

Sexual Orientation Glossary

Asexual – Lack of sexual attraction to anyone or low or absent interest in sexual activity

Biphobia - Discomfort or negative response toward bisexual people

Bisexual/Bisexuality/Bi - A person who feels love, affection, and sexual attraction regardless of gender

Demi-sexual/Demi-sexuality - A person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection

Down-low – A slang term that refers to men who have sex with men (MSM) but are either closeted or do not identify as gay. Most often associated with and has its origins in African American culture in the US

Gay Man/Homosexual - A man who feels love, affection, and sexual attraction toward men

Heterosexism - Institutional policies and interpersonal actions that assume heterosexuality is normative and ignores other orientations; the belief that heterosexuality is superior to other orientations

Heterosexual/Heterosexuality/Straight - A person who feels love, affection, and sexual attraction to persons of a different gender

Heteroflexible – People who are usually attracted to people of gender different from their own, but might occasionally be attracted to people genders similar to their own.

Homophobia - Discomfort or negative response toward gay and lesbian people and/or of same sex attraction or behavior in the self or others

Lesbian/Homosexual - A woman who feels love, affection and sexual attraction toward women

Homoflexible/Lesbiflexible – People who are usually attracted to people of genders similar to their own but might occasionally be attracted to people of genders different from their own.

Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) – Also: males who have sex with males (MSM); a clinical term that refers to men who engage in sexual activity with other men, whether they identify as gay, bisexual, or neither.

Omnisexual/Pansexual – A person who feels love, affection and sexual attraction regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Thus, pansexuality includes potential attraction to people (such as transgender individuals) who do not fit into the gender binary of male/female.

Pomosexual - A person who avoids sexual orientation labels (not the same as asexual)

Same Gender Loving (SGL) – A term coined for African American use by Cleo Manago in the early 1990s; a description for homosexuals, particularly in the African-American community; often used by those who prefer to distance themselves from terms associated with "white-dominated" LGB communities

Androsexual/Androphilic: Attracted to males, men, and/or masculinity

Gynesexual/Gynephilic: Attracted to females, women, and/or femininity

Hypersex(ual/-ity): A sexual attraction with intensity bordering on insatiability or addiction; recently dismissed as a non-medical condition by the American Psychiatric Association when it was proposed to be included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders version 5

Questioning: The process of exploring one's own sexual orientation, investigating influences that may come from their family, religious upbringing, and internal motivations

Sexual Preference: (1) Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with "sexual orientation," creating an illusion that one has a choice (or "preference") in who they are attracted to; (2) the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate.

Skoliosexual: Attracted to genderqueer and transsexual people and expressions (people who aren't identified as cisgender)

Gender Identity Related Terms

Gender Identity - *Internal sense of being male, female, or something in between (Gender is considered a continuum and not strictly binary concept.) Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others*

Cisgender – Someone whose gender identity and assigned biological sex are not in conflict; non- transgender

Bigender: A person who fluctuates between traditionally "woman" and "man" gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender)

Binary Sex: A traditional and outdated view of sex, limiting possibilities to "female" or "male"

Biological sex: The physical anatomy and gendered hormones one is born with, generally described as male, female, or intersex, and often confused with gender

Cis-man: A person who identifies as a man, presents himself masculinity, and has male biological sex, *often referred to as simply "man"*

Cis-woman: A person who identifies as a woman, presents herself femininely, and has female biological sex, *often referred to as simply “woman”*

Gender Binary/Binary Gender/Gender Binarism - The idea that human gender exists in two forms: masculine and feminine. Also describes a society that divides people into male and female gender roles, gender identities and attributes

Gender Expression - How one represents/expresses their gender identity to others, a combination of behavior, dress, hairstyles, voice, body characteristics or other gender-related behaviors

Genderism – A system of oppression that benefits cisgender people at the expense of transgender and gender non-conforming people. The idea of only believing in two genders (male & female). Genderism may take the form of transphobia, bias, and discrimination towards transgender and gender non-conforming people.

