

Terms to Know*

* Used and modified with permission by AHS Human Resources from the *Guide To Creating Safe and Welcoming Places for Sexual & Gender Diverse (LGBTQ*) People* (2016)

The objective of this document is to provide appropriate terms and phrases when talking to and about sexual and gender diverse people.

LGBTQ / LGBTQ* / LGBTQ+

Acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning”. Sometimes “*” or “+” is used at the end to represent the many diverse sexual orientations and gender identities that are part of this community.

LGGBTTTQQAAAIP

While less commonly used, you may see this acronym that many feel is more reflective of this community. This acronym stands for:

Lesbian	Queer
Gay	Questioning
Gender Queer	Asexual
Bisexual	Ally
Transsexual	Androgynous
Transgender	Intersex
Two-Spirit	Pansexual

Agender

Someone who does not identify with a specific gender or have recognizable gender expression.

Asexual

A person who does not experience sexual attraction and may or may not experience emotional/romantic attraction.

Ally

A person who advocates for the human rights of sexual and gender diverse people by challenging discrimination and heterosexism.

Bisexual

A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of any gender or sex. Also, a person who has sexual attraction to males and females.

Cisgender/Cis

A person whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Crossdresser

Someone who occasionally dresses in the clothing of the “opposite” gender as part of their gender expression. They may or may not identify as transgender. This is not indicative of nor connected to the person’s sexual orientation.

Drag King / Drag Queen

Someone who dresses up as the “opposite” gender for performance or fun. This may or may not be a reflection of their true gender identity. This is not indicative of nor connected to the person’s sexual orientation.

Gay

A person who has emotional or sexual attraction to people of the same sex or gender. This term is most often used for a male who has emotional or sexual attraction to males.

Gender

Social and cultural expectations of roles and presentation. For most people their gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Others identify as being transgender or gender diverse.

Gender Binary

This is the classification of sex and gender into two distinct and disconnected states of masculine and feminine. It describes a social boundary that discourages people from crossing or mixing gender roles.

Gender Confirming Surgery (GCS)

Many transgender people prefer this term to the older term, *Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)*, which many find offensive. Sometimes *Gender Affirming Surgery (SGA)* is used. This term refers to doctor-supervised surgical interventions, and is only one small part of transition or expression of their gender. Many transgender people do not undergo surgery for a variety of very personal and private reasons. It is considered extremely inappropriate to ask a transgender person about what surgical or other medical procedures they may or may not have undergone.

Gender Expression

External and public presentation of a person’s gender expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics. Gender expression also includes using facilities (such as washrooms and change rooms) that correspond with their own sense of gender. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture.

Gender Fluid

The gender identity, behaviors and appearance of a person moves along a gender spectrum and/or challenges gender restrictions and norms. Related terms can include gender queer, gender non-conforming, gender neutral, pangender, tri-gender, agender, non-binary gender.

Gender Identity

One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Some people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those genders. They may identify as agender, without gender, among other terms. Some people may not identify with a gender at all. Unlike gender expression gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Queer

A person who may identify and express themselves beyond what is typically associated with their sex/gender assigned at birth. People who are gender queer may not identify as transgender.

Heterosexism

Discrimination based on the assumption that all people are heterosexual and cisgender and that these are the normal and/or superior sexual orientation and gender identities.

Heterosexual (Straight)

A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of the opposite sex or gender, to their own.

Homo/ Bi /Trans -phobia

A fear and/or hatred of homosexual/ bisexual/transgender people shown by prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence. Violence and propaganda which willfully promotes hatred or violence against people based on their sexual orientation is considered a hate crime under the Criminal Code of Canada. Legislation is currently pending to include gender identity and expression as a hate crime.

Intersex

The reproductive, sexual or genetic biology of a person is unclear, not exclusively male or female or otherwise does not fit within traditional definitions of male or female.

Lesbian

A female who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to females.

Pansexual

A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of any gender or sex.

Polyamory

Having more than one sexual loving relationship at the same time with all other consenting partners involved.

Queer

A reclaimed term used by some people who identify as sexual and/or gender diverse and also used as a positive, inclusive term to describe communities and social movements.

Questioning

A person who is exploring, or is unsure of, their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sex

Categories (male, female) to which people are typically assigned at birth and may appear on proof of identity documents, unless a person has documentation changed.

Sexism

Prejudice or discrimination based on sex; especially: discrimination against woman. Behaviour, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of roles based on sex, gender identity or gender expression.

Sexual Orientation

Describes a person's emotional and/or sexual attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation is NOT the same thing. For many, their sexual orientation can be fluid and may change over time. Sexual orientation may or may not reflect sexual behaviours.

Straight (Heterosexual)

A self-identified term for a person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of the opposite sex or gender, to their own. This is also called heterosexual.

Transgender (Trans, Trans-identified)

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Not all people identify as transgender and some people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.

Transition

The process of a transgender individual who publicly changes their gender presentation in society is known as "transitioning". Transgender people may choose from a range of changes to express their gender such as:

- Change of name and use of pronouns
- Expression e.g. clothing, jewellery, mannerisms, voice, and vocabulary
- Anatomy and physiology, which can include hormones, surgery, or gender confirming surgery, i.e. male to female or female to male

The journey of transition is unique to each individual. Not everyone who considers themselves transgender will undergo all of the changes listed above.

Transsexual

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. This term has been most often associated with someone who has undergone some medical and/or surgical procedures. Although still preferred by some, unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is NOT an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word *transgender*. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

They/Them

A non-gendered, singular or plural personal pronoun.

Two-Spirit (2S)

A cultural term used by some Indigenous people to mean a person who has both a male and female spirit which may include concepts of spirituality, sexual orientation and gender identity.