



Glossary of Gender & Sexual Identity Terminology

for PARENTS

How to use this booklet

The power of language to shape our perceptions of other people is immeasurable and cannot be understated. Awareness of the language of a community, especially with respect to gender and sexual identity can have a significant impact on uncovering the many misperceptions and myths associated with these concepts.

On an individual level, the lack of language to describe oneself renders a person invisible and can create immense psychological harm. When you use terms that do not reflect or pathologize people in the community, it increases this painful experience even more. This is true even when you aren't directly referencing the person you are speaking with. This is why it is so important to use your child's affirmed name and pronouns. By doing so, you show that you "see" your child. To not do so is to render them invisible and potentially create an existential crisis.

It is important to note that, the language surrounding both gender and sexual identities is constantly evolving. The beauty in this is that the more terminology we have to describe ourselves, the more visible we become. The downside in this ever-evolving landscape of language is how easily our knowledge becomes outdated. In some cases, what is considered appropriate to one cohort may be derogatory to another. Another difficulty is the lack of universal agreement about the definitions of many terms.

In this booklet are some of the more common working definitions and examples of frequently used (and misused) gender related terms that parents should know. These terms and concepts are broken out into sections and alphabetically organized within each section. We will be updating this as we find new terms but know this is not an exhaustive list. It is a starting point for talking with and understanding your child. Always make sure you check with them so you know what they consider most affirming.

Table of contents

Tips to Consider 4

Important LGBTQ+ Terms For Parents to Know 7

Gender Terms of Identity 13

Gender Affirming Social Terms 19

Gender Identity Pronouns 22

Terms Used by Medical Providers 24

Gender Affirming Medical Interventions/Procedures 28

Sexuality Terms of Identity 34

Offensive/Outdated Terms 42

TransFamily Gender Journey 46



TIPS TO CONSIDER

Always use your child's affirmed name.

While it may be hard to shift, if your child has requested to be called by a different gender affirming name, it is very important that you do your best to use their affirmed name. Not to do so can cause significant psychological pain for your child. It is important to follow your child's lead on this.

Although many transgender people are able to obtain a legal court-ordered name change, some are unable to afford the fees required for a legal name change, or are not yet of legal age to change their own name. Regardless of their legal name, they should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who chooses to use a name other than their legal name (i.e. celebrities).

It's never appropriate to put one's gender in quotation marks when you address them.

Use your child's affirmed pronouns and for others, the pronoun that matches the person's expressed gender.

Ask your child what pronouns they want you to use and do your best to use these all the time. Much like your child's name, to not to do so can cause significant psychological pain for your child. It is important to follow your child's lead on this.

A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or undergone surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you are not certain which pronoun to use, ask the person, "What pronouns do you use?"

If you don't know what pronoun to use for a transgender person and you're unable to ask them, use the pronoun consistent with their gender expression, or use the singular they.

It's appropriate to use the singular they to describe someone when you or they don't wish to assign a gender. Some people use the singular they to reflect their non-binary gender identity and/or gender expression. It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity and/or gender expression to use they/them as their pronoun.

(See: Gender Identity Pronouns)

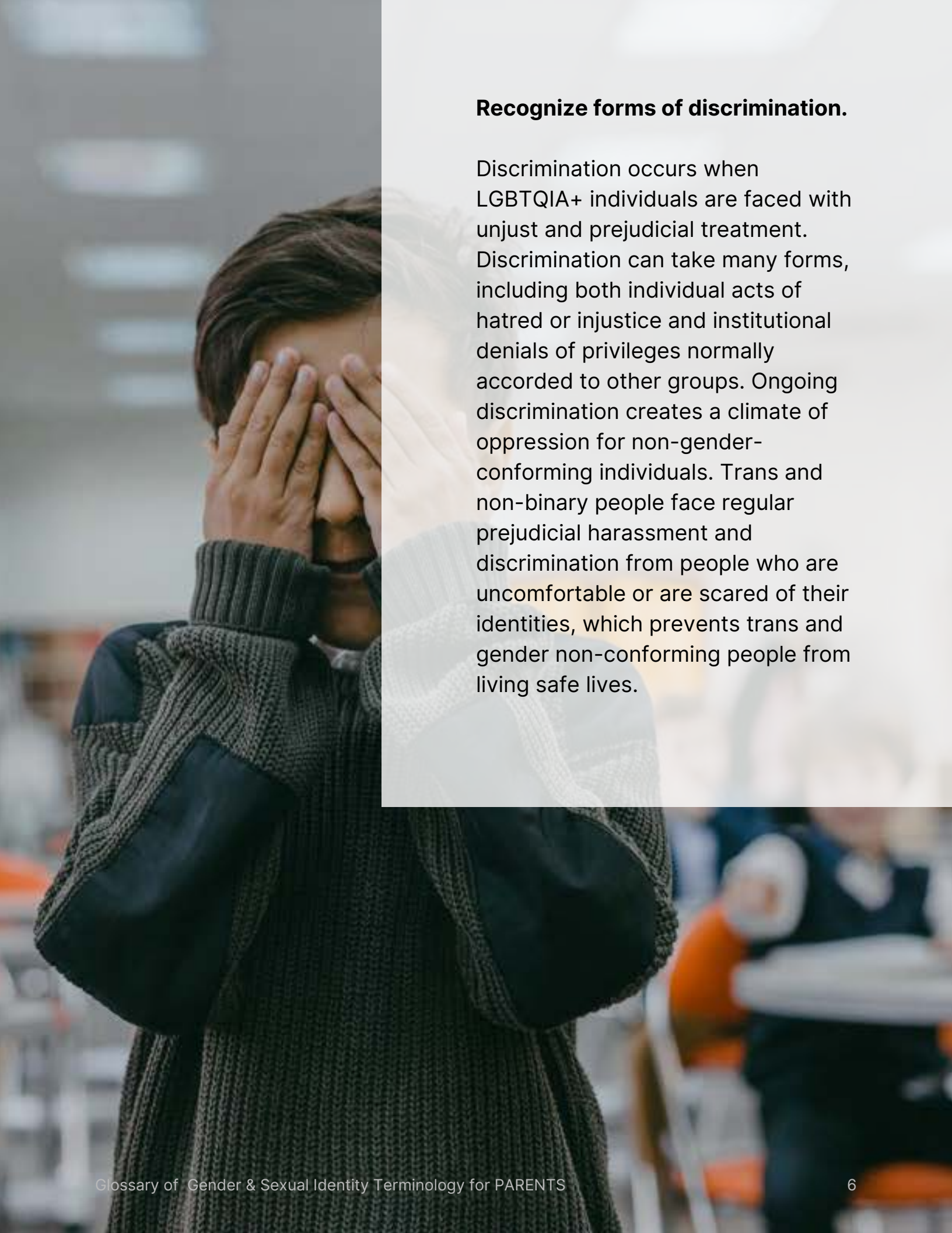
Each person's coming out experience is different.