Genderqueer - A gender identity other than man and woman; may think of themselves as being both male and female, as being neither male nor female, or as falling completely outside the gender binary

Gender Role - The accepted behaviors, thoughts, and emotions of a specific gender based upon the views of a particular society or culture

Gender Related Terms

Intersex: A person with a set of sexual anatomy that doesn't fit within the labels of female or male

Real Life Experience - Refers to the period of time in which some transsexual people live full time outwardly expressing their gender identity; many medical protocols require this prior to SRS

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) - Surgical procedures that alter one's body to better conform to a person's gender identity; sex reassignment surgery comprises many different procedures

Transitioning - The process of moving toward full time expression of one's gender identity; typically includes undergoing physical changes through hormones and/or sex reassignment surgery

Transphobia - Discomfort or negative response toward transgender individuals and other people who are gender nonconforming

Transsexual – Shorthand for a person diagnosed with transsexualism, a medical label for the condition when a person's assigned biological sex doesn't match their internal gender identity. Often, transsexual people alter or wish to alter their bodies through

hormones or surgery in order to match their gender identity. Commonly used terms: Female to Male (FTM); Male to Female (MTF)

Transvestite/Cross Dressing/Drag Queen/Drag King - A person who dresses, either full time or part time, in clothing traditionally associated with the opposite sex. For example, Drag queens/kings are usually lesbian, gay or bisexual and sometimes cross dress for social occasions.

Third Gender: (1) a person who does not identify with the traditional genders of “man” or “woman,” but identifies with another gender; (2) the gender category available in societies that recognize three or more genders

Trans-man: A person who was assigned a female sex at birth, but identifies as a man; *often confused with “transsexual man” or “FTM”*

Trans-woman: A person who was assigned a male sex at birth, but identifies as a woman; *often confused with “transsexual woman” or “MTF”*

Two-Spirit: A term traditionally used by Native American people to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders

Associated Terms

Ally - A non-LGBT person who actively supports the civil rights of LGBT people

Coming Out - An ongoing process of becoming aware of one’s sexual orientation or gender identity, accepting it, acting on it and sharing it with others

In the Closet - Keeping one’s sexual orientation or gender identity secret

LGBTQQ - The most inclusive method to identify the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender” community” (other letters stand for Queer, Questioning)

Partner - A term commonly used to describe an LGBT’s person’s significant other/mate/spouse

Passing – When used by transgender people, it means being perceived as the gender with which one identifies. When used by LGB people, it means being perceived as heterosexual or “straight”

Stealth - Keeping your transgender and transitioning past hidden from others.

Controversial Terms:

Trans*, with an asterisk, is used widely within the LGBT+ community to refer to people who are transgender, or self-identify with related terms and concepts. The asterisk in "trans*" is meant to indicate any and all suffixes that may follow the prefix "*trans*," including -gender, -sexual, and -vestite.

Transmisogyny is an intersection of two forms of oppression that transgender women are subjected to: transphobia and misogyny. Because conventional patriarchal culture views women as inherently inferior to men (misogyny), transwomen are also perceived as inferior by virtue of being feminine and pursuing a female social role in society.

Transphobia is a strong dislike, hatred, sense of disgust, or fear related to trans* people.

Gender essentialism is the belief that gender roles and stereotypes are the natural result of biological or neurological differences between males and females. Gender essentialists assume that AMABs are by nature men, that AFABs are by nature women, and that the societal roles assigned to both are acceptable based on those differences. Gender essentialism generally denies the natural existence of transgender, intersex, and non-binary people, and tends to be closely linked to misogyny. Examples of common gender essentialist assumptions are "All men like porn," and "Little girls love dolls."

Cishet, used as both an adjective and a noun, describes a person who is both cisgender and heterosexual. A person is cishet if he or she is cisgender, meaning identifying with his or her assigned-at-birth gender, as well as heterosexual, or attracted exclusively to people of the opposite sex. Cishet individuals are not inherently part of the LGBT+ or queer community but may identify themselves as allies. People who are cishet arguably form most of the human population.

Terms & words NOT to use

“He-she”

“She-male”

Tranny—should only be used by transgender people; non-transgender people should avoid this word

Fag, Faggot, Dyke, Queer—sometimes words used against gay, lesbian and bisexual people are also used against transgender people. While these words have been reclaimed and used by some members of the LGBT communities, they should never be used by people who don’t identify as LGBT themselves.

Never ask about surgeries.

Never ask “what is your real name?”

The logo for the Equality Foundation of Georgia is a large, stylized graphic. It features a yellow circle with a white outline of the state of Georgia in the center. The text "EQUALITY FOUNDATION OF GEORGIA" is written in a bold, sans-serif font across the bottom half of the circle. "EQUALITY" and "FOUNDATION" are in blue, while "OF GEORGIA" is in white.

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