

GENDERS & SEXUALITIES TERMS

All terms should be evaluated by your local community to determine what best fits. As with all language, the communities that utilize these and other words may have different meanings and reasons for using different terminology within different groups.

Agender: a person who does not identify with a gender identity or gender expression; some agender-identifying people consider themselves gender neutral, genderless, and/or non-binary, while some consider “agender” to be their gender identity.

Ally/Accomplice: a person who recognizes their privilege and is actively engaged in a community of resistance to dismantle the systems of oppression. They do not show up to “help” or participate as a way to make themselves feel less guilty about privilege but are able to lean into discomfort and have hard conversations about being held accountable and the ways they must use their privilege and/or social capital for the true liberation of oppressed communities.

Androgynous: a person who expresses or presents merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

Asexual: 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 nor have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels of sexual attraction 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.

Bigender: a person who identifies with having two genders, which aren’t necessarily man and womxn.

Biphobia: the prejudice, marginalization, and hatred of people who are perceived to be bisexual, also experienced by other identities [pansexual, omnisexual, etc.].

Bisexual: a person who may be sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.

Boi: a person who may identify as masculine-of-center and chooses to use this term as a reference to masculinity outside of cis-hood; a term originating in the black community.

Butch: someone who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

Cisgender/Cis: a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (eg, man and male-assigned).

Cisnormativity: the societal and structural assumption that all people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Drag Queen/King: a person who performs masculine or feminine gender theatrically. While some drag queens and kings also are transgender, the terms are not used interchangeably.

Dyke: a slur historically used against queer womxn, particularly masculine-of-center womxn, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

Fag: a slur historically used against queer men, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

Female-To-Male (FTM), Male-To-Female (MTF): used to describe a person who has gone through a gender transition, sometimes used to refer to someone who has had gender reassignment surgery.

Femme: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

Gay: a person who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender; misused as an umbrella term for the entire LGBTQ+ community.

Gender: gender covers a wide range of concepts related to identities that apply to everyone.

- **Gender Characteristics:** characteristics that are used to attribute gender to an individual, such as facial hair or vocal pitch.
- **Gender Confirmation/Affirming Surgery:** a variety of medical procedures that trans people may choose to feel more at home in their bodies; wanting these procedures is not a requirement for being transgender.
- **Gender Expression/Gender Presentation:** the way a person expresses their gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.
- **Gender Identity:** a person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Nonconformity:** not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.
- **Gender Roles:** culturally imposed and expected behaviors associated with gender identities.
- **Gender Binary System:** a social system that requires individuals to adopt a male or female identity according to the sex assigned at birth. This system imposes limitations for how you are educated, what jobs you can do (or are expected to do), how you are expected to

behave, what you are expected to wear, what your gender & gender presentation should be, and who you should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

- **Gender Dysphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of discomfort with one's own assigned sex that results in significant distress or impairment.
- **Gender Euphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of contentedness with one's gender identity, expression and/or presentation.
- **Genderfluid:** describes a gender identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.
- **Genderqueer:** 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 [eg, agender, bigender, genderfluid].

Gender Pronouns: How people want to be referred to when they are addressed or talked about in third person. Some examples of gender-neutral pronouns are They/them/theirs and Ze/hir/hirs.

Heteronormativity: the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.

Heterosexism: The societal and structural assumption that all people identify as heterosexual.

Homophobia: The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or perceive to be gay, lesbian, or queer.

Intersex: an umbrella term that describes someone with a combination of sex characteristics that puts you somewhere outside the binary "male" and "female" boxes.

Visit interactyouth.org for more information about intersex issues.

Lesbian: a womxn who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender.

Masculine: concept of what is considered traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

Mx: a gender-neutral honorific meant to affirm individuals who do not fit in the Mr/Mrs binary.

Pansexual/Omnisexual: a person who may experience sexual, romantic, physical or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities and expressions

Passing: being perceived as a particular privileged identity/gender, regardless of how the person identifies [straight passing, cis passing, etc.].



Polyamory: a romantic orientation and practice of having multiple partners, who are consenting to relationships with varying structures; not inherently queer.

Queer: Term originally used as a slur that has been reclaimed; used as an umbrella term to describe someone who does not identify as straight (when used for sexual orientation) or someone who does not identify as cisgender (when used for gender, i.e. genderqueer) or someone who does not conform to sexual or gender expectations or norms. Queer has different meanings to different people.

QTPOC: Refers to queer and trans people of color, often used when differentiating the experiences of people of color and white people within the LGBTQ community.

Sex: Determined by a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. Assigned at birth based on genitals.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual identity of a person in relation to attraction and gender. For example someone might identify as gay or lesbian if they are attracted to a person of the same gender.

Third Gender: A person who identifies with a gender outside of the gender binary imposed by colonization. Fa'afafine of Samoa, Hijra of South Asia, and the Muxe in Oaxaca, Mexico are some examples of third genders.

Transgender/Trans: an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. *'Transgendered' has been noted to be an incorrect term.*

Transphobia: The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or are perceived to be transgender.

Transition: Refers to the transitioning process transgender people go through when affirming their gender. This can be both a medical procedure and/or social transition, e.g., gender expression, pronouns, different name, etc.

Two-Spirit: A modern umbrella term by and for LGBTQ Native Americans to describe a non-binary gender system that existed within many Native American communities before colonization. This term should not be used by people who are not Native American.

Womxn: A spelling of "women" that aims to be more inclusive and intersectional, and to show that womxn are not limited to being defined by patriarchy or gender binary.

