



LGBTQ Terminology

Language is dynamic; it grows, changes and develops. This is particularly true with the language of diversity and the terms we use to identify ourselves. As respectful individuals in a civil society, we should strive to be sure that our language does not demean, exclude, or offend. We must allow others to self-identify, for definitions of terms will vary for everyone. This document and the definitions provide a starting point for discussion understanding. As the culture and definition changes, so will this document.

Terms Related to LGBTQ Community

Bisexual:

A person who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of either gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Gay:

A term often said to apply to both men and women who are attracted to the same gender much in the same way that 'man,' used generically, has been used in the past to encompass both men and women. Many object to the use of 'gay' applied to gay men and lesbians, and it is often used only to identify homosexual males.

Gay Man:

A man who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from other men. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Gender Identity:

An individual's basic self-conviction of being male or female. This conviction is not contingent upon the individual's biological gender. The exact process by which boys and girls come to see themselves as males or females is not known. However, research indicates that gender identity develops at some point between birth and 3 years of age. (See also: Transgender Definitions)

LGBTQ:

"Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (or Questioning)"

Heterosexual Privilege:

The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives that are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons simply because of their sexual orientation. The assumption that all people are heterosexual.



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Heterosexual:

A person who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of the opposite gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Heterosexism:

Systems and ways of thinking that reinforce a belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships, thereby negating the lives and relationships of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people.

Homophobia:

Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people, or people perceived to be any of the above. It may also manifest as a person's fear of being perceived as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. Consists of three separate components: Sexism, Xenophobia and Erotophobia. Currently, the word is often used in relation to issues of discrimination in regards to gender identity and sexual orientation. Other related terms that may be appropriate in specific cases: 'Biphobia' and 'Transphobia.'

Homosexual:

A term coined in 1869 by an early psychiatrist, who used it to describe a person who has "...an other than normal sexual urge which renders them physically and psychically incapable." Since the word was originally used to describe a pathology, most gays and lesbians do not like this term used to define them. Homosexuality, per se, is no longer considered an illness by the American Psychiatric Association, nor by the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, or most other reputable professional organizations.

Lesbian:

A woman who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from other women. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

"Out of the Closet" / "Being Out":

Means that one states openly that one is lesbian, bisexual, gay, or transgendered, in contrast to "staying in the closet" by hiding or denying one's gender identity or sexual orientation either from oneself or from others.

Sex:

An act, or series of acts, which are a natural part of human expressions of desire, love and affection. Or the identification of biological gender.



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Sexual Orientation:

The orientation within human beings which leads them to be emotionally and physically attracted to persons of one gender or the other or both. Currently, one's sexual orientation may be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual/pansexual, or asexual

Asexual:

A term used to describe someone who does not experience sexual attraction toward individuals of any gender. Asexuality is a sexual orientation, and is different from celibacy, in that celibacy is the choice to refrain from engaging in sexual behaviors and does not comment on one's sexual attractions. An asexual individual may choose to engage in sexual behaviors for various reasons even while not experiencing sexual attraction.

Pansexual:

A term used by some who self-identify that they are attracted to, and may form sexual and romantic relationships with, someone regardless of that person's gender-identity or genitalia.

Queer:

Used by some to refer to themselves, the LGBTQ Community, a person who is LGBTQ, or even someone who is supportive of the LGBTQ communities. Often viewed as a political statement as well as an identity or label. Many of those who use the term feel it is more inclusive, allowing for the diversity of race, class, ability and gender that is represented by the LGBTQ communities. Note: Many LGBTQ individuals dislike this word and view it as pejorative.

Domestic Partners:

Adults who are not legally married, who share resources and responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. Legal definitions may vary among city ordinances, corporate policies and by individuals and families.

Family:

"Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate that one comes home to. It is that network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, or adoption or marriage." Source: American Home Economics Association.

Terms Related to Transgender

Transgender:

A broad umbrella term for persons who have a self-image or gender identity not traditionally associated with their biological gender. Some transgender persons wish to change their



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anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception, while others do not have such a desire. There is no absolute correlation between sexual orientation and transgender issues. A transgender person may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual, etc.

Bigenderist:

A person who develops and expresses a distinctly male persona and a distinctly female persona. A bigenderist might, for example, work as a woman and socialize as a man (or vice versa). See also: Crossdresser.

