

DEFINITIONS

These words are social constructs developed over time. New language is constantly formed to unite community members as well as divide groups by experience, politics, and other group memberships. These terms and definitions are not standardized and may be used differently by different people and in different regions. Labels and identities are reported by an individual, not assumed. Biology does not always equal identity. Behaviour does not always equal identity.

Androgyne: a person who does not fit cleanly into the typical masculine and feminine gender roles of their society. They may also use the term *ambigender* to describe themselves. Many androgynes identify as being mentally "between" woman and man, or as entirely genderless. They may class themselves as *non-gendered*, *genderneutral*, *agendered*, between genders, *intergendered*, *bigendered*, 'pangender' or *genderfluid*.

Asexual: a word describing a person who is not sexually and/or romantically active, or not sexually and/or romantically attracted to other persons.

Autosexual: a word describing a person whose significant sexual involvement is with oneself or a person who prefers masturbation to sex with a partner.

Biphobia: irrational fear or dislike of bisexuals. Bisexuals may be stigmatized by heterosexuals, lesbians and gay men. There is considerable overlap between *biphobia* and *homophobia*, and bi people often experience the effects of both.

Bi-positive: the opposite of biphobia. A bi-positive attitude is one that validates, affirms, accepts, appreciates, celebrates and integrates bisexual people as unique and special in their own right.

Bisexual: a word describing a person whose sexual orientation is directed toward men and women, though not necessarily at the same time.

Cisgendered: having a gender-identity that is congruent with one's biological sex (i.e. both biological sex and gender-identity are female)

Closeted / In the closet: a slang term that refers to the state of being secretive about one's true gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Coming out: the process by which LGBTTTIQ people acknowledge and disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity, or in which transsexual or transgendered people acknowledge and disclose their gender identity, to themselves and others (see also "Transition"). Coming out is thought to be an ongoing process. People who are "closeted" or "in the closet" hide the fact that

they are LGBTTTIQ. Some people “come out of the closet” in some situations (e.g., with other gay friends) and not in others (e.g., at work).

Crossdresser: a person who dresses in the clothing of the other sex for recreation, expression or art, or for erotic gratification. Formerly known as “transvestites.” Crossdressers may be male or female, and can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. Gay/bisexual male crossdressers may be “drag queens” or female impersonators; lesbian/bisexual female crossdressers may be “drag kings” or male impersonators. The term may also apply to persons who, for emotional and psychological well-being, dress in clothing usually associated with the other sex.

Cultural homophobia: refers to the social standards, norms and attitudes held by each culture and society that promote the notion that homosexuality is wrong or unnatural.

Discrimination: prejudice plus the use of power. Discrimination can take many forms, including ageism, racism, classism, heterosexism, Islamophobia, sexism, ableism, ethnocentrism, etc. Many acts of discrimination build up over time, perpetuated against one relatively less powerful social group by a more powerful social group, leading to a group of people being in a state of oppression.

Domestic violence: any use of physical, sexual or psychological force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship. Although both women and men can be victims of domestic violence, the overwhelming majority of violence involves men abusing women.

Drag King / Drag Queen: to do “Drag” means to assume the dress and mannerisms of the other sex for performance purposes only. A *Drag Queen* is usually a man performing as a woman; likewise, a *Drag King* is a woman performing as a man; usually also identify as LGBTTTIQ, but not necessarily. When in character, Drag Queens and Kings prefer the pronouns that correspond with their *gender presentation* at that time, e.g. “she” or “her” for Drag Queen.

Dyke: a word traditionally used as a derogatory term for lesbians. Other terms include lezzie, lesbo, butch, bull dyke and diesel dyke. Many women have reclaimed these words and use them proudly to describe their identity.

Fag: a word traditionally used as a derogatory term for gay men. Other terms include fruit, faggot, queen, fairy, pansy, sissy and homo. Many men have reclaimed these words and use them proudly to describe their identity.

