



QUEER CAFÉ LGBTQ INFORMATION NETWORK

LGBTQ Terminology

LGBTQ - Initialism or acronym representing the words Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer

Agender - Without gender, non-gender, genderless, gender neutral. A non-binary gender identity or a statement of not having a gender identity. Gender unknown or undefined.

Ally - Person, typically straight or cis-identified, who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community.

Asexual/Asexuality - Having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners.



Bigender - Person who fluctuates between traditionally woman and man gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender).

Bicurious - Curiosity about having attraction to people of the same gender or sex (Same as questioning).

Bisexual - Person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to both male/men and females/women.

Cisgender (siss-jendur) - Person whose gender identity and biological sex (assigned at birth) align. A person who is not transgender is cisgender.



Closeted - Individual who is not open to themselves or others about their sexuality or gender identity. Also known as being "in the closet." When someone chooses to break this silence they "come out" of the closet.

Coming Out - Process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity. Process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

Gay - Term used to describe individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. More commonly used when referring to males/men-identified people who are attracted to males/men-identified people. Can be applied to females/women-identified people as well. An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.



Gender Bending - Disrupting or messing with gender roles. Sometimes a form of social activism undertaken to destroy rigid gender roles and defy sex-role stereotypes.



Gender Binary - Idea that there are only two genders (male/female or man/woman) and that a person must be strictly identified as one or the other, with no options in between.

Gender Dysphoria - Discomfort with an assigned sex and/or gender and/or the gender norms and roles associated with either.

Gender Expression - Gender presentation. External (social) display of one's gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on scales of masculinity and femininity.

Gender Fluid - Gender identity that is a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

Gender Identity - Internal (emotional) perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, and transgender.

Genderqueer – Gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. An umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (agender, bigender, genderfluid).



Gender Variant– Someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser).

Heterosexism – Oppressive behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more right than queerness, or makes other sexualities invisible.

Heterosexual – Person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex. Also known as straight.

Homophobia – Oppressive negative attitudes (fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, erasure, discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community.

Homosexual – Medical/clinical term used to describe a gay or lesbian person or a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender.

Intersex – Someone whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite.



Lesbian – Term used to describe women attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

Pansexual – Person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Gender blind. ("Pan" means "all.")

Polysexual - Person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of many gender identities/expressions. Person who incorporates many different kinds of sexualities. ("Poly" means "Many.")

Preferred Gender Pronouns—Opposite, different, or generic pronouns used by a person whose gender is fluid, variant or non-conforming. A man/male may prefer "she/her/hers" and a woman/female may prefer "he/him/his." Or a person may prefer gender neutral pronouns like "them/they/their" or "ze/zem/zir."

Queer - Umbrella term referring to a broad range of orientations and identities that are not heterosexual or cisgender. Refers to sexual minorities, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, pansexual, asexual, gender variant, and more.

Questioning - Individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity. (Same as bicurious)

Sexual Minority - Reference to any identity, orientation, lifestyle, or practice that doesn't comply with the mainstream heterosexual or cisgender concept of normal sexual or gender behavior.



Sexual Orientation – Type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Persons may be heterosexual or homosexual. Sexual orientation is innate, not chosen.

Transgender - Umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on sex assigned at birth.

Transsexual – Person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Transvestite – Person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression (cross-dresses) for any one of many reasons, including entertainment, relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification. Often called a cross-dresser or drag queen.