



LGBTQIA+ Terminology



2S (two spirit): used to describe an Indigenous person who embodies both masculine and feminine qualities, often encompassing a spiritual and gender identity outside the binary

AFAB: Assigned female at birth

AMAB: Assigned male at birth

Aromantic: AKA "aro," refers to those who experience little to no romantic attraction to persons of any gender

Asexual: AKA "ace," refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little, or conditional sexual attraction

Bisexual: a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity

Cisgender: a term used to describe people whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth

Coming out: When a person first tells someone/others about their orientation and/or gender identity

Demisexual: describes people who only feel sexual attraction to someone after they've formed a strong emotional bond with them

Fluid: a term people often use to describe their sexual orientation or gender identity if it changes with time

FTM: Stands for "female-to-male, referring to someone who was assigned female at birth, but is transitioning or has transitioned as a man

Gay: a person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to members of the same gender

GENDER EXPRESSION: External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice

GENDER IDENTITY: One's innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither - how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves

GENDER NON-CONFORMING: A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category

INTERSEX: Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits

LESBIAN: A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Non-binary people also use this term describe themselves

LGBTQ+: Stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and more." Many people and organizations use "LGBTQ" as a catch-all term for the non-cisgender and non-straight community, but the acronym varies depending on culture and style. For example, some groups may add "I" for intersex (LGBTQI), "2" for two-spirit (LGBTQ2) or "A" for asexual (LGBTQA). HRC uses LGBTQ+, with the plus sign representing all of the many identities on the queer spectrum.

MTF: Stands for "male-to-female," referring to someone who was assigned male at birth, but is transitioning or has transitioned as a woman

NON-BINARY: Describes a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. A non-binary person may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or completely outside these categories. While many non-binary people also identify as transgender, not all do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid

PANSEXUAL: Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender

Pronouns: Any word that can replace a noun or noun phrase and refer specifically to people who are being talked about. Examples of pronouns an individual may use include She/Her/Hers, He/Him/His or They/ Them/Theirs. Some individuals use neopronouns such as Xe/Hir/Hirs, or use no pronouns at all.

QUEER: Queer has many meanings. For some people, "queer" is a general catch-all/ umbrella term, used as a shorthand to capture all non-heterosexual sexual identities, and/or non-cisgender gender identities. For other people, queer may reflect their sexual orientation, leading them to identify as queer as opposed to lesbian, or bisexual, or something else. For them, queer often reflects those who are attracted to/partner with people who are transgender, non-binary, or gender-expansive, or who themselves are transgender, non-binary, or gender expansive. Still others may use queer to define their gender /gender identity, reflecting those who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement. Like all identities, you should only refer to someone as queer when they have let you know they identify that way.

SEXUAL IDENTITY: The label one uses for their sexual orientation. Essentially, it is the term you use to indicate your sexual orientation, to yourself and to the world. While most people who use a specific sexual identity (e.g., lesbian) use it to refer to a specific sexual orientation (e.g., a woman who is attracted to other women), others may use different identity labels to describe that same sexual orientation—and others still may use the same identity label to convey different sexual orientations.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Term used to describe one's overall inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attractions to other people. Essentially, it is who you are 'oriented' towards. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

TRANSGENDER: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth

TRANSITION: A process that some transgender and non-binary people go through when they decide to live as their true gender, rather than the one assigned to them at birth.