The decision to come out is deeply personal and the act of coming out can be difficult and emotional. Each person should make decisions about disclosing sexuality and gender in their own time and manner. It's important to respect each person's decision how and when they want to come out, and to whom they choose to share it with.

Be aware of your cisgender privilege.

Cisgender is the term reflecting individuals whose gender corresponds with their birth sex ("Cis" meaning "the same side as", and the antonym, of "trans"). Also called straight privilege or heterosexual privilege. Having cisgender privilege reflects the unearned benefits you get that people who are or who are perceived as gender conforming do not have. These include conscious and unconscious advantages and/or immunities that often benefit you on a daily basis (i.e. being addressed with proper pronouns and your correct name, being able to use the bathroom that corresponds with your gender without issue, not understanding what it feels like to live with body parts that you consider binding or tucking regularly).



A photograph of a person with dark hair, wearing a dark green and black patterned sweater, covering their face with both hands. They are standing in a crowd, with other people and white chairs visible in the blurred background. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Recognize forms of discrimination.

Discrimination occurs when LGBTQIA+ individuals are faced with unjust and prejudicial treatment. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for non-gender-conforming individuals. Trans and non-binary people face regular prejudicial harassment and discrimination from people who are uncomfortable or are scared of their identities, which prevents trans and gender non-conforming people from living safe lives.



Important LGBTQ+ Terms

For PARENTS to know

Please Note

This is a starting point. The terms and definitions below are an attempt to define identities that are always evolving; therefore, these terms continue to evolve and change, as such terms mean different things to different people.

Advocate

An advocate is someone who publicly and actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a group. An advocate works to support and help those who feel they are not being seen, heard, or respected and helps to ensure their rights are being respected and considered seriously.

Ally

An ally is any person who actively supports a specific groups of people and/or causes. An LGBTQIA+ ally publicly speaks out in support of justice for LGBTQIA+ communities.

Closeted

Closeted, also referred to as being “in the closet,” describes people in the LGBTQIA+ community who aren’t publicly open about their sexual or gender identity. Closeted is understood as the opposite of being “out” (See: Coming Out). Some people may be out in certain communities but closeted with others, often due to the fear of discrimination, rejection, or violence.

Coming In

The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and comes to understand their sexual orientation or gender identity for themselves, but have not yet shared it with others. It reflects the private and often emotional place one comes from in the process of making decisions about sharing their gender and/or sexual identity with others.

Coming Out

Also described as “coming out of the closet”. A phrase that refers to the deeply personal process of accepting, acknowledging, and appreciating one’s sexual and/or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

Coming out is often a series of moments and conversations that may include openly identifying as LGBTQIA+, disclosing one’s authentic sexual/gender identity, and/or sharing about a same or similar gender sexual or romantic experience. Some people choose to keep their sexual/gender identity private, while others decide to share these things with close friends or family, acquaintances, or the public.

Cisnormativity

The assumption or presumption all people are cisgender unless otherwise specified.

Cisgenderism/Genderism

Cisgenderism/Genderism is the rigid belief that gender is binary; a classification of gender into two individual and opposite categories of masculine/feminine.

Cissexism

Cissexism is a harmful and prejudicial set of beliefs based on thinking that being non-trans is the only acceptable and “natural” form of gender identity or expression.

Heteronormativity

The belief that heterosexuality, based on the gender binary, is the default, preferred, or normal mode of sexual orientation.

It also assumes that sexual /marital relations between people of opposite sex is the norm and anything else is a deviation. A heteronormative belief therefore involves alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity and gender roles.



Intersectionality

This term refers to the concept that all forms of oppression is connected. As they overlap and combine, it creates interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage. Intersectional theory reflects how people are often affected by multiple aspects of oppression, including their race, ethnicity, culture, class, sexual/gender identity, education, ability, age, language, and religion (see graphic).



LGBTQ+

An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (or questioning)”. This often describes individuals who don’t identify as exclusively heterosexual or cisgender. There are many accepted versions of this acronym, and is also sometimes referred to as “Alphabet Soup”. The + symbol in the acronym refers to the inclusion of all those who identify other than lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual or androgynous.

Alternative acronyms:

LGBTQ+: “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, plus everyone else”

LGBTQIA+: “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/androgynous/ally, plus everyone else”

LGBTQQIP2SAA: “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit (2S), androgynous and asexual”.

Living Openly

Also referred to being “out “or “out of the closet”, one who lives openly lives in a state in which they are comfortable being open with their sexual/gender identity when it feels appropriate for them. This may include dressing, speaking, behaving, and publicly presenting their authentic self on a daily basis.

Misgendering

Misgendering someone, whether deliberately or accidentally, occurs when one refer to someone by the wrong gender pronouns (i.e. calling a trans man “she/her” when they use he/him or they/them” If you misgender someone accidently, it’s best to simply correct yourself and make a point to ensure you continue to use their preferred pronouns. Deliberate misgendering is disrepectful and prejudicial, and stems from transphobia.

