

Terminology

Agender: A person without gender. An agender individual's body does not necessarily correspond with their lack of gender identity. [Related Terms: neutrois, genderless, gender neutral]

Ally : 1. Someone who confronts heterosexism, anti- LGBTQIA biases, heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves and others 2. Has concern for the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, queer, and other similarly identified people 3. Believes that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.

Androgynous: Person appearing and identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.

Aromantic: Person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others and/or in forming romantic relationships.

Asexual: A person who does not experience sexual attraction. They may or may not experience emotional, physical, or romantic attraction. Asexuality differs from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation, not a choice. People who are asexual may call themselves "ace."

Assigned at Birth: This term illustrates that an individual's sex (and subsequently gender in early life) was assigned without involving the person whose sex was being assigned. Commonly seen as "Female Assigned At Birth" (FAAB or AFAB) and "Male Assigned At Birth" (MAAB or AMAB).

Bicurious: A person showing some curiosity for a relationship or sexual activity with a person of a gender they do not usually engage with. [Related terms: heteroflexible, homoflexible]

Bigender: A person whose gender identity is a combination of man and woman. They may consciously or unconsciously change their gender-role behavior from masculine to feminine, or vice versa.

Biological Sex: A medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex (often abbreviated to simply "sex").

Biphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQIA community, as well as in general society.

Terminology, Cont.

Bisexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to people of their own gender as well as other genders, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

Bottom Surgery: Surgery on the genitals designed to create a body in harmony with a person's gender identity. [Related Terms: Gender Confirming Surgery, Sexual Reassignment Surgery]

Butch: A masculine-appearing or identifying person. 'Butch' is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but has also been claimed as an affirmative identity label.

Cisgender: someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity assigned to them based on their sex assigned at birth. For example, your birth certificate says female, and you identify as a female.

Cisnormativity: The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender people's identities are more normal, valid, and worthy of respect than transgender people's identities.

Cissexism: A pervasive and institutionalized system that "others" transgender people and treats their needs and identities as less important than those of cisgender people.

Closeted: An individual who is not open to themselves and/or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity (also known as being "in the closet"). When someone chooses to break this silence they "come out" of the closet (See "coming out").

Coming Out: To "come out" is to publicly declare and affirm one's personal sexual/gender identity; one can "come out" to a person in conversation or in a more public arena. It is not a single event but instead a life-long process. In each new situation (e.g. job, class, geographic location, etc.), SGD individuals must decide whether or not to come out.

Cross-dressing: To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other gender. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression, is not necessarily tied to erotic activity, and is not indicative of sexual orientation.

Demiromantic: A person who does not experience romantic attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone.

Demisexual: A person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone.

Terminology, Cont.

Drag King: A woman who emulates a man, usually in a performance context.

Drag Queen: A man who emulates a woman, usually campy, and usually in a performance context.

Dyke: A term referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it can be adopted affirmatively by many lesbians (and not necessarily masculine ones) as a positive self-identity term.

Fag(got): A term originated in medieval times when a faggot was a bundle of sticks used to stoke a fire. The term came to refer to the burning of heretics, including gay and lesbian men and women. Usually a Derogatory term for a gay or effeminate man or any individual who does not match their assigned gender role. Occasionally used as a self-identifying affirming term by some gay men, at times in the shortened form 'fag'.

Femme: Feminine-appearing or identifying person, often used to refer to a feminine-presenting lesbian.

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, bi and straight)

FTM / F2M: Abbreviation for female-to-male transgender or transsexual person. A more progressive term is "FAAB" – Female assigned at birth.

Gay: A common and acceptable term used to describe individuals who are committed or attracted physically, romantically, spiritually, intellectually, and/or sexually to members of the same sex. More commonly used when referring to males, but can be applied to females as well.

Gay Pride: This is a common name for celebrations commemorating the June 1969 Stonewall riots. In most cities Gay Pride is held in June, although at KU, we celebrate during April (GAYpril).

Gender: A socially constructed system of classifications that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristic can change over time and vary between cultures.

Gender Binary: The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

Terminology, Cont.

Gender Confirming Surgery: Medical surgeries used to modify one's body to be more congruent with one's gender identity. Also known as 'Sex Reassignment Surgery,' especially within the medical community. In most states, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender status.

Gender Dysphoria: A diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) used to diagnose people whose gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with. This diagnosis is given to facilitate clinical care and access to insurance coverage that supports mental health. For a person to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria, there must be a marked difference between the individual's expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign him or her, and it must continue for at least six months. In children, the desire to be of the other gender must be present and verbalized. This condition causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Gender Expression: How one presents oneself and one's gender to the world via dress, mannerisms, hairstyle, facial hair etc. This may or may not coincide with or indicate one's gender identity. Many utilize gender expression in an attempt to determine the gender/sex of another individual. However, a person's gender expression may not always match their gender identity.

Gender Identity: The internal perception of 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 terms include man, woman, genderqueer...

Gender Normative / Gender Straight: Someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

Gender Non Conforming: A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, butch, cross-dresser, etc.). Also known as 'Gender Variant.'

Gender Roles: Culturally contextually norms regarding how individuals are supposed to act, dress, feel, think, and relate to others, etc., based on sex (what genitalia they have).

Terminology, Cont.

Genderqueer: An individual whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Sometimes this includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system. Genderqueer individuals may or may not pursue any physical changes, such as hormonal or surgical intervention, and may not identify as trans*. People who identify as genderqueer may think of themselves as one or more of the following: both man and woman (bigender, pangender); neither man nor woman (genderless, agender); moving between genders (genderfluid); third gender or other-gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation.