Family of choice: the circle of friends, partners, companions and perhaps ex-partners with which many LGBTTTIQ people surround themselves. This group gives the support, validation and sense of belonging that is often unavailable from the person’s family of origin.

Family of origin: the biological family or the family that was significant in a person's early development.

Femininity: refers to qualities and behaviours judged by a particular culture to be ideally and/or traditionally associated with or especially appropriate to women and girls.

Femiphobia: irrational fear, hatred or negative attitudes towards femininity. The valuing of masculinity over femininity, including fear, hatred and negative attitudes towards males who may express themselves in ways perceived to be feminine.

Gay: a word to describe a person whose primary sexual orientation is to members of the same sex or who identifies as a member of the gay community. This word can refer to men and women, although many women prefer the term "lesbian."

Gay-positive: the opposite of homophobia. A gay-positive attitude is one that affirms, accepts, appreciates, celebrates and integrates gay and lesbian people as unique and special in their own right.

Gay bashing: physical, mental and/or sexual violence perpetuated against LGBTTTIQ persons or those perceived to be.

Gender: is socially constructed and is based on societal expectations of how a person should behave based on their sex.

Gender-based violence: any practice that operates on a societal imbalance of power and control based on social constructions of gender, gender expression, sexual behaviour and sexual orientation that upholds traditional male power. It includes biphobia, transphobia and homophobia, heterosexism, genderism and sexism, gendered emotional and psychological abuse, sexual assault, exploitation, harassment and misconduct, domestic violence, forced prostitution, female genital cutting, etc.

Gender bending: a slang term used mostly within the LGBTTTIQ subculture; refers to challenging the boundaries of socially prescribed norms of what is "typically" male and female through physical appearance, dress and/or behaviour.

Gender conforming: abiding by society's gender rules, e.g., a woman dressing, acting, relating to others and thinking of herself as feminine or as a woman.

Gender identity: linked to a person's sense of self, it is a person's own identification of being male, female, intersex, masculine, feminine, transgendered, transsexual, or genderqueer among

many terms, including: pre-op transsexual, post-op transsexual, non-op transsexual, crossdresser, transvestite, transgendered, two-spirit, intersex, hermaphrodite, fem male, gender blender, butch, manly woman, diesel dyke, sex radical, androgynist, etc.

Genderqueer: this very recent term was coined by people who experience a very fluid sense of both their gender identity and their sexual orientation, and who do not want to be constrained by absolute or static concepts. Instead, they prefer to be open to relocate themselves on the gender and sexual orientation continuums.

Gender role / presentation / expression: the public expression of gender identity. Gender role includes everything people do to show the world they are male, female, androgynous or ambivalent. It includes sexual signals, dress, hairstyle and manner of walking. In society, gender roles are often expected to be masculine for men and feminine for women.

Gender transition: the period during which some transsexual persons begin changing their appearance and bodies to match their internal identity.

Genderism: the belief that the binary construct of gender, in which there are only two genders (male and female), is the most normal, natural and preferred gender identity. This binary construct does not include or allow for people to be intersex, transgendered, transsexual or genderqueer.

Hate crimes: offences that are motivated by hatred against victims based on their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Hegemony: the dominance or leadership of one social group over others. The ideas of the ruling class come to be seen as the norm; they are seen as universal ideologies, perceived to benefit everyone whilst only really benefiting the ruling class.

Heterosexism: the assumption, expressed overtly and/or covertly, that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression that reinforces silence and invisibility for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Heterosexual: term used to describe a person whose primary sexual orientation is to members of the other sex. Heterosexual people are often referred to as "straight."

Heterosexual privilege: the unrecognized and assumed privileges that people have if they are heterosexual. Examples of heterosexual privilege include: holding hands or kissing in public without fearing threat, not questioning the normalcy of your sexual orientation, raising children

without fears of state intervention or worries that your children will experience discrimination because of your heterosexuality.

Homophobia: irrational fear, hatred, prejudice or negative attitudes toward homosexuality and people who are gay or lesbian. Homophobia can take overt and covert, as well as subtle and extreme, forms. Homophobia includes behaviours such as jokes, name-calling, exclusion, gay bashing, etc.