Outing

The act of outing someone is intentionally or unintentionally exposing someone’s sexual or gender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can be devastating for those who aren’t ready to live openly, including repercussions on employment, personal safety, and complicated religious and/or family situations. If someone shares their gender/sexual identity with you, keep in mind this is personal and sensitive information, and recognize that this person trusted you enough to tell you. It’s best to ask them what, if any, of the information you’re allowed to share with others, and it’s important to respect their wishes as to how and to whom they come out.



Pride

Pride is a celebration of standing open in one's own identity against oppression, beginning with the Stonewall Riots at the end of June 1969. Pride Month (June) is a celebration of how far the LGBTQIA+ community have come in terms of fighting discrimination and injustice and accepting individuals' authenticity. From a time when gay and trans clubs were raided by police regularly to now, The celebration of Pride is a remembrance of where those in the community came from, and a reminder of how far society has yet to go.

Transphobia

Transphobia reflects a range of irrational fears, hatred, disbelief, mistrust, and intolerance of transgender people.

Transphobia can many forms, including an aversion to and prejudice against trans people, discounting or rejecting their preferred pronouns and gender identity, derogatory language and name-calling, bullying, abuse, and violence. Many people hold transphobic beliefs because they were taught to them, perhaps by parents and family growing up, as such beliefs are often culturally generational.





Gender Terms of Identity

Agender

Person who identifies as agender does not identify with any gender. It can be seen as either non-binary or genderless.

Androgynous

An androgynous person expresses themselves by merging stereotypically feminine and masculine characteristics, or present mainly neutral characteristics.

Bigender

A bigender person identifies as two genders, (ex: male and female, male and androgynous, agender and demigirl, or any other combination).

Butch

Butch is a term that is used to describe a person who expresses masculinity regardless of their gender. It can be used as an adjective and a noun. In the lesbian community, a Butch is a masculine identified lesbian who often performs a male gender, and usually identifies as a female who is attracted to women.

Cisgender

An adjective for people whose gender identity generally matches the gender assigned at birth based on their physical sex. The word is derived from the Latin root “cis” meaning “on this side.” For example, if a baby who was born with a vulva is categorized a girl/female and also sees herself as a girl throughout her life, she is considered cisgender. Similarly, if a baby born with a penis is categorized a boy/male at birth and also sees himself as a boy throughout his life, he is considered cisgender. (See: Gender Affirming Terms: Assigned Gender)

Cross-Dresser

A person — typically a heterosexual cisgender man — who sometimes likes to dress up in women’s clothing in order to have fun, entertain, for sexual enjoyment, to make a political statement about gender roles, or to just experiment with the feminine side of their male personalities.

Cross-Living

Cross-living is the act of cross-dressing all the time and living as the gender which one perceives themselves to be.

Demiboy/Demigirl

A demiboy is someone who identifies as a man, boy or otherwise masculine, regardless of their assigned gender at birth. They may or may not identify as another gender in addition to feeling partially a boy or man. Demiboys may use he/him and/or they/them pronouns. Also called demiguy, demiman or demimale person.

A demigirl identifies as a woman, girl or otherwise feminine, regardless of their assigned gender at birth. Also called a demiwoman or a demifemale person.

Drag Queen/Drag King

A drag queen is a male (usually cisgender) performer who dresses in women's clothing and performs exaggerated female behaviors for entertainment.

Drag queens often perform in bars, clubs, and other events. Drag queens can identify with a variety of sexuality and genders. They usually prefer to be called he/him or they/them pronouns while in drag.

Alternative term: Male impersonator.

A drag queen king is a female (usually cisgender) performer who dresses in men's clothing and performs exaggerated male behaviors for entertainment.



Femme

Femme is a term used to describe one who expresses femininely regardless of their gender. Can be used either as a positive or negative term.

Female-to-male (FTM)/ Male-to-female (MTF)

Female-to-male (also written as FTM or F2M) is a term to describe one who was assigned female at birth but identifies on the male spectrum. They may also be identified as a transgender man (See: Transgender man) Male-to-female (also written as MTF or M2F) is a term to describe one who was assigned male at birth who identifies on the female spectrum. They may also identify as a transgender woman (See: Transgender woman)

FTX/F2X

A genderqueer or gender expansive person who was assigned female at birth.

Hijra

A Hindustani word for third gender people. Most Hijra are assigned male at birth. In Hindu mythology, Hijra were considered 'holy'. The hijra community in India prefer to call themselves Kinnar or Kinner, referring to the mythological beings that excel at song and dance. In Pakistan, they are called Khawaja Sira—equivalent for transgender in Urdu language. Hijras are officially recognized as third gender in countries in the Indian subcontinent, being considered neither completely male nor female.

Gender Fluid

One who identifies as gender fluid feels they aren't bound to one specific gender, but instead their identity shifts between masculine and feminine, or neither. A gender fluid person may feel male on some days, female on others, both male and female, or neither--a gender fluid person might also identify as genderqueer. For some, being gender fluid is their gender identity.

Gender-nonconforming

A broad term referring to people who don't follow the traditional cultural/social expectations that conform to their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a traditional category.

Gender-expansive

A broad term that describes those who don't fit into the culturally 'traditional' expectations of binary gender (male/female).



Hijra

Kathoey

A common word used in Thailand to describe a male-to-female transgender person or person of a third gender or an effeminate homosexual male. Directly refers to 'someone of a third gender', loosely translates to "Ladyboys". The term "transgender" is rarely used in Thailand. Thai kathoeyes are world famous for having beautifully feminine appearances and working to appear as normal women in society, using things such as hair and makeup, plastic surgery, gender reassignment surgery, and various other cosmetic procedures. Thailand is among the most accepting and welcoming of LGBT and kathoey culture in Southeast Asia.