Hate Crime: Assault, rape, arson, and murder are crimes under any circumstance, but when the victim of such a crime is chosen simply because of their affiliation with a minority group, the FBI considers the crime a “hate crime”.

Heteronormativity: The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities.

Heterosexism: 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. Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by institutional power – that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual: A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex (also see “straight”).

Homophobia: An umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of the SGD community. Homophobia enforces sexism as well as heterosexism.

Homosexual: A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. Often a clinical term, so if used socially it can seem derogatory (preferred term is “gay”).

Terminology, Cont.

In the Closet: Refers to a homosexual, bisexual, trans person or intersex person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family.

Institutional Oppression: Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

Internalized Oppression: The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersex: Someone whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Individuals born intersex are often “assigned” a sex and gender at birth, which is gradually being regarded as a violation of a person’s well-being. Intersex people are sometimes defined as having “ambiguous” genitalia.

Lesbian: A common and acceptable term used to describe women committed and/or attracted physically, romantically, spiritually, intellectually, and/or sexually to other women.

LGBTQIA: A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual community. The acronym is used as an umbrella term when talking about non heterosexual and non-cisgender identities, and does not always reflect members of the community. Sometimes the “A” is used to reference Allies and the “Q” is used to reference Questioning people.

Masculine of Center: A term originating within communities of color describing people whose gender identity or expression falls towards the masculine end of the gender spectrum; includes a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, trans masculine, etc.

Metrosexual: A straight-identifying man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.

MTF/ M2F: Abbreviation for a male-to-female transgender or transsexual person. This term reflects the direction of gender transition. A more progressive term is “MAAB” – Male assigned at birth. Some people prefer the term FTF (female to female) to underscore the fact that though they were assigned male at birth, they never identified as male. [Related terms: transgender woman, trans woman]

Terminology, Cont.

Oppression: The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Outing: When someone discloses information about another's sexual orientation or gender identity without their knowledge and/or consent.

Pansexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions, not just people who fit into the standard gender binary (i.e. men and women).

Passing: (1) a term for trans* people being accepted as, or able to "pass for," a member of their self-identified gender/sex identity (regardless of birth sex). (2) An LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

Polyamory: Refers to having honest, usual non-possessive, relationships with multiple partners and can include: open relationships, polyfidelity (which involves multiple romantic relationships with sexual contact restricted to those), and sub-relationships (which denote distinguishing between a 'primary' relationship or relationships and various "secondary" relationships).

Queer: 1. An umbrella term which includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans people, intersex persons, radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive communities. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label or gender identity label used to denote a non-heterosexual or cisgender identity without have to define specifics. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been reclaimed by some folks in the LGBTQIA community. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold 'queer' to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexual people is often considered offensive.

Questioning: An individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Same Gender Loving / SGL: a term sometimes used by members of the African-American / Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

SGD: Sexuality and Gender Diversity.

Terminology, Cont.

Sex: A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because 'sex' is usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female' based on genitalia, this category does not recognize the existence of intersex bodies.

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: The types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. 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.

Sex Reassignment Surgery / SRS: A term used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex to align with their identified gender. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance.

Sexuality/Gender Minorities (SGM) or Gender/Sexuality Minorities (GSM): a more progressive and inclusive term becoming increasingly more popular, particularly in academia. SGM or GSM includes everyone who may be a minority in terms of sexuality, gender ID, or gender expression, whereas LGBT or LGBTQ leaves out many individuals (e.g., asexual, intersexual, bigender, pansexual etc.)

SGD: Sexuality and Gender Diversity.

Stonewall Uprising: On June 28th, 1969, New York City Police attempted a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn, a working-class gay and lesbian bar in New York's Greenwich Village. Unexpectedly, the patrons resisted, and the incident escalated into a riot that continued for several days. Many people attribute this event as the catalyst for the American Gay Liberation Movement. It is often left out that the more frequent patrons of this bar were trans women of color, drag queens and butch lesbians.

Straight: A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

Stud: An African-American and/or Latina masculine-presenting lesbian. Also known as 'butch' or 'aggressive'.

Terminology, Cont.

Top Surgery: This term refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

Trans: An alternate and more colloquial term for transgender. Trans is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may identify with a particular descriptive term (e.g., transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, FTM).

Transgender: A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on sex or gender assigned at birth. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity. Includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueer, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others. Some transgender people feel they exist not within one of the two standard gender categories, but rather somewhere between, beyond, or outside of those two genders.

Transition(ing): This term is primarily used to refer to the process a trans person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression. Transition includes some or all of the following: changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents, hormone therapy, and possibly some form of chest and/or genital alteration.

Transman: An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transgender people or transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their transgender history (sometimes referred to as transguy).

Transphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans people, the trans community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

Transsexual: A 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/or surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex. This term is usually only referred to in medical and physiological cases, thus may be considered offensive because of the pathologization of gender.

Transwoman: An identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals or transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their transgender history.

Two-Spirit: A Native American term for people who blend the masculine and the feminine. It is commonly used to describe individuals who historically crossed gender. It is often used by contemporary LGBTQIA Native American people to describe themselves.

Terminology, Cont.

Ze / Hir: Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans+ people. Pronounced /zee/ and /here/ they replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

This terminology sheet was originally created by Eli R. Green and Erica Peterson of the LGBT Resource Center at the University of California, Riverside ☐ 2003-2004 and has been revised using resources from the following organizations: University of California, Riverside; MIT; University of California, Berkeley; George Washington University; California State University, San Marco; University of California, San Diego; Bowling Green State University; The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), and Wikipedia. Updated August 2015 with the assistance of members of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals.