

GLOSSARY OF LGBTQ TERMS COMPILED BY PFLAG AND UUA

Affectional orientation: describes the pattern of a person's romantic attraction, or the gender of the people a person falls in love with or desires to partner with.

Ally: A term used to describe someone who does not identify as LGBTQ but who is supportive of LGBTQ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate.

Biological Sex: attributes such as anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones that is usually assigned at birth and inform whether a person is male, female, or intersex.

Bisexual: An individual who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to men and women. Sometimes stated as "bi." People who are bisexual need not have had equal sexual experience with both men and women and, in fact, need not have had any sexual experience at all; it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

Cisgender: A term used to describe an individual whose gender identity aligns with the one typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. Often shortened to "cis".

Coming out: For people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, the process of self-acceptance that continues throughout one's life. Sometimes referred to as "disclosing" by the transgender community. People often establish a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender/gender-nonconforming identity to themselves first and then may choose to reveal it to others. Coming out can also apply to the family and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth or adults. There are many different degrees of being out: some may be out to friends only, some may be out publicly, and some may be out only to themselves. It's important

to remember that not everyone is in the same place when it comes to being out, and to respect where each person is in that process of self-identification. It is up to each person, individually, to decide if and when to come out or disclose.

Gay: The adjective used to describe people whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people of the same sex (e.g. gay man, gay people). In contemporary contexts, "lesbian" is often a preferred term for women. People who are gay need not have had any sexual experience; it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

Gender expression: The manner in which a person chooses to communicate their gender identity to others through external means such as clothing and/or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may incorporate both masculine and feminine expressions – or neither – through androgynous expressions. The important thing to remember and respect is that every gender expression is valid.

Gender identity: One's deeply held personal, internal sense of being male, female, some of both, or neither. One's gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex (i.e., a person assigned female at birth identifies as male or a person assigned male at birth identifies as female). Awareness of gender identity is usually experienced in infancy and reinforced in adolescence.

Gender nonconforming: A person who views their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly female or male. Other terms for gender nonconforming include “non-binary,” “gender creative,” “gender variant,” “genderqueer,” “gender fluid,” “gender neutral,” “bigendered,” “androgynous,” “gender diverse.” Such people feel that they exist psychologically between genders, as on a spectrum, or beyond the notion of the male and female binary paradigm. Gender nonconforming people sometimes prefer using gender-neutral pronouns such as “their” “ze” or “hir” and are usually comfortable with their bodies as they are regardless of how they express their gender.

Homophobia: An aversion to lesbian or gay people that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Similarly, “biphobia: is an aversion to bisexuality and people who are bisexual, and “transphobia” is an aversion to people who are transgender. “Homophobic,” “biphobic” and “transphobic” are the related adjectives. Collectively, these attitudes are referred to as “anti-LGBTQ bias”.

Homosexual: An outdated clinical term often considered derogatory and offensive, as opposed to the preferred terms, “gay” and “lesbian.”

Intersex/disorders of sex development (DSD): Individuals born with chromosomal or hormonal anomalies or ambiguous genitalia. In the past, medical professionals commonly assigned a male or female gender to the individual and proceeded to perform gender assignment surgeries beginning in infancy and often continuing into adolescence, before a child was able to give informed consent. The Intersex Society of North America opposes this practice of genital mutilation on infants and children. Intersex/DSD is related to biological sex and is primarily unrelated to, but often confused with, LGBTQ issues. Please note: the medical term “hermaphrodite” has been used in the past, but is no longer an acceptable term.

Lesbian: A woman whose emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction is to other women. People who are lesbians need not have had any sexual experience, it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

LGBT: An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender which refers to these individuals collectively. It is sometimes stated as “GLBT” (gay, lesbian, bi, and transgender). Occasionally, the acronym is stated as “LGBTQ” to include allies, “LGBTQ” with “Q” representing queer or questioning, or “LGBTI” with the “I” representing intersex.

PFLAG: PFLAG is the United States' first and largest organization uniting parents, families, and allies with people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. PFLAG National is the national organization, which provides support to the PFLAG network of local chapters.

Pansexual: A person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people of all gender identities and biological sexes. People who are pansexual need not have had any sexual experience, it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

Queer: A term currently used by some people—particularly youth—to describe themselves and/or their community. Some value the term for its defiance, some like it because it can be inclusive of the entire community, and others find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. Traditionally a negative or pejorative term for people who are gay, “queer” is disliked by many within the LGBT community, who find it offensive. Due to its varying meanings, this word should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer (i.e. “My cousin self-identifies as genderqueer.”)

Questioning: A term used to describe those who are in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof.

Sexual orientation: Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people. People who are straight experience these feelings primarily for people of the opposite sex. People who are gay or lesbian experience these feelings primarily for people of the same sex, people who are bisexual experience these feelings for people of both sexes, and people who are asexual experience no sexual attraction at all. Other terms include (but are not limited to) pansexual and polysexual. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, while sexual behavior involves the choices one makes in acting on one's sexual orientation. One can have sex with someone and even have children, but that doesn't necessarily define or align with their sexual orientation. Many LGB people have first married an opposite-sex partner and had children with them, sometimes out of a sense of obligation or cultural expectation, before coming out as gay or lesbian. It is important to remember that one's sexual activity does not define who one is with regard to one's sexual orientation; it is the attraction that helps determine orientation.

Straight: a man who is exclusively attracted to women or a woman who is exclusively attracted to men; also sometimes generally used to refer to people whose sexualities are societally normative. Alternately referred to as "heterosexual."

Transgender: A term describing the state of a person's gender identity which does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. Other terms commonly used are "female to male" (FTM or "transman"), "male to female" (MTF or "transwoman"), and "gender nonconforming." Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically to match their gender identity (also referred to as "transsexual.") This word is also used as a broad umbrella term to describe those who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression. Like any umbrella term, many different groups of people with different histories and experiences are often included within the greater transgender community-such groups include, but

are certainly not limited to people who identify as transsexual, gender nonconforming, non-binary, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, two spirit, and androgynous.