Neutrois

A neutrois person identifies as no specific binary gender, but still feels they are a specific gender. They Neutrois people may prefer express themselves as androgynous or and may or may not seek surgical interventions to affirm their bodies. This is different from no-gendered, or non-gendered people who don't identify as any gender.

Non-binary

An adjective describing a person whose gender identity falls outside the "traditional" binary categories (male/female, man/woman). Non-binary people may define their gender as including both male and female by falling somewhere in between, or they may identify as a different gender or genders altogether. Also sometimes called genderqueer.

Pangender

Person who identifies as multiple genders, or across a spectrum.

Transgender

Transgender (also referred to as Trans) is a broad term used to describe individuals whose gender identity is different from that which was assigned to them at birth. Transgender people include individuals who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, agender, androgyne, demigender, genderfluid, individuals who cross-dress or dress androgynously, and other individuals who cross or go beyond traditional gender categories. Transgender 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.

Trans-feminine

A person whose sex assigned at birth was male but whose gender identity and/or expressions tends toward femininity and usually outside of the binary. They may or many not identify as female or use female pronouns.

Trans-masculine

A person whose sex was assigned female at birth but whose gender identity and/or expression tends toward masculinity and usually outside of the binary. They may or may not identify as male or use male pronouns.

Transgender Man

A person whose sex assigned at birth was female but whose gender identity is male. These identities can also refer to someone who was surgically assigned female at birth, in the case of intersex people, but whose gender identity is male. Many trans men identify simply as men.

Transgender Woman

A person whose sex assigned at birth was male but whose gender identity is female.





Gender Affirming Social Terms

Disclosure

A word that some people use to describe the act or process of revealing one's transgender or gender-expansive identity to another person in a specific instance. Some find the term offensive, implying the need to disclose something shameful, and prefer to use the term coming out, whereas others find coming out offensive, and prefer to use disclosure.

Gender Euphoria

The feeling of satisfaction, comfort, joy, and pride a transgender person feels when they are able to present or openly express their authentic gender identity to other people and receive acceptance and appropriate reactions from others (i.e. a trans man being told "have a nice day, Sir" or referred to as he/him, affirming his acceptance as a man within his community).

Gender Expansive

An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people that expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond what is perceived as the expected gender norms for their society or context. Some gender-expansive individuals identify as a man or a woman, some identify as neither, and others identify as a mix of both. Gender-expansive people feel that they exist psychologically between genders, as on a spectrum, or beyond the notion of the man/woman binary paradigm, and sometimes prefer using gender-neutral pronouns (see Personal Gender Pronouns). They may or may not be comfortable with their bodies as they are, regardless of how they express their gender.

Gender Expression

The way a person communicates their gender identity to others through specific behaviors and mannerisms, clothing, haircut, voice, etc. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation or even one's gender identity.

Gender Fluid

Describes a person who does not consistently identify with one fixed gender and moves between gender identities.

Gender Identity

One's gender identity reflects one's innermost concept of self as male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, it's not necessarily visible to others and not contingent on their biological sex.

Gender Role

Cultural/social mores which dictate how people are expected to behave, act, and present themselves through clothing, hairstyle, grooming, and speaking based on their biological sex.

Gender Transition

The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions. Most people do not feel like they are transitioning gender, but aligning their body and presentation to match their gender.

Presentation

One's presentation is how they present themselves to others, making up the totality of one's appearance including how they dress, speak, behave, etc.

Transition/Gender Transition

To transition is the process of a transgender person transitioning, or moving, from living life in their assigned gender to living life in their authentic gender identity. There are three general aspects to transitioning: social (e.g., presentation, relationships, employment, names/pronouns); medical (e.g., hormones, surgery, mental health) and legal (e.g., changing gender marker and name on legal documents and identification). Each person's transition path is unique.

A person with short dark hair is seen from the side, looking into a mirror. The mirror reflects their face, showing a woman with dark hair pulled back. The scene is set in a room with patterned wallpaper. The entire image has a blue tint.

Gender Identity Pronouns

Pronouns

Socially acceptable forms of addressing others, often based on their perceived gender, including he, his, him, she, her, hers, they, them, their, Sie, Ze, Hir, etc.

Hir/ZeHir/Ze

Gender neutral alternate pronouns preferred by some gender variant peoples. Ze pronounced /zee/ and Hir pronounced /here/; these pronouns replace “he”/“she” and “his”/“hers” respectively. Other gender neutral pronouns include They/Them/Their.

Sie or Ze

A non-gender specific pronoun used instead of “she” and “he.” (See: Hir/ZeHir/Ze)

They/them/theirs

A set of gender-neutral pronouns used by some nonbinary or genderqueer people to identify themselves in the third person. See more about gender-neutral third-person pronouns in our blog on the subject





Terms Used by Medical Providers

Affirmed Gender

An individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. This term should replace terms like new gender or chosen gender, which imply that an individual's gender was chosen.

Assigned/Designated Gender

The gender that is assigned to an infant at birth, which may or may not align with their sex at birth.

Assigned Sex

The announcement by doctors ("It's a boy/girl") based on what the physical anatomy looks like (i.e boys have a penis, girls have a vulva). The biological state of male or female assigned at birth. Based on this, you are supposed to grow up, be, and exist within a certain set of gender roles. (See also: Sex; Assigned Female At Birth; & Assigned Male At Birth)

Assumed Gender

The gender others assume an individual to be based on the sex and gender they are assigned at birth, as well as apparent societal gender markers and expectations, such as physical attributes and expressed characteristics.

AFAB (Assigned Female At Birth)

Often associated with the outward appearance of female genitalia (vulva, vagina) in a newborn.

AMAB (Assigned Male At Birth)

Often associated with the outward appearance of male genitalia (penis, gonads) in a newborn.

