

LGBTQ+ Glossary of Terms

The following is a non-exhaustive list of terms. These definitions have been adapted from the Queering Reproductive Justice Toolkit and the Queer- and Trans-Inclusive Sex Education Toolkit, both published by the National LGBTQ Task Force and available at thetaskforce.org/reproductive-justice.

Agender: An identity under the nonbinary and transgender umbrellas. Some agender individuals have no gender identity, although some define agender as having a gender identity that is neutral.

Aromanticism or Aro: A romantic orientation where a person experiences little to no romantic attraction and/or has no desire to form romantic relationships. Like asexuality, it exists on a spectrum which involves a range of identities characterized by varying levels of romantic attraction. This spectrum is called the aromantic spectrum. Aromantic people can identify with any sexual orientation along with their aromantic identity, or they may just identify as aromantic.

Asexuality or Ace: A sexual orientation where a person experiences little to no sexual attraction to anyone and/or does not experience desire for sexual contact. Asexuality is a spectrum, and there are some people who may not fit the strictest definition of the word asexual, but feel their experience aligns more with asexuality than with other sexual orientations.

Bigender: An identity under the nonbinary and transgender umbrellas. Bigender individuals identify with more than one gender.

Biphobia: The hatred or fear of bisexual people - sometimes leading to acts of violence and expressions of hostility, often manifesting as the erasure of bisexual identities, experiences, and voices.

Bisexual: A person whose romantic, emotional, or sexual attraction is towards same and/or different genders.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity matches with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gay: A person whose romantic, emotional, or sexual attraction is towards their own gender, most commonly used for men. Men-loving-men (MLM) is a term with a similar meaning coined by communities of color.

Gender expression: How a person represents or expresses one's gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics. All people have a gender expression.

Gender fluid: Refers to an identity under the nonbinary and transgender umbrellas. Genderfluid individuals have different gender identities at different times. A genderfluid individual's gender identity could be multiple genders at once, and then switch to none at all, or move between single gender identities. For some genderfluid people, these changes happen as often as several times a day, and for others, monthly, or less often.

Gender identity: A person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else such as agender, binary, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, or nonbinary. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. All people have a gender identity.

Gender nonconforming (GNC) or Genderqueer: Terms for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

Gender-affirming care: An inclusive term for treatments and procedures that help an individual align their physical and/or other characteristics with their gender identity, often called transition-related care. This term moves beyond the term "transition," which implies a singular rather than an ongoing process, and is more inclusive of agender, bigender, gender fluid, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, and nonbinary people. Often, accessing gender-affirming care is extremely difficult due to cost and other barriers.

Homophobia: The hatred or fear of lesbian, gay, and same-gender loving people, sometimes leading to acts of violence and expressions of hostility. Homophobia is not confined to any one segment of society and can be found in people from all walks of life.

Intersex: Refers to a person who is born with sexual or reproductive anatomy that does not fit within the sex binary of male or female, encompassing a variety of sex expressions.

Latinx: Pronounced "Latin-ex," is a gender-neutral way to describe people of Latin American descent. The "x" makes *Latino*, a masculine identifier, gender-neutral. It also moves beyond *Latin@* to encompass genders outside of the limiting male-female binary.

Lesbian: A woman whose romantic, emotional, or sexual attraction is towards other women. Women-loving-women (WLW) is a term with a similar meaning coined by communities of color.

LGBT or LGBTQ: Shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people.

LGBTQ Rights, Equality, Justice, and Liberation: These words often get used as synonyms, but have different meanings with particular goals.

- *LGBTQ rights or equality* refers to the movement to gain legal privileges that are currently denied to LGBTQ people and/or protections we need in the face of discrimination, with the long-term goal of inserting LGBTQ people into existing social institutions and systems of power.
- *LGBTQ justice or liberation* refers to the long-term goal of (re)creating social institutions and equitable systems that are supportive of LGBTQ people and allows us to live as our full, authentic selves.

Nonbinary (NB): A term used by people who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female. This can include people who are agender, bigender, genderfluid, gender nonconforming, and genderqueer, among others. Some nonbinary people identify as transgender, while others do not.

Person/People Living with HIV (PLHIV): A term to identify a person who has a positive HIV diagnosis. The term is indicative of the people-first language used in HIV advocacy to combat the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS and its portrayal as a deadly disease. The term highlights the fact that a person with a positive diagnosis can live a long and healthy life with the right treatment and care. This term should be used instead of HIV-infected person, HIV-positive person, or AIDS patient, all of which are potentially stigmatizing.

Pronouns: Terms used to substitute a person's name when they are being referred to in the third-person. Some common pronouns include he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/their(s). A person's gender should not be assumed based on their pronouns.

Queer: An umbrella term which embraces a variety of sexual preferences, orientation, and habits of those who are not among the exclusively heterosexual and monogamous majority. Although the term was once considered derogatory and offensive, the community has reclaimed the word and now uses it widely as a form of empowerment. Younger generations tend to use the term "queer" for reasons such as the fact that it does not assume the gender of the queer person or the gender of any potential romantic partners, and/or in order to make a political statement about the fluidity of gender.

Same-gender loving (SGL): An affirming term coined by communities of color to describe sexual orientation.

Sexual Orientation: A person's identity in relation to whom they are attracted to. All people have a sexual orientation. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are distinct components of a person's identity.

Straight/Heterosexual: A person whose romantic, emotional, or sexual attraction is towards people of a different gender, usually used in the context of the binary genders of male and female.

Transgender: A broad term for people whose gender identity or expression is different from those typically associated with their sex assigned at birth. "Trans" is shorthand for "transgender." (Note: Transgender is correctly used as an adjective, for example: "transgender people," "people who are transgender," "a woman who is transgender," etc. However, "transgenders" or "transgendered" are incorrect and disrespectful.)

Transphobia: The hatred or fear of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people. This sometimes leads to acts of violence and expressions of hostility. Transphobia is not confined to any one segment of society and can be found in people from all walks of life.

Two-Spirit: Contemporary umbrella term that refers to the historical and current First Nations people whose individual spirits were a blend of female and male spirits. This term has been reclaimed by Native American LGBTQ communities in order to honor their heritage and provide an alternative to the Western labels of gay, lesbian, or transgender.