

Know Better, Do Better



Adapted from UC
Davis' LGBTQIA
Resource Center

GLOSSARY

These are not universal definitions. This glossary is provided to help give others a more thorough but not entirely comprehensive understanding of the significance of these terms. You may even consider asking someone what they mean when they use a term, especially when they use it to describe their identity. Ultimately it is most important that each individual define themselves for themselves and therefore also define a term for themselves.

"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

-- Audre Lorde

This glossary contains terms, such as ableism and disability, that may not be considered directly related to identities of sexuality or gender. These terms are important to acknowledge as part of our mission to challenge all forms of oppression that affect the multiple, intersectional identities held by members of our community.

Ability: The quality of having the means or skill to do something. Ability is not permanent, can fluctuate throughout one's life, and is another aspect of diversity in our communities. Disabilities do not necessarily limit people unless society imposes assumptions that do not account for the variation in people's abilities.

Ableism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who are differently abled, including differences in mental, cognitive, emotional, and/or physical abilities, through attitudes, actions, or institutional policies.

Ageism: The pervasive system of prejudice and discrimination that marginalizes people based on their age. This can be perpetuated through stereotypes of youthfulness versus life at an older age and through oppressive policies that subordinate and exclude older folks. Ageism can impact different age groups besides older folks, such as children who are stereotyped as being unable to make big decisions.

Allosexism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses asexual people built out of the assumption that everyone does and should experience sexual attraction.

Allosexual: A sexual orientation generally characterized by feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality.

Allistic: An adjective used to describe a person who is not autistic and is often used to emphasize the privilege of people who are not on the autism spectrum.

Allyship: The action of working to end oppression through support of, and as an advocate with and for, a group other than one's own.

Androgyne: A person with a gender that is both masculine and feminine or in between masculine and feminine.

Aromantic: A romantic orientation generally characterized by not feeling romantic attraction or a desire for romance. Aromantic people can be satisfied by friendship and other non-romantic relationships. Many aromantic people also identify with a sexual orientation, such as asexual, bisexual, etc.

Asexual: A broad spectrum of sexual orientations generally characterized by feeling varying degrees of sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity, despite sexual desire. Some asexual people do have sex and do experience varying levels of sexual attraction. There are many diverse ways of being asexual. A person who does not experience sexual attraction can experience other forms of attraction such as romantic attraction, as physical attraction and emotional attraction are separate aspects of a person's identity. These may or may not correlate with each other - for instance, some people are physically and romantically attracted to women. However, others might be physically attracted to all genders and only emotionally attracted to men.

Autism: A neurological variation encompassing a wide range of presentations and experiences. Common characteristics of autism include repetitive behavior and differences in social interaction, interpersonal relationships, and communication. For some people, their gender identity is significantly tied to their identity as an autistic person.

*For this glossary, we use identity-first language instead of person-first language for describing autistic people because for some people, their disability is an important part of who they are (this practice comes from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network). However, we acknowledge that language and how people describe their identities can vary for each person and change over time.

BDSM: Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism. BDSM refers to a wide spectrum of activities and forms of interpersonal relationships. While not always overtly sexual in nature, the activities and relationships within a BDSM context are almost always eroticized by the participants in some fashion. Many of these practices fall outside of commonly held social norms regarding sexuality and human relationships.

Bear Community: a part of the queer community composed of queer men similar in looks and interests, most of them big, hairy, friendly and affectionate. The community aims to provide spaces where one feels wanted, desired, and liked. It nourishes and values an individual's process of making friends and learning self-care and self-love through the unity and support of the community. Bears, Cubs, Otters, Wolves, Chasers, Admirers and other wildlife comprise what has come to be known as the Brotherhood of Bears and/or the Bear community. See also: Ursula

Bigender: Having two genders, exhibiting cultural characteristics of masculine and feminine roles

Biphobia: See Monosexism.

*As a staff, we've been intentionally moving away from using words like "transphobic," "homophobic," and "biphobic" because they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears. Also, for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language can be disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

Bisexual: A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender. Some people may use bisexual and pansexual interchangeably.

BlaQ/BlaQueer: Folks of Black/African descent and/or from the African diaspora who recognize their queerness/LGBTQIA identity as a salient identity attached to their Blackness and vice versa. (T. Porter)

Body Image: how a person feels, acts, and thinks about their body. Attitudes about our own body and bodies in general are shaped by our communities, families, cultures, media, and our own perceptions.

Body Policing: any behavior which (indirectly or directly, intentionally or unintentionally) attempts to correct or control a person's actions regarding their own physical body, frequently with regards to gender expression or size. (ASC Queer Theory)

Butch: A gender expression that fits societal definitions of masculinity. Usually used by queer women and trans people, particularly by lesbians. Some consider "butch" to be its own gender identity.

Cisgender: a gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person's assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to highlight the privilege of people who are not transgender.

Cissexism/Genderism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders and that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. This system oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of cis-normative constructs. Within cissexism, cisgender people are the dominant group and trans/gender non-conforming people are the oppressed group.

