

Glossary of Sexuality Vocabulary – LGBTIQ+ terms... and more...

By Alexander Venter, 2020. The following is a current list of definitions/terminology relating to LGBTIQ+ identities, people, sexualities, genders. **Note:** they are **not** all incontrovertible (unable to be debated/denied), they are not all technically accurate and/or ideologically free. This list is adapted from <https://thesafezoneproject.com/resources/vocabulary/>, with other terms beyond LGBTIQ+ that I have added due to the expanding language of sexology and gender dysphoria. Also, see <https://www.healthline.com/health/different-types-of-sexuality>

Update, February 2023, the terms below have not been updated in light of further exploding terminology since I did this glossary; e.g., there now 72 genders identity expressions, see... https://www.medicinenet.com/what_are_the_72_other_genders/article.htm

Androgyny /androgynous; **1 noun**, a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity. **2 adjective**, occasionally used in place of “**intersex**” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy, generally in the form “androgyne.”

Asexual – *adj.*, experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behaviour. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people experiencing no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels. Sometimes abbreviated to “ace.”

Biological sex – *noun*: 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 referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.” See **sex assigned at birth** below.

Bisexual – **1 noun**: a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. **2 adj.:** a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders that an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with “**pansexual**” (see below).

Cisnormativity – *noun*: the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.

Cross-dressing – dressing in the clothing or adopting the presentation of the other sex. Motivations for cross-dressing vary significantly on a spectrum from degrees of gender dysphoria (identity confusion), to entertainment purposes (drag-queen or drag-king), to sexual arousal (transvestism), which may or may not have elements of fetishism.

Demiromantic – *adj.:* little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual connection is formed with someone, often within a sexual relationship.

Demisexual – *adj.:* little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

Female to Male (FtM) – a person who is identified as female at birth but experiences a male gender identity and has or is in the process of adopting a male presentation. See **MtF** below.

Gay – **1 adj.:** experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. **2 noun:** can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

Gender – they psychological, social and cultural aspects of being male and female.

Gender bending – intentionally bending and/or crossing gender roles as culturally defined.

Gender dysphoria – the feeling of discomfort or distress that occurs in people whose psycho-emotional gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth, or from their sex-related physical characteristics. Transgender and gender-nonconforming people might experience gender dysphoria at some point in their lives.

Gender expression – *adj.*, the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanour, social behaviour, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

Gender fluid – *adj.*, a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

Gender identity – *adj.*, 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. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming – **1** *adj.*: a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). **2** *noun*: a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as "GNC."

Genderqueer – **1** *noun*: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. **2** *adj.*: an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary (below) identities, as in agender, bigender, genderfluid, etc.

Gender role – adoptions of cultural expectations for maleness or femaleness

Heterosexual/straight – *adj.*: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to members of the opposite binary gender, or to a different gender.

Homosexual – *adj. & noun*: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness and is discouraged for common use – the recommended use is gay or lesbian.

Homophobic/homophobia – *noun*: an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTIQ+ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTIQ+. **Homophobic**, *adj.*: a word used to describe actions, behaviours, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTIQ+ people.

AV Note: theological ethical disagreement on homosexual *practice* (erotic genital intimacy) – to say that it is sinful before God, as is all other forms of heterosexual sinful practice – is **not** homophobia or being homophobic.

Intersex – *adj.*: term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differ from the two expected patterns of male or female. I.e. it describes conditions in which a person is born with sexual characteristics or anatomy that does not allow clear identification as male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (hermaphroditic); these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

Lesbian – *noun & adj.*: women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTIQ+; GSM; DSG – *abbr.*: shorthand or umbrella term for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer, see below) gender and/or sexuality. There are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTIQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersexual and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people add a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive).

Male to Female (MtF) – a person who is identified as male at birth but experiences a female gender identity and has or is in the process of adopting a female presentation.

Monosexual – a broad sexual orientation category that includes people who experience romantic or sexual attraction to people of one sex or gender. Monosexuality typically includes those who are exclusively heterosexual, gay, or lesbian.

Nonbinary – a word describing people who don't exclusively identify as either a man or a woman. They reject the binary of "both genders" (male/masculine and female/feminine) as a misnomer. Nonbinary people could identify as bigender, agender, genderfluid, and so on.

Pansexual – *adj.*, not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity. *Noun*, a pansexual person. This includes those who don't identify with any gender (agender) or sexual orientation. Many **pansexual** people describe themselves as being attracted to people based on personality, not gender.

Primary and secondary sex characteristics: *primary characteristics* are features that are directly part of the reproductive system, such as testes, penis and scrotum in males, and ovaries, uterus and vagina in females. *Secondary characteristics* have no direct reproductive function, for example, facial hair in males and enlarged breasts in females.

Polyamory (polyamorous) – *noun* : refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships; i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners. Often shortened to "poly."

Queer – **1** *adj.*: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. **2** *noun*: a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTIQ+ people. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTIQ+ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTIQ+ people").

Questioning – *verb, adj.*: an individual who is questioning, or at times when someone is unsure about, or is exploring, their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sexual orientation – *noun*: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, which is then generally labelled – based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

Sexual preference – refers to one's sexual preference, suggesting a degree of voluntary choice, whereas the consensus is that sexual orientation is not a choice. *noun*: preference is the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in.

Sex assigned at birth (SAAB) – *abbr.*: a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person's assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called "designated sex at birth" (DSAB) or

“sex coercively assigned at birth” (SCAB), or specifically used as “assigned male at birth” (AMAB) or “assigned female at birth” (AFAB).

Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) – *noun*: used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s biological sex. “Gender confirmation surgery” is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as “top” surgery and “bottom” surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

Straight – *adj.* : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

Third sex or third gender – a term used to describe persons who are neither man or woman, which could reference an intermediate state or another sex or gender, or having qualities of both man/woman in oneself.

Trans* – *adj.*: an umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

Transgender – **1** *adj.*: a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. **2** *noun*: an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

Transsexual – *noun and adj.*: 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 surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Transphobia – *noun*: the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen in the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobic, *adj.*: a word used to describe a person who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people. **AV Note**: theological ethical disagreement on trans* sexual *practice* (erotic genital intimacy) is **not** transphobia or being transphobic – as stated in **homophobia** above.

Transition/transitioning – *noun, verb*: referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).

Ze / zir / “zee”, “zerr” or “zeer”/ – alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers”. Alternatively, some people who are not comfortable or do not embrace he/she, use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.