

## Terms and Definitions: a non-exhaustive list.

Here are some LGBTQ terms and definitions adapted from the Center of Excellence for Transgender Health & the Human Rights Campaign. Language is not stagnant and these definitions will change as language flows and grows.

**Ally** | A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

**Androgynous** | Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

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

**Biphobia** | Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

**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.

**Cisgender** | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Closeted** | Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Coming out** | The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates his or her sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

**Cross dresser / drag queen / drag king** | These terms generally refer to those who may wear the clothing of a gender that differs from the sex which they were assigned at birth for

entertainment, self-expression, or sexual pleasure. Some cross dressers and people who dress in drag may exhibit an overlap with components of a transgender identity. The term transvestite is no longer used in the English language and is considered pejorative.

**Gay** | A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

**Gender dysphoria** | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term - which replaces Gender Identity Disorder - "is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

**Gender-expansive** | Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

**Gender expression** | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. Gender identity and gender expression may differ; for example a woman (transgender or non-transgender) may have an androgynous appearance, or a man (transgender or non-transgender) may have a feminine form of self-expression.

**Gender-fluid** | According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

**Gender identity** | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither - how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

**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.

**Genderqueer** | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Gender transition** | The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.

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

**Lesbian** | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.

**LGBTQ** | An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer."

**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.

**Nonbinary** | Transgender or gender nonconforming person who identifies as neither male nor female.

**Outing** | Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or 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.

**Queer** | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ."

**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** | Historically has referred to the sex assigned at birth, based on assessment of external genitalia, as well as chromosomes and gonads. In everyday language is often used interchangeably with gender, however there are differences, which become important in the context of transgender people.

**Sexual orientation** | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

**Transgender** | A person whose gender identity differs from the sex that was assigned at birth. May be abbreviated to trans. A transgender man is someone with a male gender





identity and a female birth assigned sex; a transgender woman is someone with a female gender identity and a male birth assigned sex. A non-transgender person may be referred to as cisgender (cis=same side in Latin). Also an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

**Trans-masculine/trans-feminine** | Terms to describe gender nonconforming or nonbinary persons, based on the directionality of their gender identity. A trans-masculine person has a masculine spectrum gender identity, with the sex of female listed on their original birth certificate. A trans-feminine person has a feminine spectrum gender identity, the sex of male listed on their original birth certificate. In portions of these Guidelines, in the interest of brevity and clarity, transgender men/women are inclusive of gender non-conforming or nonbinary persons on the respective spectræ.

**Transphobia** | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

**Transsexual** | A more clinical term which had historically been used to describe those transgender people who sought medical intervention (hormones, surgery) for gender affirmation. Term is less commonly used in present day, however some individuals and communities maintain a strong and affirmative connection to this term.

**Two-Spirit** | A modern umbrella term used by some indigenous North Americans for gender variant individuals in their communities.

Adapted from:  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>  
<http://transhealth.ucsf.edu/trans?page=guidelines-terminology>