Sex

Biological sex is determined by chromosomes (XX for female, XY for males); hormones (estrogen/progesterone for females, testosterone for males); and internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for females, penis and testicles for males). Sex and gender are associated, but not the same, nor interchangeable. Considering the possible variation of these factors, biological sex should be defined as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options. One example of this Klinefelter Syndrome usually diagnosed in adult males in which they are found to have an extra X chromosome.

(See: Klinefelter Syndrome)

Binary Sex

Also called gender binary, binary sex is a “traditional” and outdated view of sex, limiting possibilities to solely “female” or “male”. (See: Gender Affirming Terms: Assigned Gender/Sex).

Intersex

An intersex person is one who is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the traditional binary categories of male or female. Some intersex people are assigned a specific sex at birth through surgery, if their external genitals are not obviously male or female. Some intersex babies assigned a legal sex at birth grow up to feel their gender doesn't match the sex selected for them. It's important to note, some intersex people are transgender, but intersex does not necessarily mean transgender.

Binary Gender

A “traditional” and outdated model of gender, limiting possibilities to “man/male” and “woman/female”.

Binary Gender System: A culturally defined social code of acceptable behaviors and ideologies which teach that there are only two genders--men and women; where men are expected to present as masculine and women are expected to present as feminine, and that there is nothing outside of this system.

Female-Bodied

A female-bodied person was assigned female sex at birth or is a person who has had their genitals surgically altered to be a woman. Not an appropriate term when referring to a transgender person assigned female at birth.

Klinefelter Syndrome

A congenital genetic condition that affects only males in which they are born with an extra X chromosome (XXY instead of XY), and often isn't diagnosed until adulthood. Symptom of this syndrome often show during pubertal changes, including a lack of secondary sexual characteristics, being taller than average, having reduced facial and body hair, reduced muscle strength, noticeable breast development (Gynecomastia), osteoporosis, feminine fat distribution (for example thicker/wider hips and/or thighs), varicose veins, low energy/lethargy, learning disabilities, delayed speech and language development, small testes and infertility issues. Klinefelter Syndrome affects 1 in 550 men, with many people never being diagnosed.

Male-Bodied

A male-bodied person was assigned male sex at birth or is a person who has had their genitals surgically altered to be a man.

Not an appropriate term when referring to a transgender person assigned male at birth.

Gender

Gender is an umbrella term that reflects a social construct of emotional and psychological characteristics that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other based on numerous factors. Gender is often thought of in binary terms (man/woman, male/female), but gender is not necessarily the same as an individual's biological sex or even as one's internal sense of self.

Gender Dysphoria

A medical diagnosis that reflects one's feelings of being the wrong sex including feeling discomfort in their biological sex, with their physical appearance, and feeling distress and, anxiety, and about the mismatch between their bodies and their gender identity. A person may be formally diagnosed with gender dysphoria in order to receive medical treatment to help them transition. It is important to note that not all transgender people experience gender dysphoria. (See also: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria)

Secondary Sex Characteristics

The characteristics include the changes in a person at puberty, including the growth of facial and body hair, muscle development, voice changes, breast development, and reproductive maturity.





**Gender Affirming
Social & Medical
Interventions / Procedures**



Binding

The process of tightly wrapping one's chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts, often by using a binder.

Bilateral Mastectomy

Also called Chest Masculinization or Chest Reconstruction Surgery: A surgical removal of breast tissue that removes most of the breast tissue to create a more masculine and contoured male chest, and refines the nipples and areolas. A part of "top surgery" for some transgender men.

Bottom Surgery

Colloquial phrase to describe gender affirming genital surgery. Surgery includes altering the reproductive organs and/or external genitals.

Clitoroplasty

A surgical procedure that creates a normal clitoris with functioning sensation. This procedure is usually performed in tandem with other procedures during gender affirming surgery, including vaginoplasty (creating the vaginal canal) and vulvoplasty (creating the outer vagina).

Facial feminization/ masculinization surgery

Facial feminization surgery involves reshaping of the face to look more feminine, including reshaping the nose; brow or forehead lift; reshaping of the chin, cheek and jaw; tracheal shave (Adam's apple reduction); lip augmentation; hairline restoration; and earlobe reduction. A part of gender affirming surgery for some transgender women.

Facial masculinization surgery involves reshaping of the face to look more masculine, including forehead lengthening and augmentation; cheek augmentation, reshaping the nose and chin; jaw augmentation; thyroid cartilage enhancement to construct an Adam's apple. A part of gender affirming surgery for some transgender men.

Gender Affirming Surgery

Gender affirming surgery includes medical procedures meant to align one's genitals and physical attributes with their authentic gender, and only one small part of the transition process. These procedures may include "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) and "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). Gender affirming surgery is sometimes referred to as gender reassignment surgery or gender confirming surgery. Previously referred to as Sex Reassignment Surgery. Avoid the phrase "sex change operation". Do not refer to someone as being "pre-op" or "post-op." Not all transgender people choose to, or can afford to, undergo medical surgeries.

For transgender men, surgeries involve a bilateral mastectomy (chest reconstruction), panhysterectomy (removal of the uterus, ovaries, oviducts, cervix, and related lymph nodes), and sometimes a phalloplasty (construction of a penis) and scrotoplasty (formation of a scrotum) or a metoidioplasty (restructuring the clitoris).

For transgender women, surgeries involve vaginoplasty (construction of a vagina) and optional surgical breast augmentation (implants). Additional surgeries might include a tracheal shave (reducing the size of the Adam's apple), bone restructuring to feminize facial features (See: Facial feminization/masculization surgery), and hair transplants.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

The process in which transgender people choose to take a prescription of synthetic hormones. For transgender women, that may include estrogen as well as testosterone blockers. For transgender men: testosterone (also referred to as T).

Hysterectomy

Surgical removal of the uterus, often the one of the first procedures of gender affirming "bottom" surgery that generally includes several procedures, often performed in tandem. They may include the following: A hysterectomy to remove the uterus, an oophorectomy to remove the ovaries, a possibly a vaginectomy to remove the vagina. A part of "bottom surgery" for some transgender men.

