conform with the gender "norms" that are expected of them. The term usually refers to gender expression or presentation (that is, how someone looks and dresses). It can also refer to behavior, identity, and roles that do not conform to gender "norms."

Genderfluid: A person whose gender expression or identity, or both, change over time. That change might be in expression, but not identity, or in identity, but not expression. Or both expression and identity might change together. Identity and/or expression can change multiple times throughout a day or over a period of a few days.

Genderflux: An umbrella term for gender identities in which the gender or one's perception of the gender's intensity varies over time.

Genderqueer: A person whose performance of gender is not "normative" in relation to what is socially expected. Normativity is subject and can be harmful, so when examining/discussing/assigning gender "norms" please shift what you have been taught about gender in order to consider **all** genders to be normative. The term genderqueer became popular as increasing amounts of gender variant people voiced discomfort in and exclusion from the Trans communities.

Greygender: A person who identifies as (at least partially) outside the gender binary and has a strong natural ambivalence about their gender identity or gender expression.

Hate Motivated Offenses: Assault, rape, arson, and murder are crimes under any circumstance, but when a victim of such a crime was targeted simply because of their affiliation (or perceived affiliation) with a minority group, the FBI considers the crime a "hate crime." In some states, hate crimes carry an additional penalty beyond the standard penalty for assault, murder, etc. Also known as "gay-bashing," acts of intolerance, or hate crimes.



Heterosexual: A person who has emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual attractions to persons of the “opposite” sex or gender. The sexuality that dominant discourse prescribes.

Heteronormativity: An (often subconscious) idea that everyone is heterosexual and the attitudes associated with that assumption.

- **Heterosexual Privilege:** Advantages that come with heterosexuality in this society and culture (i.e. acceptance from family, safety, and acceptance in their chosen career field).
- **Heterosexism:** The belief that all people are heterosexual, the assumption and/or belief that heterosexual relationships and behavior are superior to other forms of relationships.

Homosexual: A person who has emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual attraction to persons of the “same sex.” More of a medical term, it is considered an outdated term when referring to LGB people or communities.

Homophobia: Fear, anger, discomfort, intolerance, or lack of acceptance toward LGBTQIA2S+ people, or experiencing these feelings about one’s own non-heterosexual preference (i.e. internalized homophobia).

Intergender: A nonbinary gender identity that describes the experience of having a gender that falls somewhere in between female and male or is a mix of both male and female.

Intersex: Formerly known as “hermaphrodites” (a term that is now considered offensive), this term refers to people who have traits of both male and female sexual organs, have ambiguous sexual organs, possess a chromosomal variance other than XY or XX, or other biological factors which do not easily fit into socially constructed “male” or “female” boxes. Intersexuality is fairly common. Many who identify as intersex believe that early childhood surgical intervention is not only unnecessary, but also cruel. Instead, they advocate for counseling and support for children and families. Not every intersex person identifies as a member of LGBTQ communities.

Lesbian: A woman who has emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual attractions to other women.

Maverique: A nonbinary gender identity that emphasizes the inner experience of gender. Maverique describes those who experience gender or have a core gender identity that's independent of existing categories and definitions of gender, such as male or female, man or woman, masculine or feminine, and androgynous or neutral.

MSM: Abbreviation for Men who have Sex with Men; often used within public health to be inclusive of all sexual orientations where two or more sex partners both identify as male. This abbreviation and wording is still regularly used, though there is critique that it is limiting and focuses on biological sex rather than gender identity.

Multigender: An umbrella term that is used to describe people who experience more than one gender identity. Other gender labels that fall under the multigender umbrella include: bigender, trigender, pangender, polygender. In some cases, "genderfluid" may also fall under this umbrella.

Multisexual: An umbrella term that is used to describe people who experience attraction to more than one genders. Other sexualities that fall under the multisexual umbrella include: bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual.

Neutrois: A nonbinary identity and umbrella term that is used to describe people who have a gender that isn't exclusively male or female. Neutrois can be a broader term encompassing other gender identities, such as nonbinary, agender, genderfluid, or genderless.

Omnigender: Someone who experiences all genders and treats them as one gender. Every gender is seen as building blocks to create one whole gender.

Omnisexual: Characterized by the potential for aesthetic attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire for people of all gender identities. Omnisexual persons consider gender a factor in their attraction, but still identify as being attracted to all genders.

Outing: To declare a person's identity publicly; people can out themselves, or someone can out them either with or without their permission.

Pangender: A nonbinary gender identity that describes people who experience all or many gender identities on the gender spectrum simultaneously or over time.

Pansexual: Characterized by the potential for aesthetic attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire for people, regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Pansexual persons do not consider gender a factor in their attraction.

Polyamory: The practice of engaging in multiple romantic (and typically sexual) relationships, with the consent of all the people involved. Not all LGBTQ folks are polyamorous nor are all polyamorous relationships LGBTQ. Those who are polyamorous may identify as polysexual or “poly.”

Polygender: The gender identity term describes the experience of having multiple gender identities, simultaneously or over time. This term indicates the number of gender identities someone experiences, but doesn't necessarily indicate which genders are included in the given person's polygender identity.



Positive (Pos): Identifier of being HIV-positive. While this language is frequently used by LGBTQ persons, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all folks that are LGBTQ have HIV or AIDS, nor is it a LGBTQ related disease. The LGBTQ population, specifically gay men and trans folks, has a long history of being targeted, stereotyped, and discriminated against by medical culture. During the early 1980s, AIDS was originally named Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) and was referred to as “gay cancer” and “gay plague.” While AIDS is not specific to the LGBTQ populations, the effects of the discrimination and hostility by medical culture, media, and politics remain lasting and still have detrimental impacts today. Many LGBTQ persons have distrust with medical culture, are stereotyped and discriminated against, and there is little funding for research to cure AIDS due to the assimilation of the disease with LGBTQ persons.