Homosexual: a term to describe a person whose primary sexual orientation is to members of the same sex. Some people prefer to not use this label, preferring to use other terms, such as gay or lesbian.

Identity: how one thinks of oneself, as opposed to what others observe or think about one.

Institutional homophobia: refers to the ways in which different institutions in society such as government, educational systems, religion, businesses and other organizations and systems discriminate against LGBTTTIQ people. These are the systems and institutions in society that make the laws, set policies, allocate resources, and shape people's attitudes and behaviours.

Internalized homophobia: fear and self-hatred of one's own sexual orientation that occurs for many lesbians and gay men as a result of heterosexism and homophobia. Once lesbians and gay men realize that they belong to a group of people that is often despised and rejected in our society, some internalize and incorporate this stigmatization, and fear or hate themselves.

Internalized oppression: "buying into" the elements of oppression by the target group. When target group members believe the stereotypes they are taught about themselves, they tend to act them out and thus perpetuate the stereotypes, which reinforce the prejudice and keep the cycle going.

Intersex: a person who has male and female genetic and/or physical sex characteristics. Formerly called "hermaphrodites." Many intersex people consider themselves to be part of the trans community. About 4% of children in North America are born intersex. In most cases, birth doctors decide on the sex of the newborn through a "corrective" surgery, sometimes without the parents' knowledge or consent, thinking it would coincide with the "chosen" gender. For many intersex persons it is not physically visible, and they are unaware of this until later in life, when they begin to question their gender identity.

Lesbian: a female whose primary sexual orientation is to other women or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community.

LGBTTTIQ: a common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered, two-spirit, intersex and queer individuals/communities. This acronym may or may not be used in a particular community. For example, in some places, the acronym LGBT (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered/transsexual) may be more common.

MSM: refers to any man who has sex with a man, whether he identifies as gay, bisexual or heterosexual. This term highlights the distinction between sexual behaviour and sexual identity. A person's sexual behaviour may manifest itself into a sexual identity, but the reverse is not always true; sexual orientation is not always reflective of sexual behaviour. For example, a man may call himself heterosexual, but may engage in sex with men in certain situations (e.g., prison, sex work).

Masculinity: refers to qualities and behaviours judged by a particular culture to be ideally and/or traditionally associated with or especially appropriate to men and boys.

Matriarchy (or gynococracy): refers to a gynocentric form of society, in which the leading role is taken by the women and especially by the mothers of a community. There is no clear evidence of matriarchal societies existing in the world in either the past or the present.

Misogyny: hatred of women.

Oppression: the systematic control of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power. This results in benefits for one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices. Because oppression is institutionalized in our society, target group members often believe the messages and internalize the oppression.

Out or **Out of the closet:** varying degrees of being open about one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Outing: deliberately disclosing a sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual who has chosen to keep it private, without their wishes or consent.

Passing: describes transgendered or transsexual people's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender. The term refers primarily to acceptance by people the individual does not know, or who do not know that the individual is transgendered or transsexual. Typically, passing involves a mix of physical gender cues (e.g., clothing, hairstyle, voice), behaviour, manner and conduct when interacting with others. Passing can also refer to hiding one's sexual orientation, as in "passing for straight."

Patriarchy: the traditionally dominant form of social organization or government, etc. in which man or men rule and descent is reckoned through the male line resulting in a disproportionately large share of power.

Pansexual: a sexual orientation, characterized by the potential for attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire towards people, regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Gender identity, gender expression, and sex may be irrelevant or key factors of attractions. This is different from *bisexuality* which is attraction to males and females.

Polyamory: the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved.

Polysexual: refers to people who are attracted to more than one gender or sex but do not wish to identify as bisexual because it implies that there are only two binary genders or sexes. This should not be confused with pansexuality; *pan* meaning *all*, and *poly* meaning *many*, though not necessarily all.

Prejudice: A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members. When the person holding the prejudice also has and uses the power to deny opportunities, resources or access to a person because of their group membership, there is discrimination.