Coming Out: Coming out is the process of voluntarily sharing one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others. This process is unique for each individual and there is no right or wrong way to come out. The term "coming out" has also been broadened to include other pieces of potentially stigmatized personal information. Terms also used that correlate with this action are: "Being out" which means not concealing one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and "Outing," a term used for making public the sexual orientation or gender identity of another who would prefer to keep this information secret.

Cross Dresser (CD): A word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially, as a member of a gender other than their assigned sex; carries no implications of sexual orientation. Has replaced "Transvestite."

Culture: A learned set of values, beliefs, customs, norms, and perceptions shared by a group of people that provide a general design for living and patterns for interpreting life. "Culture is those deep, common, unstated, learned experiences which members of a given culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged." (E. Hall.)

Cultural Humility: An approach to engagement across differences that acknowledges systems of oppression and embodies the following key practices: a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, a desire to fix power imbalances where none ought to exist, and aspiring to develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others on a systemic level.

Demisexual: Demisexuality is a sexual orientation in which someone feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond. Most demisexuals feel sexual attraction rarely compared to the general population, and some have little to no interest in sexual activity. Demisexuals are considered to be on the asexual spectrum.

Disability/(Dis)ability/Dis/ability: A social construct that identifies any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered “typical” for a human being given environments that are constructed for and by the dominant or “typical” person.

Discrimination: Inequitable actions carried out by members of a dominant group or its representatives against members of a marginalized or minoritized group.

Drag King: A person (often a woman) who appears as a man. Generally, in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

Drag Queen: A person (often a man) who appears as a woman. Generally, in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.

Ethnicity: A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Femme: Historically used in the lesbian community, it is being increasingly used by other LGBTQIA people to describe gender expressions that reclaim and disrupt traditional constructs of femininity.

Gay: A sexual and affectional orientation toward people of the same gender.

Gender: A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

Gender Expansive: An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture’s commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone else whose gender in some way is seen to be broadening the surrounding society’s notion of gender.

Gender Expression: How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as “masculine,” “feminine,” or “androgynous.” Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).

Gender Fluid/Genderfluid: A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations. Being fluid in motion between two or more genders.

Gender Identity: A sense of one’s self as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.

Genderism/Cissexism: Is the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders & that one’s gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. In a genderist/cissexist construct, cisgender

people are the dominant/agent group and trans/ gender non-conforming people are the oppressed/target group.

Gender Outlaw: A person who refuses to be defined by conventional definitions of male and female. ("Gender Outlaw" by Kate Bornstein)

Gender Non-conforming (GNC): Adjective for people who do not subscribe to societal expectations of typical gender expressions or roles. The term is more commonly used to refer to gender expression (how one behaves, acts, and presents themselves to others) as opposed to gender identity (one's internal sense of self).

Gender Queer: A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.

Gender Unicorn: A commonly used model to explain various aspects of one's identity, including assigned sex at birth, gender identity, gender expression, physical attraction, and romantic attraction. The Gender Unicorn illustrates how, with the exception of assigned sex at birth, these different aspects of identity exist on spectrums. The Gender Unicorn is available at transstudent.org/gender

*The popular Genderbread Person was plagiarized from the Gender Unicorn. Both models are not comprehensive representations of identities since these are complex topics.

Gender Variant: A person who varies from the expected characteristics of the assigned gender.

Heteronormativity: Attitudes and behaviors that incorrectly assume gender is binary, ignoring genders besides women and men, and that people should and will align with conventional expectations of society for gender identity, gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction. For example, someone assigned female at birth is expected to 1) have a body that is considered "female" by the dominant culture, 2) identify as a girl or woman, 3) act feminine and fulfill the roles associated with girls and/or women, and 4) be romantically and sexually attracted to men.

Heterosexism: The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and erasure.

Heterosexuality: A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.

Homophobia: See Heterosexism above.

*There are a group of people who have been intentionally moving away from using words like "transphobic," "homophobic," and "biphobic" because (1) they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears, and (2) for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language is disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

Homosexual/Homosexuality: An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. Historically, it was a term used to pathologize gay and lesbian people.

Internalized oppression: The fear and self-hate of one or more of a person's own identities that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about their identities throughout childhood. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.

Intersectionality: A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

Intersex: An umbrella term to describe a wide range of natural body variations that do not fit neatly into conventional definitions of male or female. Intersex variations may include, but are not limited to, variations in chromosome compositions, hormone concentrations, and external and internal characteristics. Many visibly intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make the individual's sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Hermaphrodite is an outdated and inaccurate term that has been used to describe intersex people in the past.

Kink: (Kinky, Kinkiness) Most commonly referred to as unconventional sexual practices, from which people derive varying forms of pleasure and consensually play-out various forms of desires, fantasies, and scenes.

Latinx: pronounced "La-TEEN-ex", is a non-gender specific way of referring to people of Latin American descent. The term Latinx, unlike terms such as Latino/a and Latin@, does not assume a gender binary and includes non-binary folks.

