GETTING IT RIGHT

A TERMINOLOGY GUIDE FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY
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This terminology guide was written to help give people the words and meanings to help make conversations easier and more comfortable.

LGBTQ+ people use a variety of terms to identify themselves, not all of which are included in this glossary. Always listen for and respect a person’s self identified terminology.

Let's get started!

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**Sex (S)**
At birth, infants are commonly assigned a sex. This is usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy, and is often confused with gender.

**Intersex**
Someone who, due to a variety of factors, has reproductive or sexual anatomy that do not seem to fit the typical definitions for the female or male sex. Some people who are intersex may identify with the gender assigned to them at birth, while many others do not.

**Gender**
A person’s deeply-felt, inherent sense of being that may or may not correspond to a person’s sex assigned at birth.
**Gender Identity**
An individual's personal sense of having a particular gender.

**Gender Expression (GE)**
The external manifestations of gender, expressed through such things as names, pronouns, clothing, haircuts, behavior, voice, body characteristics, and more.

**Sexual Orientation (SO)**
The desire one has for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not.

**Transgender**
Relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their birth sex.

**Cisgender**
Relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

**Trans-woman**
To refer to a person who was assigned male at birth and lives and/or identifies as a woman.
Trans-man
To refer to a person who was assigned female at birth and lives and/or identifies as a man.

Gender Non Binary (GNB)
To refer to people who identify with a gender outside of the gender binary. The word non-binary describes a wide array of different identities which fall outside of the gender binary, and can be related to, or completely separate from male and female gender identities.

Gender Non Conforming (GNC)
To refer to someone whose gender expression does not conform to the cultural or social expectations of gender, particularly in relation to male or female

Lesbian
Sexual or romantic attraction to other women or between women

Gay
Relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same gender. Often a term used to refer to men who are sexual or romantic attraction to other men.

Bisexual
Sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same gender and of the opposite gender.
**Queer**
An adjective used by some people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don’t apply to them. Some people may use queer, or genderqueer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQ people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBTQ community.

**Questioning**
Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it can also mean questioning. This term describes someone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Demisexual**
Refers to an individual who can only form a romantic or physical attraction to someone after having formed an emotional bond with the person.

**Pansexual**
Refers to an individual who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people regardless of the gender identity.
Drag
A public performance that involves playing with gender norms and expectations. Often refers to a man who wears women’s clothing (a drag queen), or a woman who wears men’s clothing (a drag king).

Crossdresser
Individual who dresses in clothing usually associated with a sex that differs from the one assigned at birth. This is done for a variety of personal reasons. Crossdressing is not indicative of sexual orientation or gender identity. This term replaces the sometimes pejorative term transvestite.

Two-Spirit
Contemporary term chosen to describe certain Native American and Canadian First Nation people who identify with a third gender, implying a masculine and a feminine spirit in one body. Replaces the problematic term berdache.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
The process by which trans individuals choose to take a prescription of artificial hormones. For trans women, that may include estrogen as well as testosterone-blockers. For trans men, testosterone, or T.
**Closeted**
Used as slang for the state of not publicizing one’s sexual/gender identity, keeping it private, living an outwardly heterosexual/cisgender life while identifying as LGBT, or not being forthcoming about one’s identity. At times, being in the closet also means not wanting to admit one’s identity to oneself.

**Coming Out**
To disclose one sexual identity or gender identity. It can mean telling others or it can refer to an internal process of coming to terms with one’s identity. In some situations, a heterosexual ally may feel the need to come out about her or his identity.

**Transphobia**
Negative ideas, assumptions and actions used to harm transgender individuals

**Homophobia**
Negative ideas, assumptions and actions used to harm gay and lesbian individuals.

**Biphobia**
Negative ideas, assumptions and actions used to harm bi individuals.

**Passing**
"Passing" refers to whether someone is perceived as female, male, or another gender.
Stealth
The term stealth in its most extreme sense refers to a person who passes as their desired sex or gender at all times and who has broken contact with everybody who knew their gender history.

Ally
An ally is a person who confronts heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc., in themselves and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well-being of LGBTQ people, and who is committed to social justice and equal rights.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HRC's Glossary of Terms
https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms

GLAAD's Media Reference Guide