



LGBT Glossary

Ally (Heterosexual Ally, Straight Ally) Someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBT+ people. A heterosexual ally is also someone who confronts heterosexism in themselves and others. The term ally is generally used for any member of a dominant group who is a friend, advocate or activist for people in an oppressed group (i.e. White Ally for People of Colour).

Androgynous Term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly "female" nor "male," usually based on appearance.

Asexual A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.

Biphobia The fear, hatred, or intolerance of bisexual people.

Bisexual, Bi An individual who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men and women. Bisexuals need not have had sexual experience with both men and women; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual.

Cisgender a term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Closeted Describes a person who is not open about his or her sexual orientation.

Coming Out A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity first to themselves and then may reveal it to others. Publicly identifying one's orientation may or may not be part of coming out.

Down Low Pop-culture term used to describe men who identify as heterosexual but engage in sexual activity with other men. Often these men are in committed sexual relationships or marriages with a female partner. This term is almost exclusively used to describe men of colour.

Drag Queen/Drag King Used by people who present socially in clothing, name, and/or pronouns that differ from their everyday gender, usually for enjoyment, entertainment, and/or self-expression. Drag queens typically have everyday lives as men. Drag kings typically live as women and/or butches when not performing. Drag shows are popular in some gay, lesbian, and bisexual environments. Unless they are drag performers, most Trans people would be offended by being confused with drag queens or drag kings.

Gay The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., *gay man, gay people*). *In contemporary contexts, lesbian (n. or adj.) is often a preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.*

Gender Expression Refers to how an individual expresses their socially constructed gender. This

may refer to how an individual dresses, their general appearance, the way they speak, and/or the way they carry themselves. Gender expression is not always correlated to an individuals' gender identity or gender role.

Gender Identity Since gender is a social construct, an individual may have a self perception of their gender that is different or the same as their biological sex. Gender identity is an internalised realisation of one's gender and may not be manifested in their outward appearance (gender expression) or their place in society (gender role). It is important to note that an individual's gender identity is completely separate from their sexual orientation or sexual preference.

Gender Neutral This term is used to describe facilities that any individual can use regardless of their gender (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms). This term can also be used to describe an individual who does not subscribe to any socially constructed gender (sometimes referred to as "Gender Queer").

Gender Non Conforming A person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.

Gender/Sexual Reassignment Surgery - Refers to a surgical procedure to transition an individual from one biological sex to another. This is often paired with hormone treatment and psychological assistance. A "Transsexual" individual must go through several years of hormones and psychological evaluation and live as the "opposite" or "desired" gender prior to receiving the surgery (see intersex).

Gender Role A societal expectation of how an individual should act, think, and/or feel based upon an assigned gender in relation to society's binary biological sex system.

Heterosexual An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also *straight*.

Homosexual (*see Offensive Terms to Avoid*) *Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gay and lesbian people. The Times have restricted the usage of the term. Gay and/or lesbian accurately describe those who are attracted to people of the same sex.*

Homophobia Fear of lesbians and gay men. *Prejudice is usually a more accurate description of hatred or antipathy toward LGBT people.*

Intersex People who naturally (that is, without any medical interventions) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Many visibly intersex babies/children are surgically altered by doctors to make their sex characteristics conform to societal binary norm expectations. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Has replaced "hermaphrodite," which is inaccurate, outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it means "having both sexes" and this is not necessarily true, as there are at least 16 different ways to be intersex.

In the Life Often used by communities of colour to denote inclusion in the LGBT+ communities.

Kinsey Scale Alfred Kinsey, a renowned sociologist, described a spectrum on a scale of 0 to 6 to describe the type of sexual desire within an individual. 0 Completely Heterosexual – 6: Completely Homosexual. In his 1948 work *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*.

LGBTQQIA An acronym used to refer to all sexual minorities: "Lesbian, Gay/Gender Neutral/Gender Queer, Bisexual/Bigender, Transgender/Transvestite/ Transsexual, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, and Allies/ Androgynous/Asexual."

Lifestyle *Inaccurate term used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lives. As there is no one straight lifestyle, there is no one lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender lifestyle.*

Men Loving Men (MLM) Commonly used by communities of colour to denote the attraction of men to men.

Men Who Have Sex with Men Men, including those who do not identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual, who engage in sexual activity with other men (used in public health contexts to avoid excluding men who identify as heterosexual).

Openly Gay Describes people who self-identify as lesbian or gay in their personal, public and/or professional lives. Also *openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender.*

Outing The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBT community.

Pansexual not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity.

Queer Traditionally a pejorative term, *queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves. However, it is not universally accepted even within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless someone self-identifies that way.*

Questioning The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sexual Orientation The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to suggest that being gay or lesbian is voluntary and therefore "curable."

Sexual Behavior Refers to an individual's sexual activities or actions (what a person does sexually). Though often an individual's sexual orientation is in line with their sexual behavior, it is not always the case.

Sexual Minority An all inclusive, politically oriented term referring to individuals who identify with a minority sexual orientation, sex identity, or gender expression/gender identity.

Sexual Preference *This term refers to an individual's choice in regards to attraction. Sexual preference can be based on gender/sex, physical appearance (height, weight, race, ethnicity), or emotional connection. It is important to note that sexual preference denotes a "choice" and has a negative connotation when used to describe the LGBT+ population.*

Straight Pop culture term used to refer to individuals who identify as a heterosexual, meaning having a sexual, emotional, physical and relational attraction to individuals of the "opposite" gender/sex. The term "straight" often has a negative connotation within the LGBT+ population, because it suggested that non heterosexual individuals are "crooked" or "unnatural".

Transvestite An umbrella term, which refers to people who wear the clothing of the "opposite" gender. These individuals can be transgender, transsexual, cross dressers, Drag performers, or individuals who express their gender in a unique way. This term is often thought to be outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it was historically used to diagnose medical/mental health disorders.

Women Loving Women (WLW) Commonly used by communities of colour to denote the attraction of women to women.

Zie & Hir The most common spelling for gender neutral pronouns. Zie is subjective (replaces he or she) and Hir is possessive and objective (replaces his or her).