Leather community: A community which encompasses those who enjoy sexual activities involving leather, including leather uniforms or cowboy outfits, and is related to similar fetish-based communities such as sado-masochism, bondage and domination, and rubber. Although the leather community is often associated with the queer community, it is not a "gay-only" community.

Lesbian: Usually, a woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender. However, some nonbinary people also identify as lesbians, often because they have some connection to womanhood and are primarily attracted to women. (See nonbinary below)

LGBT: Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term that is often used to refer to the community as a whole. Our center uses LGBTQIA to intentionally include and raise awareness of Queer, Intersex and Asexual communities as well as myriad other communities under our umbrella.

LGBTQIA Allyship: The practice of confronting heterosexism, sexism, genderism, allosexism, and monosexism in oneself and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. Is founded on the understanding that dismantling heterosexism, monosexism, trans oppression/trans misogyny/cissexism and allosexism is a social justice issue.

Masculine of Center (MOC): A term coined by B. Cole of the Brown Boi Project to describe folks, including lesbian/queer womyn and trans folks, who lean towards the masculine side of the gender spectrum. These can include a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, trans-masculine, etc.

Microaggressions: Brief and subtle behaviors, whether intentional or not, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages of commonly oppressed identities. These actions cause harm through the invalidation of the target person's identity and may reinforce stereotypes. Examples of microaggressions include a person who is not white being told they speak "good English" or someone saying something is "gay" to mean they think something is bad.

Misgendering: Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (i.e. "Hello ladies!" "Hey guys"), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (i.e. "Well, since we're all women in this room, we understand...").

MLM: an abbreviation for men who love men, which includes gay men as well as men who are attracted to men and people of other genders.

Monogamy: Having only one intimate partner at any one time; also known as serial monogamy, since "true" monogamy refers to the practice of having only one partner for life (such as in some animal species).

Monosexism: The belief in and systematic privileging of monosexuality as superior, and the systematic oppression of non-monosexuality.

Monosexual: People who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for one gender only. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are the most well-known forms of monosexuality.

MSM: an abbreviation for men who have sex with men; they may or may not identify as gay.

Multisexual: An umbrella term to describe attraction to more than one gender. It can include sexual attractions like bisexual, polysexual, omnisexual, and others. The aforementioned terms are used by some interchangeably and for others the subtle differences among them are important.

Neurodiversity: Neurodiversity refers to the natural and important variations in how human minds think. These differences can include autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, Tourette Syndrome, and others. Like other variable human traits like race, gender, sexuality, or culture, there is no right or wrong form of diversity. The social dynamics that exert power over other forms of diversity also impact neurodivergent people. Neurodiversity is not something to be cured or corrected to fit some social norm - rather, we should celebrate different forms of communication and self-expression and promote support systems to allow neurodivergent people to thrive. (Neurocosmopolitanism, The National Symposium on Neurodiversity)

Neurodivergent: "Neurodivergent, sometimes abbreviated as ND, means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of "normal." A person whose neurocognitive functioning diverges from dominant societal norms in multiple ways – for instance, a person who is Autistic, has dyslexia, and has epilepsy – can be described as multiply neurodivergent. The

terms neurodivergent and neurodivergence were coined by Kassiane Asasumasu, a multiply neurodivergent neurodiversity activist.” (Neurocosmopolitanism)

Neurotypical: “Neurotypical, often abbreviated as NT, means having a style of neurocognitive functioning that falls within the dominant societal standards of “normal.” Neurotypical can be used as either an adjective (“He’s neurotypical”) or a noun (“He’s a neurotypical”).” (Neurocosmopolitanism)

Neutrois: A non-binary gender identity that falls under the genderqueer or transgender umbrellas. There is no one definition of Neutrois, since each person that self-identifies as such experiences their gender differently. The most common ones are: Neutral-gender, Null-gender, Neither male nor female, Genderless and/or Agender. (Neutrois.com)

Non binary/Nonbinary/Non-binary: A gender identity and experience that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate for an individual, moving beyond the male/female gender binary. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world. For some people who identify as non-binary there may be overlap with other concepts and identities like gender expansive and gender non-conforming.

Omnigender: Possessing all genders. The term is used specifically to refute the concept of only two genders.

Oppression: exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit.

Individual Level: a person’s beliefs or behaviors that consciously or subconsciously work to perpetuate actions and attitudes of oppression (See internalized oppression)

Institutional Level: Institutions such as family, government, industry, education, and religion have policies and procedures that can promote systems of oppression.

Societal/Cultural Level: community norms that perpetuate implicit and explicit values that bind institutions and individuals; social norms on what is valued, accepted, or desirable give the individual and institutional levels the justification for systemic oppression.

Orientation: Orientation is one’s attraction or non-attraction to other people. An individual’s orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their orientation. Some, but not all, types of attraction or orientation include, romantic, sexual, sensual, aesthetic, intellectual and platonic.

Pansexual, Omnisexual: Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes. Has some overlap with bisexuality and polysexuality (not to be confused with polyamory).

