



# VOCABULARY

## GENDER

**Sex:** Determined at birth by anatomy/physiology - chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics, and genitalia (examples: male, female, intersex).

**Gender:** Social organization of the relationship between the sexes. Typically assigned at birth when the doctor announces the sex of an infant. Assumed to be congruent with sex (examples: masculine/man, feminine/woman, transgender).

**Gender Identity:** a person's sense of their own gender, which is communicated to others via gender expression. Since most people conform to societal gender norms, they have a gender identity congruent with their gender expression. However, for some people, gender identity, gender expression and sex do not correspond with each other.

**Gender Expression:** an individual's characteristics and behaviors such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are perceived as masculine or feminine.



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**Androgynous:** Someone who has both masculine and feminine characteristics, or neither. Similar to genderqueer.

**Agender:** A person who is without gender or genderless.

**Bigendered:** A person whose gender identity as both masculine & feminine or is both man & woman.

**Binding:** The process of flattening one's breasts to have a more masculine or flat chest.

**Boi, Birl, Boy-dyke, Butch, Tomboy:** Refers to people who feel that "female" is not an accurate or complete description of who they are.

**Bottom Surgery:** Surgery on the genitals designed to align one's body with a person's preferred gender expression (Phalloplasty, Metoidioplasty, Orchidectomy, Vaginoplasty, Labiaplasty, etc). See "Sex Reassignment Surgery".

**Cisgender, cissexual:** People whose gender identity and gender expression align with their assigned sex at birth (i.e., the sex listed on their birth certificates). Non-transgender people.

**Coming Out:** Refers to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one's identity with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). Coming out to others is a continual, life-long process which occurs each time someone indicates their identity to another person.

**Crossdresser :** Someone who dresses in the clothing that has been socially designated for the "opposite" gender. Formerly called transvestite, which is *now seen as an offensive term*.

**Drag King/Drag Queen:** Someone who cross-dresses for entertainment (typically involves an exaggerated gender presentation, acting, dancing & lip syncing). Often very glamorous or outrageous in appearance.

**Fag:** This is a word which has been formerly used as a slur against effeminate gay men but that has been reclaimed by some members of the marginalized group who view this as an empowering identity. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘fag’ to be a derogatory, and its use by heterosexuals is *often considered offensive*.

**Femme:** Feminine-identified person of any gender/sex.

**Genderbender, Genderblender, Gender fluid, Gender- gifted, Gender Outlaw, Gender Rebel, Pangender, Polygender, Bi-gender:** Similar to genderqueer, these terms refer to gender variations other than the traditional, dichotomous view of women and men. People who self-refer with these terms may identify and present themselves as both or alternatively male and female, as no gender, or as outside the binary.

**Genderfuck:** Refers to the intentional effort to play with traditional notions of gender identity, gender roles, and gender presentation.

**Gender Non-Conforming** and/or **Gender-Variant:** Those who cannot, or choose not to, conform to societal gender norms associated with their birth-assigned gender.

**Gender Binary:** The idea that there are only two genders (man/woman) and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

**Gender Confirming Surgery:** Medical surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity. See “Sex Reassignment Surgery,” “Top Surgery,” and “Bottom Surgery.”

**Gender Cues:** What human beings use to attempt to tell the gender/sex of another person (examples include hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc.). Cues vary by culture.

**Gender Neutral Pronoun** (from <http://web.mit.edu/trans/GenderNeutralPronouns.pdf>):

**Gender Neutral Pronoun Usage:**

	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Possessive Adjective</b>	<b>Possessive Pronoun</b>	<b>Reflexive</b>
<b>Female</b>	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
<b>Male</b>	He	Him	His	His	Himself
<b>Gender Neutral</b>	Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
<b>Spivak</b>	E	Em	Eir	Eirs	Emself

**How to pronounce gender neutral pronouns:**

Ze	Hir	Hirs	Hirself	E	Em	Eir	Eirs	Emself
/zee/	/here/	/heres/	/hereself/	/ee/	/em/	/air/	/airs/	/emself/

The pronoun “they” may also be used as a gender neutral pronoun to describe a single individual.

**Genderqueer:** Refers to people who do not identify, or who do not express themselves, within the gender binary. May view themselves as both/neither gender. Genderqueer people may or may not identify as transgender.

**Hermaphrodite:** Person born with ambiguous sex characteristics. This is *now an offensive term*, as Intersex is now the preferred term. See “Intersex.”

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** Any form of hormone therapy wherein the patient, in the course of medical treatment, receives hormones (typically prescribed by an endocrinologist), either to supplement a lack of naturally occurring hormones, suppress or substitute the secretion of specific hormones (examples include: estrogen, progesterone, testosterone).

**In the Closet:** Refers to an LGBTQI+ person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. There are varying degrees of being in the closet; for example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family. Also known as being on the “Downlow.”

**Intersex:** Person born with ambiguous sex characteristics (formerly referred to as “Hermaphrodite,” which is *now an offensive term*).

**Lipstick Lesbian:** Usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way, depending on who is using it. See “Femme.”

