

# Definitions

**Advocate:** Someone who stands behind the cause of LGBTQ+ as though it is their own cause.

**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.

**Asexual:** Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.

**Autoerotic:** An individual who, or the practice of becoming stimulated through internal stimuli, self-satisfaction of sexual desire.

**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.

**Biphobia:** The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society.

**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 assigned physical sex.

**Cissexual:** Someone whose sexual identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Cissexism** (see *cisnormativity*): The belief or bias that people who are not intersexed have more intrinsic value than those who are intersex or do not identify with male or female sexes.

**Coming Out** (also referred to as *inviting in*): May refer to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersexed person (to "come out" to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality, gender identity, or intersexed status with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). This can be a continual, life-long process for homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexed individuals.

**Discrimination:** Prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Takes many forms, including individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges accorded to other groups.

**FTM / F2M:** Abbreviation for female-to-male transgender or transsexual person.

**Gay** (see *homosexual*): 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"

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identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with 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:** A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

**Gender Binary:** (See also *Identity Sphere*) The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or. Disregards several gender identities that transcend the binary

**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 Normative\*:** A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society. (Also referred to as ‘Genderstraight’.)

**Gender Expression/Presentation:** How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors that society characterizes as “masculine” or “feminine.” May also be androgynous or something else altogether. Some people differentiate between the two terms.

**Genderfluid:** Being fluid in motion between two or more genders; shifting naturally in gender identity and/or gender expression/presentation. May be a gender identity itself. Refers to the fluidity of identity.

**Gender Non-conforming (GNC)\*:** A person who does not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of them by society.

**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.

**Gender variant:** A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression varies from the culturally-expected characteristics of their assigned sex.

**Hermaphrodite\*** (see *intersex*): An out-of-date and offensive term for a person who is intersexed.

**Heteronormativity** (see *heterosexism*): The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.

**Heterosexism:** See *heteronormativity*

**Heterosexual** (see *straight*): A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the “opposite” gender.

**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 sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the “same” gender. \*

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**In the Closet:** – A person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” One can be out to friends, but not family, etc.

**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.

**Inviting In:** See *Coming Out*.

**Lesbian:** Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people. Derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African-Americans and other non-European groups. Some individual female-identified people from diverse ethnic groups, including African-Americans, embrace the term ‘lesbian’ as an identity label.

**Men who have Sex with Men (MSM):** Men who are not self-classified as gay, but who have sex with other men. May be macho or very masculine.

**Metrosexual\*:** An urban, heterosexual male with a strong aesthetic sense who spends a great deal of time and money on his appearance and lifestyle. This term can be perceived as derogatory because it reinforces stereotypes that all gay men are fashion-conscious and materialistic.

**Mixer/Mx.:** Gender neutral pronoun to replace Mister or Miss, Sir or Madam.

**MTF/M2F** (see *transwoman*): Abbreviation for male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

**Oppression:** The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

**Outing:** Involuntary disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex or transgendered status.

**Pangendered:** A person whose gender identity is comprised of all or many gender expressions.

**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.

**Polyamory:** Having honest, usually non-possessive, relationships with multiple partners and can include: open relationships, polyfidelity (which involves multiple romantic relationships with sexual contact restricted to those), and subrelationships (which denote distinguishing between a ‘primary’ relationship or relationships and various “secondary” relationships).

**Prejudice:** A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members.

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**Passing:** Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual.

**Polysexual:** The attraction to multiple genders and/or sexes.

**Queer\*:** 1. An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive 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. Reclaimed, formerly used solely as a slur, but is currently used by LGBTQ+ activists as a term of self-identification. A sizable percentage of people may still find '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.

**Same Gender Loving (SGL):** Used by some members of the African American / Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without terms and symbols of European descent. Emerged in the early 1990's, offering Black women who love women and Black men who love men a way of identifying with the uniqueness of Black culture.

**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 Change:** (see *sexual reassignment surgery* and *gender reaffirming surgery*)

**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)** (see *sex change* and *gender reaffirming surgery*): 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*.

**Sex Identity:** How a person identifies physically: female, male, in between, beyond, or neither.

**Sexuality:** A person's exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.

**Stereotype:** A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for individuality. Though often negative, can also be complimentary. Even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact, because they involve broad generalizations that ignore individual realities.

**Straight:** Another term for heterosexual.

**Transgendered (Trans\*) Community:** A loose category of people who transcend gender norms in a wide variety of ways. The central ethic of this community is unconditional acceptance of individual exercise of freedoms including gender and sexual identity and orientation.

**Transgender/Trans:** Someone whose gender identity reaches across genders or beyond gender.

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**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).

**Transphobia** – The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

**Transsexual:** A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

**Transvestite:** Someone who dresses in clothing generally identified with the opposite gender/sex. While the terms 'homosexual' and 'transvestite' have been used synonymously, they are in fact signify two different groups. The majority of transvestites are heterosexual males who derive pleasure from dressing in "women's clothing". (The preferred term is 'cross-dresser,' but the term 'transvestite' is still used in a positive sense in England.)

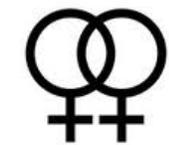
**Transwoman\*:** An identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as males.

**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 be specific to the Zuni tribe. Similar identity labels vary by tribe and include 'one-spirit' and 'wintke'.

**Women who Have Sex with Women (WSW):** Women who do not necessarily identify with the Euro-centric term 'lesbian,' or consider themselves to be gay due to their feminine gender expression, but who have sexual relations with other women.

**+** : the 'plus' sign symbolizes the limitless number of sexualities and gender identities that are considered a part of the Queer community.

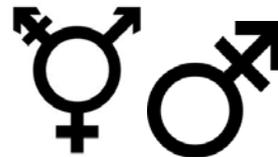
**Symbols:**



Interlocking venus



Interlocking mars

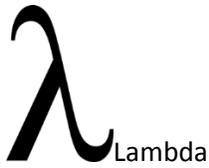


Transgender Symbol(s)



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Lambda



Queer flag, or gay and lesbian



Pansexual Flag



Polysexual Flag



Bawabu – Same Gender Loving



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN®

US National Activism Group for LGBTQ+



Asexual Flag



Bisexual Flag



Transgender Flag



Intersex symbol

**Terms generated from:**

The Gender Equity Resource Center Staff

University of California, Berkeley

[http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt\\_resources\\_definiton\\_of\\_terms](http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms)

University of Michigan

<http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>

Ohio University

[http://www.ohio.edu/lgbt/resources/educate\\_def.cfm](http://www.ohio.edu/lgbt/resources/educate_def.cfm)

University of California, Los Angeles

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

University of California, Davis

<http://lgbtrc.ucdavis.edu/lgbt-education/lgbtqia-glossary>

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