Phobia: In mental and emotional wellness, a phobia is a marked and persistent fear that is excessive in proportion to the actual threat or danger the situation presents. Historically, this term has been used inaccurately to refer to systems of oppression (i.e. homophobia has been used to refer to heterosexism.) As a staff, we’ve been intentionally moving away from using words like “transphobic,” “homophobic,” and “biphobic” because they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears, and, for

some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language is disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

Polyamory: Denotes consensually being in/open to multiple loving relationships at the same time. Some polyamorists (polyamorous people) consider “polyam” to be a relationship orientation. Sometimes used as an umbrella term for all forms of ethical, consensual, and loving non-monogamy.

Polygender, Pangender: Exhibiting characteristics of multiple genders, deliberately refuting the concept of only two genders.

Polysexual: People who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for more than one gender. Not to be confused with polyamory (above). Has some overlap with bisexuality and pansexuality.

Privilege: a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. The concept has roots in WEB DuBois’ work on “psychological wage” and white people’s feelings of superiority over Black people. Peggy McIntosh wrote about privilege as a white woman and developed an inventory of unearned privileges that she experienced in daily life because of her whiteness.

Pronouns: Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect.)

Queer: One definition of queer is abnormal or strange. Historically, queer has been used as an epithet/slug against people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality do not conform to dominant expectations. Some people have reclaimed the word queer and self-identify in opposition to assimilation (adapted from “Queering the Field”). For some, this reclamation is a celebration of not fitting into social norms. Not all people who identify as LGBTQIA use “queer” to describe themselves. The term is often considered hateful when used by those who do not identify as LGBTQIA.

Questioning: The process of exploring one’s own gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Some people may also use this term to name their identity within the LGBTQIA community.

Race: A social construct that divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, based on the social, economic, and political context of a society at a given period of time. (Racial Equity Resource Guide)

Racism: The systematic subordination of people from marginalized racial groups based on their physical appearance, ethnic or ancestral history, or cultural affiliation. Racism is considered a deeply pervasive, systemic issue perpetuated by members of the privileged racial group holding dominant social power over others. Discrimination, prejudice, or xenophobia may be more accurate terms for describing individual acts of oppression. While these individual acts likely stem from systemic racism, at the individual level the power dynamics that enable racism are not at play in the same way.

Religion: A personal or institutionalized system of beliefs and practices concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, often grounded in belief in and reverence for some supernatural power or powers; often involves devotional and ritual observances and contains a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Romantic Orientation: Romantic Orientation is attraction or non-attraction to other people characterized by the expression or non-expression of love. Romantic orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their romantic orientation. See also Orientation.

Same Gender Loving: a term used by some African American people who love, date, have attraction to people of the same gender.

Sex: a medically constructed categorization. Sex is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia, either in ultrasound or at birth.

Sexism: The cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue ways of being that are associated with women.

Sexuality: The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual Orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their sexual orientation. See also Orientation.

Sizeism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have bodies that society has labeled as “overweight,” as well as people of short stature. Historically speaking, fat people’s bodies have been labeled as unhealthy, undesirable, and lazy; this fails to complicate narratives around health and healthy living. This form of oppression has been referred to as fatphobia.

Social Identities: Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others.

Socialization: The process by which societal norms influence a number of aspects that frame how members of a community live - including how they might think, behave, and hold certain values. Socialization can reinforce assumptions or expectations that give power to systems of oppression.

Social Justice: A goal and a process in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Begins with an acknowledgement that oppression and inequity exist and must be actively dismantled on all levels. (Adams, Bell, & Griffin.)

Socioeconomic Class: Social group membership based on a combination of factors including income, education level, occupation, and social status in the community, such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family or individual.

SOGIE: An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression. Is used by some in a similar way to the umbrella acronym: LGBTQIA.

Spectrum: a range or sliding scale. Aspects of one's identity like sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression exist on a spectrum. For example, with sexual orientation, the attraction to men, women, or someone of another gender all exist on separate spectrums. Someone might feel a little attracted to men, very much attracted to women, and moderate attraction to people outside this binary. Please also see the Gender Unicorn to learn more about these aspects of identity.

*The phrase “on the spectrum” is more commonly used to refer to identifying on the autism spectrum rather than sexuality or gender. (AutisticAdvocacy.org)

Spirituality: Having to do with deep feelings and convictions, including a person’s sense of peace, purpose, connection to others, and understanding of the meaning and value of life; may or may not be associated with a particular set of beliefs or practices.

Stereotype: A generalization applied to every person in a cultural group; a fixed conception of a group without allowing for individuality. When we believe our stereotypes, we tend to ignore characteristics that don’t conform to our stereotype, rationalize what we see to fit our stereotype, see those who do not conform as “exceptions,” and find ways to create the expected characteristics.

Trans: The term trans acts as a more inclusive term than transgender for gender non-conforming and non-binary folks.

Trans man: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Transphobia: See Cissexsim above.

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Trans woman: A person may choose to identify this way to capture their gender identity as well as their lived experience as a transgender person.

