



Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions

GLBPTTQIIAA+: any combination of letters attempting to represent all the identities in the community, this near-exhaustive one (but not exhaustive) represents Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Intergender, Asexual, Ally

Ally: a heterosexual person who supports sexual minorities

Androgyny: (1) a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; (2) occasionally used in place of “intersex” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy

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

A-sexual: a person who generally does not experience sexual attraction (or very little) to any group of people and are abstinent and restrain themselves from sexual activity.

Bi-gender: a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender).

Binary Gender: a traditional and **outdated** view of gender, limiting possibilities to “man” and “woman”

Binary Sex: a traditional and **outdated** view of sex, limiting possibilities to “female” or “male”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.

Bisexual: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to people of their own gender as well as another gender; often confused for and used in place of “pansexual”.

Cisgender: a description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align (e.g., man, masculine, and male)

Cis-man: a person who identifies as a man, presents himself as masculine, 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”

Closeted: a person who is keeping their sexuality or gender identity a secret from many (or any) people, and one that has yet to “come out of the closet”



Coming Out: the process of revealing your sexuality or gender identity to individuals in your life; often incorrectly thought to be a one-time event, this is a lifelong and sometimes daily process; not to be confused with “outing”

Cross-dressing: wearing clothing that conflicts with the traditional gender expression of your sex and gender identity (e.g., a man wearing a dress) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification; often conflated with transsexuality

Drag King: a person who consciously performs “masculinity,” usually in a show or theatre setting, presenting an exaggerated form of masculine expression, often times done by a woman; often confused with “transsexual” or “transvestite”

Drag Queen: a person who consciously performs “femininity,” usually in a show or theatre setting, presenting an exaggerated form of feminine expression, often times done by a man; often confused with “transsexual” or “transvestite”

Dyke: a **derogatory** slang term used for lesbian women; reclaimed by many lesbian women as a symbol of pride and used as an in-group term

Faggot: a **derogatory** slang term used for gay men; reclaimed by many gay men as a symbol of pride and used as an in-group term

Female: a person with a specific set of sexual anatomy (e.g., 46,XX phenotype, vagina, ovaries, uterus, breasts, higher levels of estrogen, fine body hair) pursuant to this label

Fluid(ity): generally with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that is a fluctuating mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, gay and straight); not to be confused with “transitioning”

FTM/MTF: a person who has undergone medical treatments to change their biological sex (Female To Male, or Male To Female), often times to align it with their gender identity; often confused with “trans-man”/“trans-woman”

Gay: a term used to describe a man who is attracted to men, but often used and embraced by women to describe their same-sex relationships as well

Gender Expression: the external display of gender, through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally measured on a scale of masculinity and femininity

Gender Identity: the internal perception of an individual’s gender, and how they label themselves

Genderless: a person who does not identify with any gender



Genderqueer: (1) a blanket term used to describe people whose gender falls outside of the gender binary; (2) a person who identifies as both a man and a woman, or as neither a man nor a woman; often used in exchange with “transgender”

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

Hermaphrodite: an outdated medical term used to describe someone who is intersex; not used today as it is considered to be medically stigmatizing, and also misleading as it means a person who is 100% male and female, a biological impossibility for humans

Heterosexism: behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more “right” than queerness, or ignores/doesn’t address queerness as existing

Heterosexual: a medical definition for a person who is attracted to someone with the other gender (or, literally, biological sex) than they have; often referred to as “straight”

Homophobia: fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, or discomfort with queer people, often focused inwardly as one begins to question their own sexuality

Homosexual: a medical definition for a person who is attracted to someone with the same gender (or, literally, biological sex) they have, this is considered an offensive/stigmatizing term by many members of the queer community; often used incorrectly in place of “lesbian” or “gay”

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.

Intersex: a person with a set of sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit within the labels of female or male (e.g., 47,XXY phenotype, uterus, and penis)

Male: a person with a specific set of sexual anatomy (e.g., 46,XY phenotype, penis, testis, higher levels of testosterone, coarse body hair, facial hair) pursuant to this label

Outing [someone]: when someone reveals another person’s sexuality or gender identity to an individual or group, often without the person’s consent or approval; not to be confused with “coming out”

Pansexual: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions



Queer: (1) historically, this was a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBTQ+ people; (2) a term that has been embraced and reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community as a symbol of pride, representing all individuals who fall out of the gender and sexuality “norms”

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

Same Gender Loving (SGL): a phrase coined by the African American/Black queer communities used as an alternative for “gay” and “lesbian” by people who may see those as terms of the White queer community

Sexual Orientation: the type of sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to; often mistakenly referred to as “sexual preference”

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 in

Skoliosexual: attracted to gender-queer and transsexual people and expressions (people who aren’t identified as cisgender)

Straight: a man or woman who is attracted to people of the other binary gender than themselves; often referred to as “heterosexual”

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

Transgender: a blanket term used to describe all people who are not cisgender; occasionally used as “transgendered” but the “ed” is misleading, as it implies something happened to the person to make them transgender, which is not the case

Transitioning: a term used to describe the process of moving from one sex/gender to another; sometimes this is done by hormone or surgical treatments

Transsexual: a person whose gender identity is the binary opposite of their biological sex, who may undergo medical treatments to change their biological sex, often times to align it with their gender identity, or they may live their lives as the opposite sex; often confused with “trans-man”/“trans-woman”



Transvestite: a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression (“cross-dresses”) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification; often called a “cross-dresser,” and often confused with “transsexual”

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