

# LGBTQ Terminology

**Ally** – (noun) a (typically straight- or cis-identified) person who supports, and respects for members of the LGBTQ community. While the word doesn't necessitate action, we consider people to be active allies who take action upon this support and respect, this also indicates to others that you are an ally.

**Asexual** – (adj) having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex to those who experience low levels and only after significant amounts of time, many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is "ace," meaning someone who is asexual.

**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 [or designated] at birth."

**Biphobia** – (noun) a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have/express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the queer community as well as straight society. Biphobic – (adj) a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people

**Bisexual** – (adj) a person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to male/men and females/women. Other individuals may use this to indicate an attraction to individuals who identify outside of the gender binary as well and may use bisexual as a way to indicate an interest in more than one gender or sex (i.e. men and genderqueer people). This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

**Cisgender** – (adj; pronounced "siss-jendur") a person whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth align (e.g., man and male-assigned). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not trans\*, they are cisgender.

**Coming Out** – (1) the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). (2) The process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.).

**Gay** – (adj) (1) a term used to describe individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. More commonly used when referring to males/men-identified ppl who are attracted to males/men-identified ppl, but can be applied to females/women-identified ppl as well. (2) An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Gender Expression** – (noun) the external display of one's gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

**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. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans, and more.

**Genderqueer** - (adj) a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid). Genderqueer people may think of themselves as one or more of the following, and they may define these terms differently:

- may combine aspects man and woman and other identities (bigender, pangender);
- not having a gender or identifying with a gender (genderless, agender);
- moving between genders (genderfluid);
- third gender or other-gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation.

**Heteronormativity** – (noun) the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities. Often included in this concept is a level of gender normativity and gender roles, the assumption that individuals *should* identify as men and women, and be masculine men and feminine women, and finally that men and women are a complimentary pair.

**Homophobia** – (noun) an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

The term is extended to bisexual and transgender people as well; however, the terms biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize the specific biases against individuals of bisexual and transgender communities.

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

**Intersex** – (adj) someone whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. In the medical care of infants the initialism DSD (“Differing/Disorders of Sex Development”). Formerly known as **hermaphrodite** (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now considered outdated and derogatory.

**Lesbian** – (noun/adj) a term used to describe females/women-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other females/women -identified people.

**LGBTQ / GSM / DSG / + -** (adj) initialisms used as shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. **LGBTQ** is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); **GSM** is Gender and Sexual Minorities; **DSG** is Diverse Genders and Sexualities. Other popular options include the initialism GLBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans\* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

**Pansexual** – (adj) a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions

**Passing** – (verb) (1) a term for trans\* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender/sex identity (regardless of birth sex) without being identified as trans\*. (2) An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

**Queer** – (adj) used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight. Also used to describe people who have non-normative gender identity or as a political affiliation. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term queer can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ.

**Questioning** - (verb & adjective) an individual who or when someone is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Romantic Attraction** - (noun) an affinity for someone that evokes the want to engage in relational intimate behavior (e.g., flirting, dating, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-non, to intense). Often conflated with **sexual attraction or emotional/spiritual attraction**.

**Sexual Attraction** - (noun) an affinity for someone that evokes the want to engage in physical intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-non, to intense). Often conflated with **romantic attraction or emotional/spiritual attraction**.

**Sexual Orientation** – (noun) the type of **sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction** one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to (often mistakenly referred to as sexual preference)

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

**Trans\*/Transgender** – (adj) (1) An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. Trans with an \* is often used to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term. (2) A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex.

**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. Transphobia is often manifested in violent and deadly means. While the exact numbers and percentages aren't incredibly solid on this, it's safe to say that trans\* people are far more likely than their cisgender peers (including LGB people) to be the victims of violent crimes and murder.