Transgender: An adjective used most often as an umbrella term and frequently abbreviated to “trans.” Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one’s internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth. While transgender may refer to a woman who was assigned male at birth or a man who was assigned female at birth, transgender is an umbrella term that can also describe someone who identifies as a gender other than woman or man, such as non binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, no gender or multiple genders, or some other gender identity.

Transition: Transitioning is the process of taking steps to live as one’s true gender identity. Transitioning is different for each individual and may or may not involve medical interventions like taking hormones or having surgery. Some people may not choose to transition in certain ways for a variety of reasons. The extent of someone’s transition does not make that person’s gender identity any less or more valid.

Transitioning may include socially transitioning, such as going by certain pronouns or going by the Lived Name that affirms one’s gender identity. Transitioning may involve making changes to one’s physical appearance, such as wearing certain clothing, wearing one’s hair in a different style or length, or more complex changes such as medically transitioning through hormones or surgery. Transitioning can also involve changing legal documents to match one’s authentic sense of self.

Two Spirit: An umbrella term encompassing sexuality and gender in Indigenous Native American communities. Two Spirit people often serve integral and important roles in their communities, such as

leaders and healers. It may refer to an embodiment of masculinity and femininity, but this is not the only significance of the term. There are a variety of definitions and feelings about the term two spirit – and this term does not resonate for everyone. Two Spirit is a cultural term reserved for those who identify as Indigenous Native American. Although the term itself became more commonly used around 1990, two spirit people have existed for centuries.

Undocumented: People are who are born outside of the country to which they immigrated, who do not have documentation that grants legal rights related to residency and/or citizenship.

Ursula: Some lesbians, particularly butch dykes, also participate in Bear culture referring to themselves with the distinct label Ursula.

Womxn: some womxn spell the word with an “x” as a form of empowerment to move away from the “men” in the “traditional” spelling of women.

ALLYSHIP PRO TIPS

Many folks are interested in learning more about how to practice allyship. Below we have highlighted some suggestions for allyship, as well as some general tips:

1. Recognize the diversity of trans & genderqueer lives. Remember that these identities are part of other identities, and intersect with race, class, size, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, etc.
2. Always use the pronouns & name people want you to use. If you're unsure, ASK! If you make a mistake, correct yourself – without being dismissive of its importance, without making excuses, & without making it a huge deal/over-apologizing/drawing attention to you. Politely (& subtly, if possible) correct others if they use the wrong pronoun. It helps to be explicit rather than hoping they pick it up.
3. Ask when & where it's safe to use their chosen name & pronouns (e.g., if a trans person is not out at home, ask them how you should refer to them around their family, etc).
4. Don't ask trans people what their "real" name is (i.e., the one they were born with). This is invasive and implies their chosen name is invalid and less "real." If you know their birth name, do not divulge it to others.
5. Instead of saying someone was born a boy (or a girl), try saying they were assigned male at birth (or were assigned female). These terms recognize the difference between sex & gender and emphasize the ways in which sex & gender are assigned to individuals at birth, rather than being innate, binary or immutable qualities. AND... you can ask yourself if it is necessary to even mention what sex someone was assigned at birth.
6. Don't confuse gender with sexual orientation. Trans people, like cisgender people, are straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc.
7. Don't ask trans people about their bodies, how they have sex, what their genitals are like, etc. It's rude & objectifying & none of your business. It can be helpful to think about whether you would ask these questions of a cisgender person.
8. Don't ask about surgery or hormone status; don't ask "when are you going to have the surgery?" or "are you on hormones?" Like cisgender people, our medical histories & bodies can be intensely personal & private. If trans people want to share these details with you, allow them to do so on their own terms.

9. Don't assume the only way to transition is through hormones/surgery & understand that medical transition is very often based on economic status. Recognize the classism inherent in associating medical transition with "authentic" trans identities.
10. Don't assume all trans people want hormones and/or surgery, or to transition at all.
11. Don't assume all trans people feel "trapped in the wrong body." This is an oversimplification and not the way (all) trans people feel.
12. Don't assume all trans people identify as "men" or "women." Many trans people and genderqueer people identify as both, neither, or something altogether different.
13. Don't tell trans people what is appropriate to their gender (e.g., trans women should grow their hair out & wear dresses). Like cisgender people, we have varying forms of gender expression.
14. Do listen if a trans person chooses to talk to you about their gender identity.
15. Be proactive and informed about restrooms - consider where nearby gender-inclusive/all-gender restrooms are near your work, classes, etc. Be understanding and think ahead about options if a trans or gender-non-conforming friend is uncomfortable using a gendered bathroom, locker room, or other segregated space.
16. If your organization is holding an event, designate a gender-neutral bathroom in the building.
17. Don't ask trans people to educate you. Do your own homework & research. Understand that there is a difference between talking to individuals about their preferences/perspectives and asking someone to be your educator. Try not to view individuals as spokespeople; trans communities are diverse, not one monolithic voice or viewpoint.
18. Recognize that trans women and trans feminine people deal with sexism and misogyny in a very real way (on top of transphobia).
19. Recognize that trans women deserve access to "women-only" spaces/programs/shelters/etc.
20. If you are cisgender, recognize your privilege & prejudices as a normatively gendered person.
21. Don't let transphobia/cissexism slide. Confront it as you would confront all other forms of oppression. Trans issues are rarely discussed & when they are it is often in a negative light.
22. Talk about trans issues/rights. Engage people in discussions & share your knowledge.
23. If you are a cisgender person, be aware of the role you can play as an ally. Remember that the way you talk about trans people (e.g., using the right pronouns) influences how others perceive us & can make a difference in whether we feel safe/comfortable.