Labioplasty

A part of “bottom surgery” for some transgender women.

Metoidioplasty

A surgical alteration of the clitoris that works with existing genital tissue to form a phallus, or new functional penis. It can be performed on anyone with significant clitoral growth caused by using testosterone. Often one of the final procedures of gender affirming “bottom” surgery for some transgender men. This procedure is often performed concurrently with the removal of the vagina (See: Vaginectomy).

Oophorectomy

Also called an Ovariectomy: A surgical removal of the ovaries, often one of the first procedures of gender affirming “bottom” surgery that generally includes several procedures, often performed in tandem. They may include the following: A hysterectomy to remove the uterus, an oophorectomy to remove the ovaries, a vaginectomy to remove the vagina.

Orchiectomy

Surgical removal of the testicles from the scrotum. The absence of testes removes the body’s ability to create testosterone, which could make one’s hormone regimen simpler later on. A part of “bottom surgery” for some transgender women.

Partial Depth Vaginoplasty

A surgical procedure that creates a short vaginal canal with partial or no depth. Recovery for this procedure usually shorter than a full vaginoplasty. A part of “bottom surgery” for some transgender women.

Packing

Packing is the term for when an afab person or person without a penis uses something placed in the crotch area, like wearing padding or a phallic object in the front of the pants or underwear to give the appearance of having a penis and male bulge. Packing is commonly practiced by trans men. People who cross-dress as male may also “pack”. There are many brands of commercial ‘packers’ or ‘packys’ and are made to imitate a flaccid penis, not an erect one. Packing is a less common practice than binding.

Penectomy

Surgical amputation of the penis. This procedure is mainly used as a treatment against penile cancer, but is also used as gender affirming surgery by some.

Phalloplasty

Also called penile construction; the construction of a penis, often the final part of gender affirming “bottom” surgery that generally includes several procedures, often performed in tandem. They may include the following: A hysterectomy to remove the uterus, an oophorectomy to remove the ovaries, a vaginectomy to remove the vagina, a phalloplasty to turn a flap of donor skin into a phallus, a scrotoectomy to turn the labia majora into a scrotum, a urethroplasty to lengthen and hook up the urethra inside the new phallus, a glansplasty to sculpt the appearance of an uncircumcised penis tip, and a penile implant to allow for erection.

Scrotoectomy

Surgically removing or partially removing the scrotum. Some surgeries use the scrotum tissue to create the vaginal lining.

Standard of Care

A term that reflects the reasonable degree of care a medical professional should provide to others, usually those under their care; the degree or standard to which medical professionals are held when caring for patients.

Top Surgery

Colloquial phrase to describe gender affirming surgery of the chest — either bilateral mastectomy or breast augmentation that alters the chest area to either enhance or reduce breast tissue. Often a part of gender affirming surgery.

Tucking

Genital tucking is a technique whereby an individual hides the crotch bulge of the penis and testicles so that they are not conspicuous through clothing. Tucking is a practice used by some transgender women and gender nonconforming individuals to minimize or hide the contour (bulge) of their genitals, creating a flatter and more feminine appearance. This can be very helpful in relieving gender dysphoria and allowing them to wear clothing that affirms their gender. Genital tucking is also by cisgender men when wearing drag and performing in drag shows. There are a wide variety of methods used to tuck, involving the use of athletic tape, tight underwear, and/or specialized supportive undergarments called gaffs.

Vaginoplasty

Also called Vaginal Construction: Surgical removal of the penis and testes, with the tissue from the penis used to construct a functional vagina, clitoris and labia. Vaginoplasty creates the vaginal canal. A part of “bottom surgery” for some transgender women.

Vulvoplasty

Surgical construction of the outer vagina using the skin and tissue from the removed penis. Part of a vulvoplasty includes creating a clitoris from the head of the penis, creating an inner and outer labia, an opening of the urethra, and creating the introitus (opening of the vagina). Vulvoplasty creates the outer parts of the vagina, but not the canal.

A young woman with short blonde hair and a young man with short dark hair are embracing each other and laughing joyfully. The woman is wearing a dark blue floral top, and the man is wearing a grey striped shirt. The background is a solid light blue color.

Sexuality Terms of Identity

Androsexual

A term usually used by queergender individuals (not heterosexual or homosexual) to describe someone who expresses sexual or romantic attraction to men, males, or masculinity. This term intentionally includes attraction to those who identify as men, male, or masculine regardless of biology, anatomy, or sex assigned at birth.

Aromantic

Aromantic (pronounced "A-romantic") is a romantic orientation that describes people who experience little or no romantic attraction, regardless of gender or sex assigned at birth.

Asexual

Asexual (pronounced "A-sexual") identity is a romantic orientation that describes people who don't experience sexual attraction to others of any gender, and/or having a lack of sexual attraction or desire for other people. Some people who are asexual do experience romantic attraction to people of one or multiple genders.

Asexual spectrum: Asexuality is the term for people who don't experience sexual attraction, and the spectrum refers to different ways in which people experience less sexual attraction than the norm. Some people may only experience sexual attraction after many months or years of knowing someone, and some may never experience it. Some may be willing to engage in sexual activity even if it doesn't interest them, and some may not.

(See: Cupiosexual)

Authoromantic/Autosexual

Authoromantic is a romantic orientation that describes a person who's romantically, but not sexually, attracted to themselves. Those who identify as authoromantic often report experiencing the relationship they have with themselves as romantic. One can identify as both authoromantic and autosexual, or one or the other.

Autosexual is a sexual orientation that describes a person who's sexually, but not romantically, attracted to themselves. Someone's desire to engage in sexual behavior such as masturbation doesn't determine whether they're autosexual.