**LGBTQ+:** A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex culture.

**Nellie, Queen, Sissy, Fag:** Refers to people who feel that “man” is not an accurate or complete description of who they are, possibly due to feeling connected with feminine gender traits or expression. *May be considered offensive.*

**Outing:** Disclosing an LGBTQ+ person’s identity to others. Outing LGBTQ+ individuals is discouraged, unless the individuals has given permission to share their identity with others.

**Packing:** Wearing a phallus device for any purposes including: the validation or confirmation of one’s masculine gender identity, seduction, and/or sexual readiness (for one who likes to penetrate another during sexual intercourse).

**Passing:** Describes a person's ability to be accepted and seen for the gender or sex that they see themselves as.

**Postgender, Gender-free:** without gender and/or beyond the gender binary.

**Queer:** An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority, including, but not limited to, radical sex communities and many sexually transgressive explorers. It is a word which has been formerly used as a slur but that has been reclaimed by some members of the marginalized group who view this as an empowering identity. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a derogatory, and its use by heterosexuals is *often considered offensive*. See “LGBTQ+”

**Questioning:** An individual who is questioning whether their sexual orientation or gender identity is what they once believed it to be.

**Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS):** A term used to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s sex. In most states, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Also known as “Gender Confirming Surgery,” “Top Surgery,” “Bottom Surgery.”

**Stealth:** This term refers to when a transgender person chooses not to publicly disclose their gender history. See “Passing.”

**Stem:** A person whose gender expression falls somewhere between a stud and a femme. See “Femme” and Stud.”

**Top Surgery:** Surgery on the chest (double mastectomy) designed to align one's body with a person's preferred gender expression. May also refer to breast augmentation.

**Transactivism:** The political and social movement to create equality for gender-variant persons.

**Transitioning:** The process of moving toward expression of one's gender identity. This may include undergoing physical changes such as hormones or surgeries.

**Transfeminine:** Used as a catch-all term for people assigned male at birth who identify as feminine of center.

**Tranny:** Slang that is used for referring to a transgender person. Some have reclaimed this term and thus see it as empowering, while others *consider it to be offensive*.

**Tranny Chaser:** A term primarily used to describe people who prefer or actively seek transpeople for sexual or romantic relations. While this term is claimed in an affirmative manner by some, it is *largely regarded as derogatory*.

**Transgender (sometimes abbreviated as Trans\*):** An umbrella term used to describe gender-variant people who have gender identities, expressions or behaviors not traditionally associated with their birth-assigned sex or gender. This use allows a person to state a gender-variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. Transgender is preferred over transvestite or transsexual, older terms which do not accurately describe all transgendered people, and which also have a clinical or stigmatizing connotation. Transgender also can mean anyone who *transcends* the conventional definitions of 'man' and 'woman' (can include Butch Lesbians, Radical Faeries, Drag Queens, Drag Kings and many other kinds of gender-variant people who use a variety of terms to self-identify).

**Transition:** This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender-variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression. Also see "Bottom Surgery," Hormone Replacement Therapy," "Sex Reassignment Surgery," and "Top Surgery."

**Transman (or FtM):** Refers to someone who was identified female at birth but whose gender identity and/or expression is man/masculine (Female-to-male). People will often identify as FtM after taking some steps to express their gender as a man, or after medically transitioning. Some (but not all) transmen make physical changes through hormones or surgery.

**Transmasculine:** Used as a catch-all term for people assigned female at birth who identify as masculine of center.

**Transphobia:** The irrational fear of those who are gender-variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.

**Transsexual:** Commonly used to refer to someone who transitions from one gender to another. It includes individuals who were identified as male at birth but whose gender identity is female (MtF), individuals who were identified as female at birth but whose gender identity is male (FtM), and individuals whose gender identity is neither male nor female. Transition often consists of a change in style of dress, selection of a new name, and a request that people use a specific pronoun when describing them. Transition may, but does not always, include necessary medical care like hormone therapy and/or surgery.

**Transvestite:** Someone who dresses in clothing generally identified with the opposite gender/sex. The majority of transvestites are heterosexual males who derive pleasure from dressing in "women's clothing." This term may be *offensive to some*, however, it is still used in a positive sense in England. Also see "Cross-dresser."

**Transwoman (or MtF):** Refers to someone who was identified male at birth but whose gender identity and/or expression is woman/feminine (Male-to-female). People will often identify as MtF after taking some steps to express their gender as a woman, or after medically transitioning. Some (but not all) transwomen make physical changes through hormones or surgery.

**Two-Spirit, Third Sex, Third Gender:** People who display characteristics of both masculine and feminine genders living in the same body. The term is derived from the traditions of some Native North American cultures. It *may be offensive* to identify oneself as two-spirit if one does not also identify as Native American, as this is an appropriation of a marginalized culture one does not belong to.

## **SEXUALITY**

**Sexual Orientation:** Who one is attracted to emotionally, socially, and sexually (in behavior and fantasy).

**Romantic Orientation:** Who one is attracted to romantically or affectionately.

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**Asexual:** An individual who does not experience sexual attraction. Sometimes referred to as Ace.

