

## Definitions and Vocabulary

*The definitions of these terms are open to debate and interpretation. We always encourage self-identification. This document is a starting point and is not an exhaustive list of terms that individuals and/or communities use.*

**Ally** – A person who supports and advocates for marginalized identities to which they do not necessarily belong. An Ally interrupts disrespectful or problematic remarks and actions of others, and is willing to explore forms of bias and privilege within themselves. Ally is not a static identity but something a person is always working on becoming.

**Asexual** – A person who is not interested in or does not desire sexual activity for some period of time. Although some asexual people may not engage in sexual relationships with other people, they may desire loving, affectionate, romantic connections with others.

**Assigned sex**- Sex recorded at birth by a birth attendant based, usually, on the appearance of external genitalia.

**Bisexual** – A person attracted to some male-identified and some female-identified people.

**Cis** – An umbrella term for individuals whose lived sex, gender identity and/or gender expression fall within cultural norms and meet societal expectations based on one's assigned sex at birth. (Latin for "on the same side," contrast to trans).

**Cisgender** – A person whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth. (Contrast to transgender).

**Cissexual** – A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth, although they may have a more fluid gender identity or relationship to gender roles than someone who identifies as cisgender. (Contrast to transsexual).

**Closeted** – Hiding one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Coming out** – becoming aware of one's own sexual orientation and/or gender identity or revealing one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to others. Coming out is generally a life-long process.

**Crossdress** – When a person periodically dresses in the clothing typically associated with another gender, but may not identify with a different gender than they were assigned at birth. They may dress up for a variety of reasons including self-expression, personal enjoyment, and/or sexual gratification. Many people who crossdress identify as heterosexual, but someone who crossdresses can be of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Drag Queen/King** - People who dress as members of another gender periodically for the purpose of entertainment, making a political statement, and/or other forms of self-expression. They do not necessarily identify as another sex or gender, although they may refer to themselves as someone of another gender while in drag.

**DSD**- A general term for a spectrum of conditions where an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the medical standards for male and female types. This may be because of physical anatomy, chromosomes or hormones. Preferred over "intersex" where the medical care of infants is considered.

**FAAB** – Female assigned at birth; most likely based on how that person's genitalia were perceived by the birth attendant.

**FTM/F2M** –Female to male; trans\* people assigned female at birth who identify as male.

**Gay** – A male-identified person who is attracted to some other male-identified people. Also, more broadly, can be used by a person of any gender who is attracted to some people of their same gender. Even more broadly, gay can be used as an umbrella term for the entire LGBTQ community (i.e. "gay pride parade"), however, can be understood as exclusionary of those who are not male-identified when used in this way due to its other, more specific use.

**Gender** – Various traits, characteristics, and roles that a culture associates with or assigns to physical sex.

**Gender Binary System** –A culturally defined code of acceptable and expected identities and behaviors, which teaches that there are men and women, who are masculine and feminine, and are heterosexual. The code presumes and naturalizes the idea that there are no people who fall outside of this system. Most discussions on gender assume a binary gender system.

**Gender Expression** – The way a person expresses their gender identity on the outside through behavior and appearance, usually informed by one's culturally specific understanding of gender. Gender expression can be read and perceived by others.

**Gender Identity** – How an individual experiences and conceptualizes their gender, regardless of one's assigned sex. This is what a person feels or knows about their gender on the inside.

**Gender Nonconforming**- An individual whose gender expression differs from or does not conform to societal expectations of their gender.

**Genderqueer** – People who do not necessarily identify as either man or woman, but rather something outside of the binary gender system.

**Heterosexual Privilege** – The rights and privileges that heterosexuals enjoy as a result of heterosexism, which LGBTQ people do not have. This includes institutional benefits like federal or state protected rights, marriage, sharing insurance policies, adoption, income tax breaks and access to spouse in cases of hospitalization, as well as cultural benefits like seeing heterosexual couples on TV, allowing heterosexual couples to be openly affectionate, etc.

**Heterosexual** – A person who is attracted to people of the other binary gender. The term and concept were defined after and in opposition to homosexuality.

**Homophobia** – The irrational fear of and/or discomfort with people who are attracted to others of the same gender or who are perceived as being attracted to others of the same gender, and/or the fear of one's own attraction to others of the same gender. Includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and violence.

**Intersex** – A general term for a spectrum of conditions where an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not seem to fit the medical standards for male and female types. This may be because of physical anatomy, chromosomes or hormones.

**Lesbian** – A female-identified person who is attracted to some other female-identified people.

**LGBTQQ\*** – One form of the acronym commonly used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer and questioning communities en masse. It is asterisked here because the length of the acronym often fluctuates. It can be elongated in an effort to be inclusive of more identity categories and is most commonly seen in the shorter form, LGBT.

**MAAB** – Male assigned at birth; most likely based on how that person's genitalia were perceived by the birth attendant.

**MSM** – Male-identified people who have sex with other male-identified people. Used most often in medical and academic research and reports. The term focuses on describing sexual behavior regardless of orientation or identity.

**MTF/M2F** – Male to female; trans\* people assigned male at birth who identify as female.

**Pansexual** – A person who is attracted to some individuals of any gender identity.

**Perceived Gender Expression** – The way others read or perceive your gender based on your behaviors and appearances that have gendered meaning.

**Queer** – Having a sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression that differs from cultural norms. The term was traditionally derogatory but has been reclaimed by some (as a personal identity or an umbrella term) because of its broad definition and fluid and inclusive quality.

**Sex** – categorization of bodies by genitalia and other biological features. Sex is assigned as either male or female at birth, but some may understand their sex as something outside of these two categories.

**Sexual Orientation** – Who a person is romantically, emotionally and/or physically attracted to.

**SGL** – Same gender lover. A person who is attracted to some people who identify as the same gender as them.

**Straight** – A slang term for a person who identifies as heterosexual.

**Trans\*** – An umbrella term for individuals whose lived sex, gender identity and/or gender expression differ from cultural norms or societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth.

**Transgender** – An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not align with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Transsexual** – A person whose gender identity and/or lived sex does not align with their sex assigned at birth and who may desire physical transition, which may include, but is not limited to, hormones and/or gender confirmation surgeries.

**Two-spirit** – This term was coined in the early '90s by several Native American and Canadian First Nations communities to describe and honor individuals who manifest a dynamic balance of both masculine and feminine energies.

**Dyke, fag, homo, queer, hermaphrodite, transvestite, tranny, he-she, she-male, it** – These words have historically been used as derogatory terms for LGBTQ people. Some people within LGBTQ communities have reclaimed these words. Although some LGBTQ people use these words positively, they are not considered positive words by all LGBTQ people, and use of them by non-LGBTQ people is almost always inappropriate.