

LGBTQIA Terminology

Agender People: Individuals who identify as genderless or gender-neutral.

Asexual People or Aces: Individuals who do not experience sexual attraction.

Bi or Bisexual People: Individuals who are romantically and physically attracted to some people of different genders.

Cis or Cisgender People: Individuals whose gender identity is congruent with their assigned gender (i.e., non-trans people).

Cross-dressers: Individuals who, regardless of motivation, wear clothing, hairstyles, makeup, etc. that are considered by the culture to be appropriate for another gender but not one's own (term to use instead of "transvestites").

Demigender People: Individuals who identify somewhere between being agender and having a gender.

Drag Queens and Drag Kings: Female-presenting cross-dressers (typically gay men) and male-presenting cross-dressers (typically lesbians), respectively, who present in public, often for entertainment purposes.

Gay Men: Men who are romantically and physically attracted to other men.

Gender: The social construction of masculinity, femininity, and other ways of being in a specific culture. It involves gender assignment (the gender designation of someone at birth), gender roles (the expectations imposed on someone based on their gender), gender attribution (how others perceive someone's gender), and gender identity (how someone defines their own gender).

Genderism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege cisgender (non-trans people) and subordinate and disparage trans and gender-nonconforming people.

Gender Expression: How one chooses to express one's gender identity through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, body characteristics, etc.

Gender Identity: An individual's sense of being male, female, or another gender. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Variant, Gender Diverse, or Gender Nonconforming: Alternative terms for transgender, meaning one who varies from traditional "masculine" and "feminine" gender roles.

Genderqueer People: Individuals who identify as neither male nor female (but as a third gender or as gender fluid) as both male and female, or as somewhere in between. It is a particularly common identity among trans youth.

Heterosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege heterosexuals and subordinate and disparage lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

Heterosexual People: Individuals at one end of the gender continuum who are romantically and physically attracted to people at the other end of the continuum.

Hir: A non-gender specific pronoun used instead of "her" and "him."

Homosexual People: A clinical term for gay men and sometimes lesbians. Although the word is still frequently used in the media and by some older gay men, it is largely rejected by members of the gay community (use “gay men” or “LGBT people” instead).

Intersex: Biological variations in which development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex is not standard for male and female bodies (preferred term to “hermaphrodite”). About one in 1,500-2,000 children are born with an intersex variation.

Lesbians: Women who are romantically and physically attracted to other women.

Queer: Traditionally a pejorative term for LGBT people, the word has been reclaimed today by some LGBT people, particularly younger people, to describe themselves. If used by heterosexuals who are not allies, it is still considered derogatory.

Sie or Ze: A non-gender specific pronoun used instead of “she” and “he.”

Trans, Trans*, or Transgender People: Most commonly used as an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth. Trans people include transsexuals; individuals who cross-dress or who present androgynously; agender, demigender, and genderqueer individuals; and others who cross or go beyond traditional gender categories.

Trans Men: Female-to-male transsexual people or FTMs—individuals assigned female at birth who identify as male.

Trans Women: Male-to-female transsexual people or MTFs—individuals assigned male at birth who identify as female.

Transitioning: The period during which a person begins to live as how they identify their gender. It may include changing one’s name, taking hormones, having surgery, and altering the gender marker on legal documents.

Transsexual People: Individuals who identify with the “opposite” gender extreme. Transsexual people often undergo hormone treatments and gender-affirming surgeries to align their anatomy with their core identity, but not all desire or are able to do so.

Two Spirit People: A Native American/First Nation term for people who blend the masculine and the feminine. It is commonly used to describe female-assigned individuals who took on the roles and/or dress of men and male-assigned individuals who took on the roles and/or dress of women in the past (preferred term to “berdache”). The term is also often used by contemporary LGBT Native American and First Nation people to describe themselves.

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