**BDSM:** (Bondage, Discipline/Domination, Submission/Sadism, and Masochism ) The terms ‘submission/sadism’ and ‘masochism’ refer to deriving pleasure from inflicting or receiving pain, often in a sexual context. The terms ‘bondage’ and ‘domination’ refer to playing with various power roles, in both sexual and social context. These practices are often misunderstood as abusive, but when practiced in a safe and consensual manner can be a part of healthy sex life. Sometimes referred to as “Leather” or “Kink.”

**Bear:** A man who is attracted to other men. These individuals are commonly, but not always, overweight and often have hairy bodies and facial hair. Some are also muscular and project an image of rugged masculinity in their grooming and appearance.

**Bicurious:** A curiosity about entering into a sexual relationship with a person of the same gender.

**Biphobia:** The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society.

**Bisexual:** An individual who is attracted to others, regardless of the other person’s gender.

**Bottom:** A person who is said to take a more submissive role during sexual interactions. Sometimes referred to as ‘catcher’ or ‘pasivo’ in Latin American cultures. See also “Top.”

**Butch:** A person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. Butch is *sometimes used as a derogatory term* for lesbians, but it can also be claimed as an affirmative identity label. See “Stud.”

**Coming Out:** Refers to the process by which one accepts one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one’s identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.). Coming out to others is a continual, life-long process which occurs each time someone indicates their identity to another person.

**Demisexual:** Individuals who experience sexual attraction only after developing a close emotional bond with someone. See “Gray-Sexual.”

**Down Low:** Also referred to as D/L. See “In the Closet.”

**Dyke:** This is a word which has been formerly used as a slur against masculine lesbians but that has been reclaimed by some members of the marginalized group who view this as an empowering identity. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold it to be a derogatory, and its use by heterosexuals is *often considered offensive*.

**Fag:** This is a word which has been formerly used as a slur against effeminate gay men but that has been reclaimed by some members of the marginalized group who view this as an empowering identity. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘fag’ to be a derogatory, and its use by heterosexuals is *often considered offensive*.

**Fag Hag:** A term primarily used to describe women who prefer the social company of gay men. While this term is claimed in an affirmative manner by some, it is *largely regarded as derogatory*.

**Femme:** Feminine-identified person.

**Gay:** A generic term applied to both men who are attracted to men, and women who are attracted to women. Is often used exclusively to refer to man who is attracted to other men.

**Gray-Sexuals:** Individuals who experience sexual attraction infrequently, not very strongly, or possibly aren’t quite sure whether or not what they experience is sexual attraction. Sometimes referred to as Grace. Also see “Asexual.”

**Heteronormativity:** The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.

**Heterosexism:** Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice that is backed by institutional power and that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

**Heterosexual:** A man who is attracted to women, or a woman who is attracted to men.

**Heterosexual Privilege:** Those benefits derived by being heterosexual that are denied to LGB individuals.

**Homophobia:** The irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes.

**Homosexual:** A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex.

**In the Closet:** Refers to an LGBTQI+ person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. There are varying degrees of being in the closet; for example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family. Also known as being on the “Downlow.”

**Kink:** See “BDSM.”

**Leather:** See “BDSM.”

**Lesbian:** A woman who is attracted to women.

**Lipstick Lesbian:** Refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way, depending on who is using it. See “Femme.”

**MSM:** Men who have sex with men. See “Same-Gender Loving.”

**Non-monogomy, Open Relationship, Polyamory, Polyfidelity, Subrelationships:** Refers to having consensual and honest relationships with multiple partners.

**Outing:** Disclosing an LGBTQ+ person’s identity to others. Outing LGBTQ+ individuals is discouraged, unless the individuals has given permission to share their identity with others.

**Pansexual:** An individual who is attracted to others, regardless of the other person’s gender (acknowledges that gender is non-binary).

**Passing:** Occurs when a non-heterosexual person is assumed to be heterosexual.

**Queer:** An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority, including, but not limited to, radical sex communities and many sexually transgressive explorers. It is a word which has been formerly used as a slur but that has been reclaimed by some members of the marginalized group who view this as an empowering identity. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a derogatory, and its use by heterosexuals is *often considered offensive*. See “LGBTQ+”

**Questioning:** An individual who is questioning whether their sexual orientation or gender identity is what they once believed it to be.

**Same-Gender Loving:** A term sometimes used by members of the African-American/Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation. The term emerged in the early 1990's with the intention of offering Black women who love women and black men who love men a voice, a way of identifying and being that resonated with the uniqueness of Black culture in life. See “MSM.”

**Sexuality:** A person’s exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.

**Stone Butch:** A lesbian who usually does not desire sexual penetration and/or contact with the genitals or breasts See “Top.”

**Straight:** See “Heterosexual.”

**Stud:** An African-American and/or Latina masculine lesbian. See “Butch.”

**Switch:** A person who is both a Top and a Bottom (without a preference for one or the other). See “Bottom” and “Top.”

**Top:** A person who is said to take a more dominant role during sexual interactions. See “Stone Butch.”

# LGBTQ+ Identities

Cisgender  
Heterosexual

