

# LGBTQ Definitions

**agender** – adj. : a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

**ally** /"al-lie" – noun : a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

**androgyny** /"an-jrah-jun-ee"/ (androgynous) – **1** noun. : a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; **2** adj. : occasionally used in place of "intersex" to describe a person with both female and male anatomy, generally in the form "androgynous."

**aromantic** /"ay-ro-man-tic"/ – adj. : experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to "aro" (pronounced like "arrow").

**asexual** – adj. : experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to "ace."

**bigender** – adj. : a person who fluctuates between traditionally "woman" and "man" gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).

**biological sex** – noun : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth."

**biphobia** – noun : a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society.

**bisexual** – **1** noun & adj. : a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. **2** adj. : a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with "pansexual".

**cisgender** /"siss-jendur"/ - adj. : a gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to "cis."

**cissexism** - noun : behavior that grants preferential treatment to cisgender people, reinforces the idea that being cisgender is somehow better or more "right" than being transgender, and/or makes other genders invisible.

**closeted** - adj. : an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one's safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being "in the closet." When someone chooses to break this silence they "come out" of the closet. (See coming out)

**coming out** - **1** noun : the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). **2** verb : the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

**demiromantic** - adj. : little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual connection is formed with someone, often within a sexual relationship.

**demisexual** - adj. : little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

**drag king** - noun : someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically. **drag queen** - noun : someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.

**dyke** - noun : referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is also reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians and gay women as a positive self identity term.

**emotional attraction** - noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in emotionally intimate behavior (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, inter-depending), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

**feminine-of-center; masculine-of-center** - adj. : a phrase that indicates a range in terms of gender identity and expression for people who present, understand themselves, and/or relate to others in a generally more feminine/masculine way, but don't necessarily identify as women or men.

**feminine-presenting; masculine-presenting** - adj. : a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way. Often confused with feminine-of-center/masculine-of-center, which generally include a focus on identity as well as expression.

**femme** - noun & adj. : someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. Often used to refer to a feminine-presenting queer woman or people.

**FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F** – abbr. : female-to-male transgender or transsexual person; male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

**gay** – **1** adj. : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. **2** adj. : an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

**gender binary** – noun : the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

**gender expression** – noun : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

**genderfluid** – adj. : a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

**gender identity** – noun : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

**gender non-conforming** – **1** adj. : a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). **2** adj. : a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as "GNC."

**gender normative / gender straight** – adj. : someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

**genderqueer** – **1** adj. : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. **2** adj. : an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

**gender variant** – adj. : someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc).

**heteronormativity** – noun : the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

**heterosexism** – noun : behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than queerness, and/or makes other sexualities invisible.

**heterosexual/straight** – adj. : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

**homophobia** – noun : an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. **homophobic** – adj. : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

**homosexual** – adj. & noun : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

**intersex** – adj. : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

**lesbian** – noun & adj. : women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

**Mx.** / “mix” or “schwa” / – noun : an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Smith is a great teacher.

**pansexual** – adj. : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”

**polyamory** (polyamorous) – noun : refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to “poly.”

**pronouns** – noun : any of a small set of words (such as *I, she, he, you, it, we, or they*) in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context.

**queer** – **1** adj. : an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. **2** noun : a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people.

**questioning** – verb, adj. : an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

**QPOC / QTPOC** – abbr. : initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

**sexual orientation** – noun : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

**sexual preference** – noun : the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with “sexual orientation,” creating an illusion that one has a choice (or “preference”) in who they are attracted to.

**stealth** – adj. : a trans person who is not “out” as trans, and is perceived/known by others as cisgender.

**straight** – adj. : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

**third gender** – noun : for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognise three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

**transgender** – **1** adj. : a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. **2** adj. : an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

**transition / transitioning** – noun, verb : referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).

**transphobia** – noun : the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans\* people, the trans\* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans\* people.

**transsexual** – noun and adj. 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** – noun : a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression (“cross-dresses”) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification (often called a “cross-dresser,” and should not be confused with transsexual).

**two-spirit** – noun : is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.