Questioning: The process of exploring one’s own sexual or gender identity, including but not limited to questioning one’s upbringing, expectations from others (family, friends, church, etc.), and inner motivation.

Queer: Derogatory slang term used to identify LGBTQ people. This term has been embraced and reinvented as a positive, proud, political identifier when used by some LGBTQ people among and about themselves. Sometimes “queer” is used by activists and scholars as an umbrella term to refer to LGBTQ people (i.e. referring to “queer people” or “queer women,” etc. rather than “queers,” which has a more derogatory connotation.).

Same Gender Loving (SGL): A term commonly used by African-Americans who have same “sex” attractions, they use this term to refer to their sexual identity.

School Climate: The quality and character of school life (essentially how a school makes a person feel). School climate and family systems play a large role in LGBTQIA2S+ youth becoming more vulnerable to homelessness, dropping out of school, bullying, and other high risk traumas which increase a child's likelihood of becoming a victim to trafficking, exploitation, and/or sexual violence.

Sexual Orientation: The direction of one's sexual interest toward members of the same, different, or a variety of genders. It is a direction based on whom a person is emotionally, physically, romantically, and/or sexually attracted. It is not a matter of “choice.” It is not to be confused with sexual preference (what a person likes to do sexually), which implies making a choice. Sexual orientation is not a choice, but you can choose when and where to share your sexual orientation with others (i.e. coming out is a choice, but sexuality or sexual orientation is not a choice and cannot be changed).

Stonewall: On June 28, 1969, NYC police attempted a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, a working class gay and lesbian bar in Greenwich Village. Unexpectedly, the patrons resisted and the incident escalated into a riot that continued for several days. Though thriving gay cultures existed prior, most people look to this event as the beginning of the American Gay Liberation movement and all subsequent LGBT movements.

Stud: A dominant, often butch or masculine, lesbian. This term originated within the Black and Latina lesbian community.

Trans and Gender Diverse: These are inclusive umbrella terms that describe people whose genders are not what they were assumed or assigned at birth. Trans people may position ‘being trans’ as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male, or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person’s life. Trans and gender diverse activists and advocates often seek to create more diversity and affirmation around various genders as well as to create a culture where a variety of gender expressions or presentations are viewed as safe, sane, normative, celebratory, and affirmed in our global society.



Transfeminine/Transmasculine: are gender identities used to describe those who were assigned/assumed male or female at birth, but who identify as a gender closer to the feminine end (transfeminine) or the masculine end (transmasculine) of the gender spectrum. Gender is a spectrum, not a binary; in unlearning those socially constructed definitions of gender, youth and adults can better unpack how they feel about their gender identity in a healthier and affirming manner.

Transman (or man), Transmale: A transgender person who was Assumed Female At Birth or Assumed X At Birth (see: AFAB, AXAB) who identifies as male. May identify themselves as transmale, a transman, or a man.

Transwoman (or woman), Transfemale: A transgender person who was Assumed Male At Birth or Assumed X At Birth (see: AMAB, AXAB) who identifies as female. May identify themselves as transmale, a transman, or a man.

Transphobia: The irrational fear of, hatred of, aversion to, or discrimination against trans people.

Transsexual: A term that is considered outdated, traumatizing, and harmful by many transgender people. Definition from GLAAD: An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike trans, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many trans people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word trans. It is best to ask which term a person prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.



Transvestite: A term that is considered outdated and harmful by many transgender people, but older generations of trans persons may still use this term for themselves and others. Transvestite (when used in a non-discriminatory manner) is used by a person who may or may not express their gender in a manner similar to transgender persons. However, this term is not to be used given it is traumatizing and harmful to most trans persons at this moment in time.

Trigender: This gender identity describes the experience of having three gender identities, simultaneously or over time. This term indicates the number of gender identities someone experiences, but does not necessarily indicate which genders are included in a given person's trigender identity.

Two-Spirit (Also two spirit or, occasionally, two-spirited): is a modern, Pan-Indigenous, umbrella term used by some Indigenous North Americans to describe certain people in their communities who fulfill a traditional third-gender (or other gender-variant) role in their culture.

Uterus Bearing Individuals: Wording that is inclusive of queer folks who have a uterus regardless of gender often used to discuss reproductive health and wellbeing.

WSW: Abbreviation for Women who have Sex with Women; often used within public health to be inclusive of all sexual orientations where two or more sex partners both identify as female. This abbreviation and wording is still regularly used, though there is critique that it is limiting and focuses on biological sex rather than gender identity.



Xenogenders: An umbrella term for nonbinary gender identities that cannot be fully described through their relation to concepts typically used to describe gender such as masculinity, femininity, androgyny, or neutrality.

Ze/Hir Pronouns or They/Them Pronouns : Pronouns that are gender neutral or gender non-conforming (GNC) and preferred by some gender variant, GNC, or Trans persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here/ (ze/hir) are Afrocentric pronouns aimed at centering Blackness and queerness through language. "They" can replace or be used alongside "he"/"she" and "his" and "hers" respectively.

Remember: how people identify is more important than any definition you might read in resources. Trust those around you to define who they are and how they identify, because languages and terms are always changing!

For sources and more definitions, please visit:

[Harvard Health](#)

[Healthline](#)

[Gender Wiki](#)

[LGBTQ Wiki](#)

[Nonbinary Wiki](#)

[Transstudent.org](#)