Crossdresser:

A person who dresses in the clothing of the opposite biological gender. Crossdressers generally want to relate as, and be accepted as, a person of the gender they are presenting. Crossdressing may be partial or total in amount of time and amount of clothing worn. Crossdressers may identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. See also: Bigenderist

Drag/Drag Queen:

Dressing in the clothing of the opposite biological sex, or in a manner different than how one will usually dress (i.e. "corporate drag" or "military drag"). Drag is often theatrical and often presents a stereotyped image. Individuals who dress in Drag may or may not consider themselves part of the transgender community. They also may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Female or Male Impersonator:

Persons who crossdress as performance art and/or as stage personalities. They may also consider themselves drag performers. They may or may not consider themselves to be crossdressers or bigenderists, and they may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc.

Gender Bending / Blending:

Dressing in such a way as to question the traditional feminine or masculine qualities assigned to articles of clothing or adornment. Gender bending may be part of a fashion trend, or possibly a political statement. Gender bending often has no correlation to issues of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Transsexual:

A person whose gender identity is other than their biological gender this person may wish to change their anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception. Most transsexuals would like to alter their bodies through hormonal therapy, gender reassignment surgeries or other means.



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Transvestite:

Often a person who may achieve sexual pleasure through the use of clothing or personal adornments of the other gender. Often incorrectly used inter-changeably with Crossdresser. There is no correlation between sexual orientation and transvestite behavior. Transvestites may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. in their sexual orientation.

Transition:

In the parlance of Transgender issues, the 'transition' is the time period when an individual changes from expressing one gender to another in their personal life and/or workplace. For most individuals, the workplace transition is very carefully planned, often including appropriate levels of management in early discussions, and the transition process may be weeks to months in length. The personal life transition, also eagerly anticipated, may be more sudden.

Intersexed:

Generally applied to individuals born with ambiguous genitalia (an outdated term would be: Hermaphrodite). In the past, most intersexed individuals have had surgery shortly after birth in an attempt to give them an "identifiable" gender. There is now much discussion about this practice, but so far little has changed. Parents often feel forced to make a quick decision with little information. Most intersexed persons are raised as girls/women.

Symbols of Pride for the GLBT Communities

Pink Triangle:

The symbolism of the pink triangle dates back to World War II. Following the passage of anti-homosexual laws 1935, Nazi death camps were constructed to eliminate Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, mentally and physically handicapped, and others. Each of these groups were identified with a symbol on their camp uniforms. Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David and homosexuals, were forced to wear pink triangles. In 1977, the pink triangle was adopted as a symbol of the fight against oppression, and the work towards LGBTQ inclusion. The pink triangle is worn as a reminder of what can happen when fanatical social elements launch "hate wars" against minorities.

Lambda:

The 11th letter in the Greek alphabet, the Lambda has long been a universal gay icon.

Rainbow Flag:

In 1978, when San Francisco was grieving the assassinations of Harvey Milk, the city's first openly gay City Supervisor, and Mayor George Moscone, the organizing committee for "Speak Out for Justice" called for the development of a permanent symbol which could be used by gay men and lesbians celebrating and saluting their community. San Francisco artist and former



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military officer Gilbert Baker, inspired by the five striped “Flag of the Races” (red, black, brown, yellow, and white), designed the Rainbow Flag. The first eight-striped Rainbow Flags made their debut at the 1978 Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day March in San Francisco. The eight-colored flag was affectionately called the “New Glory”. The original eight colors were pink for sexuality, red for light, orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for natural serenity, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony, and violet for spirit. In 1979 the Paramount Flag Company introduced a six-striped flag through its outlet, The Flag Store. Over the years, the Rainbow Flag has gone through many variations. Popular sentiment, however, has kept the current six-color flag in prominence: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. In 1985 The Rainbow Flag was accepted by the International Association of Lesbian and Gay Pride Coordinators. Today one can see this flag in cities throughout the world.

Annual Gay Pride Celebration:

Held in late June every year to celebrate the anniversary of the Stonewall Inn riots, a three-day demonstration in New York City that began on June 27, 1969, and marks the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement. The purposes of this event include:

- 1) To educate about the diversity, issues and goals of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens and neighbors.
- 2) To provide a forum for celebration of the history and accomplishments of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.
- 3) To provide an opportunity for networking and outreach by the many businesses, services and community organizations that welcome and serve gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, their families and friends.

Annual National Coming Out Day (NCOD):

Many studies have proven that people who personally know LGBTQ individuals are significantly more likely to accept and support equal civil rights for LGBTQ Americans. NCOD encourages all people to be honest about their own sexual orientation in order to have the positive dialogue needed to erase bigotry, misunderstandings, and stereotypes. NCOD is celebrated on October 11th every year to commemorate the 1987 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian Civil Rights, as well as the inaugural visit of the Names Project - AIDS Quilt to the nation’s capital.

* The 1987 March was not inclusive of the bisexual and transgender communities.

REFERENCE:

Terms and definitions adapted from OutFront Minnesota and sourced from www.outfront.org/library/issues/defintions.html