

LGBTQ+ Glossary

Ally

A person who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. An ally may or may not be in the LGBTQ+ community.

Asexual

A complete or partial lack of sexual attraction to others.

Bisexual

A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of more than one sex or gender. Bisexuality does not necessarily mean an *equal* preference for a sex or gender, and preferences may fluctuate over time.

Cisgender

A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.

Coming Out

A person's process of acknowledging their sexual orientation or gender identity and choosing to share this with others.

Gay

Attraction to one's own gender. This term may be used by men, women, and non-binary individuals.

Gender Dysphoria

A feeling of distress when one's assigned gender does not match their gender identity.

Gender Expression

The way a person expresses their gender identity through behavior, clothing, mannerisms, and more. Gender expression may not always fit with society's norms or expectations.

Gender Identity

A person's self-concept of their gender, which may be male, female, both, or neither. Gender identity may or may not be the same as a person's sex assigned at birth.

Homosexual

A person attracted to members of their own sex or gender identity. This term is often used in science or academics, but may be offensive to some members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Lesbian

A woman who is attracted to other women. Attraction may be emotional, romantic, sexual, or a combination of these.

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LGBTQ+

An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer,” with a plus sign to indicate identities that do not fit within these categories.

Non-binary

A gender identity that is not strictly male or female. The individual may identify as somewhere between male and female, both male and female, neither male nor female, or may have a fluctuating gender identity.

Outing

Exposing someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission, rather than letting them share this information when they are ready. Outing someone may impact their relationships, career, and other aspects of their life.

Preferred Gender Pronouns

The words a person prefers to be described with, regardless of their outward appearance or anatomy. Gender pronouns include they/them, he/him, and she/her.

Queer

A term for a wide spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations. A person may use this term when they feel their identity does not fit neatly into a more specific category. This term was once offensive, but has been reclaimed by many in the LGBTQ+ community.

Questioning

Being uncertain about and exploring one’s gender identity or sexual orientation (“I am questioning who I am”), or an identity that expresses this (“I identify as questioning”).

Sex Assigned at Birth

The sex (male, female, or intersex) assigned to a person at birth by a medical professional, based on the person’s anatomy.

Sexual Orientation

A person’s sexual and romantic preferences. For example: gay, heterosexual, bisexual, or otherwise.

Transgender

A person whose gender identity, expression, or behavior does not align with their sex assigned at birth.

Transitioning

The changes a transgender person may undergo so their internal gender identity better matches their outward presentation. Transitioning may include changing one’s name and pronouns, hormone therapy, surgery, and other changes. A person may use the terms FTM (female-to-male) or MTF (male-to-female).