24. Don't out trans people. This could be dangerous to their safety. Likewise, be aware of your surroundings when discussing trans issues with a trans person. For their safety & comfort, they may prefer not to discuss these topics in public places or among strangers.
25. Above all respect and support trans people in their lives and choices.

via Organisation Intersex International

1. Remember that most intersex individuals prioritize discussing how to combat human rights abuses [like surgeries on intersex infants], rather than being used as examples to explore concepts in sex and gender theory.
2. Be intersex inclusive - use LGBTI or LGBTQIA acronyms in your speech and writing at your university and organization. Consider how to be inclusive in the scope of your programming, your understanding of the variety of bodies, and the issues that you consider relevant to addressing LGBTQIA oppression.
3. Make intersex more visible - "Like" an intersex activist organization like OII via Facebook; share an article, blog post, book, documentary, movie, YouTube clip, or these ally tips; spread information via other formats such as a Tumblr and in-person conversations.
4. Learn about intersex from intersex people: intersex people are the experts on our experiences and needs; contact an intersex educator for speaking engagements, if unable to meet intersex people, view documentaries, etc., featuring intersex people telling their own stories.
5. When speaking to intersex individuals:
 1. Remember that being intersex may or may not be a part of their identity
 2. Remember it is not their duty to discuss intersex at any time, or that they will be comfortable discussing all aspects: follow their lead
 3. Phrase questions to understand intersex broadly, not in ways that are too personal and thus invasive
 4. Ensure questions do not serve to stigmatize or fetishize intersex individuals
 5. If intersex individuals are not comfortable discussing certain topics:
 1. They may wish to have this conversation at another time
 2. They may wish to have this conversation, but not publicly
 3. They may wish to have a broad/general conversation, rather than a personal one

4. They may not wish to have this conversation; it may be too personal or triggering
6. Do not assume that intersex is a medical condition - some intersex folks do not use the words “condition” or “syndrome” when discussing their form of intersex. You can use language like “variations of intersex” or “intersex variations” instead of “intersex conditions.”
1. Educate yourself and others about asexuality
2. Speak up if you hear an asexual person being ridiculed or harassed for their orientation.
3. Explicitly include asexuality and its related identities in sexual orientation-focused groups, workshops, discussions, etc.
4. Don't automatically assume that everyone you meet is allosexual, even if they seem perfectly comfortable talking or writing about sex.
5. Respect a person's self-identity and refer to them by whatever labels (or lack thereof) they apply to themselves.
6. Don't ask highly personal questions about a person's sexual feelings or experiences, unless you are close enough to the person that you know such questions would be acceptable.
7. Don't tokenize an asexual person by expecting them to be the spokesperson for all things asexual.
8. Recognize that asexual people may have varying degrees of comfort with discussions of sex; some asexual people may be very uncomfortable with it, others may be completely fine with it and may even enjoy flirting or making sexual jokes just for fun. If you're not sure where someone's boundaries are, ask them.
9. Correct misconceptions about asexuality if you hear someone expressing them.
10. Don't assume anything about an asexual person's romantic orientation, or about their past or present sexual experiences (or lack thereof).
11. Cultivate a vision of sex positivity in which not wanting sex is just as valid and affirming as wanting it.

Adapted from CSU Long Beach's "Being an Ally."

1. Believe that issues related to oppression are everyone's concern, not just the concern of those who are the targets of oppression.
2. Understand that people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual are experts on their own experience, and that you have much to learn from them.

3. Take responsibility for your own education on issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Take the initiative to become as knowledgeable as you can on issues of concern to people who are LGBTQIA.
4. Making mistakes is part of the learning process of practicing allyship. Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes; learn from them, but do not retreat.
5. Avoid trying to convince people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex that you are on their side; just be there.
6. Remember that ally is a verb - actions are more powerful than words.
7. Create opportunities for allies to join in coalition to reduce oppression of LGBTQIA people.

PRONOUNS

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are linguistic tools that we use to refer to people. (i.e. they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his). We believe that it is important to give people the opportunity to state the pronoun that is correct to use when referring to them. (This is NOT an exhaustive list. Any combination is possible!)

___ laughed.	Ask ___!	That's ___ pen.	That pen's ___.	Did ___ enjoy ___?
co	co	cos	cos	coself
en	en	ens	ens	enself
ey	em	eir	eirs	emself
he	him	his	his	himself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
xie	hir ("here")	hir	hirs	hirsself
yo	yo	yos	yos	yoself
ze	zir	zir	zirs	zirsself
ve	vis	ver	ver	verself

Example: Ze reminded zirsself to pick up zir umbrella before going outside.