Bear

The most common definition of a 'bear' is a larger or obese man with facial/body hair, and a cuddly body. However, as many men who consider themselves bears don't possess the typical characteristics, the word 'bear' has evolved within the LGBTQIA+ community to become more of an umbrella term for more of an attitude and a sense of comfort with masculinity and natural bodies.

Bi-Curious

People who identify as bi-curious are questioning or exploring bisexuality, including a curiosity about their sexual attraction to people of the same or different genders.

Biphobia

Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

Bioromantic

(Pronounced "BY-romantic") A term that describes those who experience romantic attraction, but not sexual attraction, to individuals of more than one gender.

Bisexual

A bisexual person is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to a variety of people, with genders that are similar to and different than their own.

Cupiosexual

Cupiosexual describes an asexual person who doesn't experience sexual attraction but still has the desire to engage in sexual behavior or a sexual relationship.

Demiromantic/Demisexual

Demiromantic: On the aromantic spectrum, this romantic orientation describes an individual who lacks primary romantic attraction, and experiences romantic attraction only under specific circumstances, such as after building an emotional relationship with a person. Though they don't experience any primary attraction, they can develop a secondary attraction.

Demisexual: On the asexual spectrum, this sexual orientation describes individual who lacks primary sexual attraction, and experiences sexual attraction only under specific circumstances, such as after building a romantic or emotional relationship with a person. Though they don't experience any primary attraction, they can develop a secondary attraction.

Fluid

Being fluid or having fluidity refers to the fact that sexuality, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior can change over time and be dependent on the situation. You may hear someone describe their sexuality as “fluid.”

Gay

A person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, romantically or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender. A person (usually male) who accepts their same gender attraction and identifies as gay. The fields of medicine and psychology previously referred to this sexual orientation as “homosexual”, which is now viewed as an outdated and offensive term and shouldn’t be used to refer to LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Grayromantic/Graysexual

Grayromantic (sometimes spelled greyromantic) a romantic orientation that describes individuals whose romantic attraction exists in the gray area between romantic and aromantic. Many people who identify as grayromantic do experience some romantic attraction or desire, but perhaps not as intensely as those who identify as being completely outside of the aromantic spectrum.

Graysexual (sometimes spelled greysexual) is a term used to acknowledge the gray area on the sexuality spectrum for people who don’t explicitly and exclusively identify as asexual or aromantic. Many people who identify as graysexual do experience some sexual attraction or desire, but perhaps not as intensely as those who identify as being completely outside of the asexual spectrum.

Gynosexual

A term used to describe one who feels sexual or romantic attraction to women, females, or femininity, regardless of biology, anatomy, or the sex assigned at birth.

Heterosexism

A discriminatory and/or prejudiced belief system that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, and reinforces the bias that heterosexuality is more correct than or ignores the existence of queerness.

Heterosexual

A term that describes people who are romantically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to their binary opposite gender (i.e. male/ female) or a different gender. Both cisgender and transgender identified people can be heterosexual. This sexual orientation category is commonly described as “straight”.

Homophobia

Homophobia is the irrational fear, dislike or hatred of, discomfort with, and/or prejudice against people who are attracted to members of the same sex. It encompasses a wide range of negative and oppressive attitudes and feelings towards those who identify as or are perceived to be gay and lesbian.

Lesbian

A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Some women who are lesbians may also refer to themselves as gay or queer, while others prefer the label lesbian.

Libidoist Asexual

A term used to describe an asexual person who experiences sexual feelings not for other people, but that are satisfied only through self-stimulation or masturbation.

Monosexual

A broad sexual orientation category that includes people who experience romantic or sexual attraction to people of one gender. Monosexuality typically includes those who are exclusively heterosexual, gay, or lesbian.

Non-Libidoist Asexual

A term used to describe an asexual person who experiences no sexual feelings and has no sex drive.

Omnisexual

Omnisexual is similar to pansexual, but instead of being gender blind, omnisexuals are attracted to all genders.

Panromantic

A term that describes individuals who can experience romantic, or emotional (but not sexual) attraction to any person, regardless of their assigned sex or gender identity.

Polysexual

An umbrella term to describe a sexual orientation that involves one being sexually or romantically attracted to various genders. Polysexual orientations include bisexuality, pansexuality, omnisexuality, and queer, among many others. Sexual identity is determined by their gender identity, gender role, gender assignment, and sexual orientation.

Pansexual

A term that describes someone who has a gender-blind romantic and/or sexual attraction to all people, regardless of their assigned sex or gender identity.

Sex-averse

Sex-averse individuals identify as asexual and have an aversion to or reject sex or sexual behavior.

Sex-favorable

On the spectrum of asexuality, sex-favorable individuals can have favorable feelings toward and enjoy sex, though they don't experience sexual attraction.

Sex-indifferent

Also referred to as sex-neutral, this term describes asexual individuals who feel indifferent or neutral about sex or sexual behavior.



Sex-repulsed

On the asexual spectrum, sex-repulsed individuals are repulsed by or extremely disinterested in sex or sexual behavior.

Sexual Attraction

Sexual attraction describes the experience of one's sexual desire or arousal to another person/s.

Sexual Orientation/Sexuality

Sexual orientation is a spectrum of inherent and enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attractions to other people. Sexuality can change in different situations and over the course of one's life.

Skoliosexual

Skoliosexual individuals are sexually attracted to nonbinary, transgender, or genderqueer.

Spectrasexual

A term that describes people who are sexually or romantically attracted to multiple or varied sexes, genders, and gender identities — but not necessarily all or any.

Straight

A person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the opposite gender. A person who accepts their opposite gender attraction and who identifies as straight. People who identify as cisgender and transgender can be straight.

Pomosexual

A term to describe one who challenges and/or rejects cultural expectations for gender and sexuality. Pomosexuals do not feel as though they belong in any existing gender or sexuality label category, such as bisexual, pansexual, heterosexual, etc.