How you could ask:

"What pronouns do you use?"

"What pronouns would you like me to use?"

How you could share:

"I'm Jade and my pronouns are ze and hir."

"Leo, I prefer they and them, but he is fine too."

"My pronoun is co."

Other approaches to pronouns:

"Just my name, please."

"No preference!"

"It's better if you mix 'em up!"

"No pronouns for me!"

A GUIDE TO PRONOUNS FOR ALLIES

Guide to Pronouns for Allies

If you have further questions or suggestions for additions to this guide, please contact Nick Campan at nickcampan@gmail.com

Ways to make language more inclusive:

Instead of saying:

“Hey guys!” or “Hey ladies!” or “How are you guys doing?”

Try saying:

“Hey, everyone!” or “How are y’all doing?”

Notice when someone refers to another person by their occupation if you naturally use a particular pronoun. (i.e. Person A: “I just got back from the doctor’s office.” Person B: “What did he say?”)

Understanding Pronouns

Pronouns are integral to who we are. Using someone’s correct pronouns is an important way of affirming someone’s identity and is a fundamental step in being an ally.

Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. There are other nonbinary pronouns. It is important to ask people what their pronouns are. If you have questions, politely ask the person to give examples of how to use the pronouns.

“Justice is my friend. They are a great colleague and identify as nonbinary. I really like them. My office is next to theirs.”

While we might typically think of “they/them/theirs” as a plural pronoun, we actually use “they” to refer to an individual all the time without realizing it. When we refer to a person whose gender we do not know, we might use they as the pronoun.

“I got a call from the doctor today.”

“What did they say?”

(In this example, “they” is used as a pronoun to refer to an individual.)

Make a habit of introducing yourself with your pronouns, not just in LGBTQIA-specific situations. This makes sharing pronouns routine, instead of singling out certain people or communities.

“Hi, my name is Hanna and my pronouns are she/her/hers.”

Here are some respectful ways to ask someone their pronouns.

- “What pronouns do you use?”
- “May I ask what pronouns you use?”
- “When I refer to you, what pronouns should I use?”
- “Are you comfortable sharing your pronouns?” (to make sure we are not pressuring people to “out” themselves)

Try to avoid using the phrases “preferred pronouns” or “preferred name” as these suggest an element of flexibility or that someone’s identity is less than valid. Someone’s name and pronouns are not suggestions and are not preferred over something else. They are inherent to who we are.

Keep in mind some people may use certain pronouns in some contexts and not in others due to a variety of factors, including safety. For example, a person may be openly transgender or trans* at work but not at home with their family. Some people use different names and different pronouns depending on the context. It can be helpful to clarify in what situations someone uses certain pronouns. Remember it is up to each person how and when they choose to share part of their identity with others.

FAQ

“Why can’t I just assume someone’s pronouns by looking at them? I’m usually correct in my assumptions.”

By assuming someone’s pronouns based on how they look, one is implicitly reinforcing harmful stereotypes about gender expression. For example, that masculine-looking people always use he/him/his pronouns. This is not always the case, and it is important to understand and respect each individual’s identity. Therefore, we want to ask, not assume, someone’s pronouns and make a habit of introducing ourselves with our pronouns.

“What are some other ways to make sharing pronouns a regular part of our workspace?”

At the start of meetings, make it a habit to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and their pronouns if they feel comfortable. One can emphasize that sharing pronouns is an important part of respecting each person’s identity and is part of creating an inclusive space.

Adding pronouns to your email signature and business cards are an important way to show you understand the importance of pronouns.

Here are some examples:

Dan Alvarez
Pronouns: They/Them/Theirs
Administrator

Kay Miyazaki
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
Office Manager

“What if I make a mistake and use the wrong pronouns?”

While we want to do our best to use someone’s correct pronouns, mistakes can happen. If this does happen, it is best to apologize, say what pronoun you meant to use, and move on without dwelling on the mistake.

If someone apologizes profusely, it brings attention to an already awkward situation. Overly apologizing then puts the other person (the person who was just misgendered) in an uncomfortable position. Some people in this position might feel pressured to say, “It’s ok” even though it’s not - using the wrong pronouns can be incredibly harmful. If a mistake happens, apologize, correct yourself, and move on.

“She- I’m sorry, I meant to say, ‘He got the files from the office.’”

Make sure to practice! You can practice using pronouns by telling simple stories to your partner or friends.

“Monique and I gave a presentation today. They designed many of the slides. It was their idea to include a short video in the presentation. I like working with them.”

(This guide was created with information from MyPronouns.org and the Trans* Ally Workbook by Davey Shlasko.)

WORDS THAT HURT AND WHY

Sometimes we say words without realizing the impact they may have on others. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Take time to educate yourself about language and histories of oppression.

- *Bitch (In Any Language)*

- Targets and dehumanizes women, even if used toward men, including queer and gay men. Devalues women and femininity. Reinforces sexism.