Queer

The term queer is sometimes used as an umbrella term for many non-heterosexual identities and non-cisgender identities. Though this term used to be used as negative slang to describe those who engaged in same-sex relationships, the term queer (the Q in LGBTQIA+) been reclaimed by the LGBTQIA+ community and has evolved to represent

the spectrum of sexuality as opposed to a collection of individual and mutually exclusive labels. Despite this, some people still have negative associations with this word and don't use it or like it to be used to describe them. Queer, like all terms describing sexuality, should be used sensitively and respectfully.

Questioning

The process of questioning or being curious about one's sexuality or gender identity. Questioning can also be used to describe someone who's currently exploring their sexuality or gender.

Romantic Attraction

The emotional response that results in the desire for a romantic interaction with another person or themselves. A romantic attraction is not necessarily sexual, as one can feel romantic attraction to another person, not because of their body. Some people can experience romantic attraction but not sexual attraction.

Romantic Orientation

Romantic orientation is an aspect of one's identity that involves how you they identify, and the way you they experience romantic desire toward a preferred gender or genders.

Same-gender Loving

A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

Sapiosexual

A term describing one who experiences attraction based on another's intelligence rather than gender or physical attributes.

Sex Identity

Sexual identity is how one sees themselves sexually, how they identify with a sexual orientation, and identify to whom they are romantically and sexually attracted. One's sexual identity is determined by their gender identity, gender role, gender assignment, and sexual orientation.

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt, hugging a man from behind. The man has dark hair and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Offensive / Outdated Terms" is centered in white, bold font.

Offensive / Outdated Terms

Catcher

An offensive term for a person who is said to take a more submissive role during sexual interactions. Sometimes referred to as 'pasivo' in Latin American cultures.

Dyke

Also called Femme Dyke, Butch Dyke, Bi Dyke. A derogatory term referring to a masculine lesbian. Sometimes adopted affirmatively by lesbians (not necessarily masculine ones) to refer to themselves.

Faggot

Faggot, often shortened to fag, is a usually pejorative and contemptuous term used primarily to refer to a gay man, boy, or a male who presents with some typically feminine traits. The slang term originally referred to a bundle of sticks that were used to burn homosexuals back when being gay was illegal. Gay men may use this with each other, but it should never be used by someone out side of the gay male community.

Gender Identity Disorder (GID)

Psychologists used to call this "gender identity disorder." However, the mismatch between a person's body and gender identity isn't in itself a mental illness, so the term was changed to reflect that. The current and preferred term is Gender Dysphoria. This is also problematic to some degree and may be better described as Gender Incongruence.

Gender Non-Conforming

An outdated term used to describe those who view their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly male or female. More current terms include gender expansive, differently gendered, gender creative, genderqueer, nonbinary, agender, gender fluid, gender neutral, bigender, androgynous, or gender diverse.

Gender Variant

A term often used in medical literature to describe individuals who dress, behave, or express themselves in a way that does not conform to dominant gender norms. It is no longer in favor as it suggests these identities are abnormal.

Hermaphrodite

This is an antiquated and offensive term. The preferred term is intersex.

Homosexual

The fields of medicine and psychology previously referred to gay individuals as “homosexuals”. “Homosexual” is now viewed as an outdated and offensive term and shouldn’t be used to refer to LGBTQIA+ individuals. “Homo” is a derogatory slang for a gay individual.

“Passing” and “stealth”

While some transgender people may use these terms among themselves, it is not appropriate to repeat them in mainstream media unless it’s in a direct quote. The terms refer to a transgender person’s ability to go through daily life without others making an assumption that they are transgender. However, the terms themselves are problematic because “passing” implies “passing as something you’re not,” while “stealth” may connote deceit. Specifically, this term is most commonly used to discuss the frequency and extent to which an LGBTQIA+ person is perceived as or assumed to be straight or cisgender. When transgender people are living as their authentic selves and are not perceived as transgender by others, that does not make them deceptive or misleading. It’s important to note that some LGBTQIA+ people have the desire to pass while others do not. In fact, the act of being perceived as straight or cisgender can be a source of discomfort and discrimination for some in the LGBTQIA+ community. The preferred terms are visibly transgender, not visibly transgender. It’s important to note, older transgender people may still use the term stealth as a way of describing their decision to not be “out” about their transition history.

“Pre-Operative” or “Post-Operative”

Referring to an individual as “pre-op” or “post-op” inaccurately suggests that a person must have surgery in order to transition. The preferred term is transition. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition as not everyone wants or can afford to undergo such procedures.

“Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria”

A newer and controversial term that describes a type of adolescent gender dysphoria where the development of gender dysphoria seems to appear suddenly, often after or during puberty. It is usually associated with adolescents who were assigned female at birth. This is a parental experience of rapid onset, not the child’s. It appears to be experience by more conservative parents who are often validated by the voices of anti-trans groups.

“Tranny”

While some transgender people use the word tranny to describe their gender, most find it highly offensive — a derogatory slur, and dehumanizes transgender people. The preferred term is transgender.

“Transgendered”

Adding -ed to the end of transgender isn’t grammatically correct. You wouldn’t say that someone is gayed, womaned, or Latinoed. Similarly you wouldn’t call someone transgendered. Never use the term transgender as a verb or a noun, it is a descriptive adjective for a person. The preferred term is transgender.

Transgenderism

This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to “a condition.” The preferred term is transgender.

Transsexual

An older term for people whose gender identities are different from the sex that was assigned at birth and who desire and/ or seek to transition to align their bodies with their gender identities. Some people find this term offensive, others do not. Only refer to someone as transsexual if they tell you that’s how they identify .

The TransFamily Gender Journey



The TransFamily Gender Journey is the unique journey that family members, especially parents, navigate that takes them from confusion, doubt, and fear to clarity and confidence while raising or supporting a transgender, non-binary, or gender expansive child, adolescent, or adult. While the path involves 6 phases the journey is actually cyclical, with different phases becoming more prominent as issues and circumstances arise.

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