- *Ghetto/Ratchet*

- Describes something or someone as cheap, worn out, poor, dangerous, etc. Reference to housing communities that are impoverished and disproportionately impact people of color. Associates people of color with these negative characteristics.

- *Illegal Alien*

- Reduces undocumented immigrants to something less than human. Fixates on legal status instead of people as individuals. Asserts that some people belong here more than others do. Ignores political, social, and economic factors that impact people of color.

- *No Homo*

- Stresses the speaker's heterosexuality, masculinity, and/or other traits to avoid being perceived as LGBTQIA. Goes to great lengths to avoid association with anything queer. Reinforces that to be LGBTQIA is bad.

- *Retarded, Lame, Crazy, and Dumb*

- Targets mental, emotional and physical disabilities as objects for ridicule. Used as synonyms for "worthless," "bad," "unintelligent," "incapable," etc.

- *That's So Gay*

- Stigmatizes gay and queer people. Uses their identities to describe something as undesirable and bad. Replaces negative adjectives with words related to LGBTQIA identities.

- *Whore/Ho and Slut*

- Dismisses anyone seen as being "too" sexual, particularly sex workers, women, LGBTQI people and people of color. Perpetuates negativity toward sex itself. Regulates who is allowed to have it.

- *Bisexuality doesn't really exist. People are just gay or straight.*

- This denies the fluidity of sexuality and dismisses people's experiences and definitions of self. People deserve the right to define their own identities any way they wish and have those definitions honored.

- *I think everyone is really bisexual.*

- While this is often meant to acknowledge the fluidity of sexuality, it dismisses the reality of people who identify as bisexual and erases their experiences. It also invalidates the self-identifications of non-bisexual people.

- *You're too femme/butch to be bisexual.*

- Gender presentation does not indicate sexual orientation. Bisexual people have a wide range of gender presentations.

- *Bisexual people just want straight privilege.*

- Bisexual people experience discrimination within straight communities and lesbian/gay communities. They never fully experience straight privilege because they do not identify as straight. Often their identities are made invisible and denied.

- *Bisexual people are just greedy and want to have sex with everyone.*

- This stereotypes bisexual people and assumes they are all promiscuous - and that this is a bad thing. It creates negative attitudes toward sex and works against creating a sex positive climate. It also demonstrates an underlying belief that bisexuality is only about behavior and is not a legitimate identity.

- *Who do you see yourself ending up with?*

- This is another way of implying one has to "end up" gay or straight and ignores bisexuality as an identity versus a relationship status. It also assumes everyone desires to be in a long-term monogamous relationship.

- *Tranny*

- Whether or not someone identifies as trans*, calling anyone "tranny" is extremely offensive. While some folks within the trans* community may choose to reclaim this word for themselves, it is not a word that is okay to use to label another person or use as a joke.

- *That person doesn't really look like a woman/man.*

- What does it mean to look like a man or woman? There are no set criteria. It also should not be assumed that all Trans Men strive to fit within dominant ideas of masculinity, or all Trans Women strive to fit within dominant ideas of femininity, or that all Trans* people want to look like men or women. Gender presentation is fluid and distinct from gender identity, and all forms of gender expression deserve affirmation.

- *What is your REAL name? I mean the one you were given at birth.*

- This implies that the person's gender identity and chosen name are not "real" and perpetuates the idea of Trans people as deceptive. It removes agency and any right to make decisions for themselves and is incredibly invalidating. It presumes a right to intimate information, disregards privacy, and places Trans lives on public display.

- *He-She*

- This hyphenated term is demeaning and invalidates an individual's identity and the pronouns that they use.

- *Using the wrong pronouns or making assumptions about others' gender identities.*

- It is vital that we respect the names and pronouns that people use. It is impossible to know without asking. If you are not sure, ask: "What pronouns do you use?"

- *What are you REALLY? Have you had surgery? If not, then you're not a _____*

- Asking anyone personal questions about their bodies and/or surgeries is invasive and inappropriate. We don't ask cisgender people about what is under their clothes; we shouldn't ask Trans* people either.

- *Asking others about a trans person's identity or offering information about someone.*

- Asking someone about another person's identity is inappropriate. Ask yourself why you want to know. If you are concerned about using the correct pronouns, ask the person directly.

- *Cunt/Twat/Pussy*

- Using words that refer to people with vaginas to express that someone is weak or emotional. Dehumanizes womxn and perpetuates misogyny and sexism.

- *Thot*

- Word created to express womxn or people who are sexually promiscuous. There are speculations that the word comes from the KKK organization that referred to Black women who were forced into prostitution (i.e. Sarah Baartman: Hottentot).

- *Ugly*

- Word used to put down someone for the way they look, can be connected back to white supremacist, ableist, sizeist standards of beauty.

- *You guys*

- Erases the identities of people who are in the room. Generalizing a group of people to be masculine.

- *I'm being such a fat-ass/I'm being so fat right now!*

- Demeans and devalues fatness/fat bodies, reinforces harmful assumptions that fat people are gluttonous and are fat because they have no restraint around food. Also implies that there is an acceptable amount of food to eat and anything more is disgusting, or that enjoying food too much is disgusting.