Queer: traditionally, a derogatory and offensive term for LGBTTTIQ people. Many LGBTTTIQ people have reclaimed this word and use it proudly to describe their identity. Some transsexual and transgendered people identify as queers; others do not.

Queerspawn: a self-identifying term for a child with queer parent(s).

Questioning: people who are questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation and who may choose to explore options.

Reclaiming: a process of re-appropriation of certain terms used by the dominant culture to oppress minorities. The LGBTTTIQ community has gradually reclaimed such terms as *queer* and *dyke* as an act of resistance and self-empowerment, which takes away from the negative power and meaning of these terms.

SRS: Sex-reassignment surgery is a series of surgical procedures through which trans people can alter their genitals and bodies to match their internal gender. The high cost of these procedures prevents them from being universally accessible.

Self-identifying: in the context of sexual diversity and gender identity this term refers to people's own choice of how they want to be identified, as opposed to being labelled by society or others. This is a particular issue for trans folks whose right and need to self-identify is seldom respected. It is best not to attempt to identify someone based on your assumptions, but rather let people let you know how they want to be identified.

Sex / Biological Sex: includes external genitalia, internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, and fat distribution. These characteristics are objective in that they can be seen and measured (with appropriate technology). Sex is a scale that consists not just of two categories (male and female) but is actually a continuum, with most people existing somewhere near one end or the other. The space more in the middle is occupied by intersex persons.

Sexism: all attitudes, procedures and patterns – economic, social and cultural – whose effect, though not necessarily whose conscious intention, is to create, maintain and extend the power, influence and privilege of males and/or masculinity over females and/or femininity.

Sexting: the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones. This could be sexual harassment, if without the consent of the other party.

Sexual abuse: refers to the use of a child or youth by an adult for sexual purposes whether consensual or not. Sexual abuse can also occur among children or youth where there is a lack of consent, or, among children even with consent, where there is an age gap of more than two years.

Sexual assault: an assault which is committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated.

Sexual behaviour: what people do sexually. Not necessarily congruent with sexual orientation and/or sexual identity.

Sexual exploitation: is the sexual abuse of people through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life and/or money.

Sexual identity: one's identification to self (and others) of one's sexual orientation. Not necessarily congruent with sexual orientation and/or sexual behaviour.

Sexual minorities: include people who identify as LGBTTTIQ and who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sexual orientation: a term for the emotional, physical, romantic, sexual and spiritual attraction, desire or affection for another person. Examples include asexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality. Sexual orientation is much more accurately viewed as an attraction continuum that includes a range of gender identities, expressions and biological sexes.

Stalking: to pursue a person obsessively and to the point of harassment.

Stereotype: a preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. While often negative, stereotypes may also be perceived as complimentary. However, even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact simply because they are broad generalizations that do not respect the individual. The stereotypes we hold form the basis of our prejudice.

Straight: a term often used to describe people who are heterosexual.

Trans and transpeople: are terms that usually include transsexual, transgendered and other gender independent/non-conforming people.

Transgendered: a person whose gender identity is different from their biological sex. Also, it is often used as an umbrella term to include transsexuals, crossdressers, two-spirit, intersex and transgendered people.

Transition: the process (which for some people may also be referred to as the "gender reassignment process") whereby some transsexual people change their appearance and bodies to match their internal (gender) identity, while living their lives full-time in their preferred gender role.

Transphobia: irrational fear or dislike of transsexual and transgendered people.

Trans-positive: the opposite of transphobia. A transpositive attitude is one that validates, affirms, accepts, appreciates, celebrates and integrates transsexual and transgendered people as unique and special in their own right.

Transsexual: a term for a person who has an intense long-term experience of being the sex other to his or her birth-assigned sex, and who typically pursues a medical and legal transformation to become the other sex. There are transmen (female-to-male transsexuals) and transwomen (male-to-female transsexuals). Transsexual people may undergo a number of procedures to bring their body and public identity in line with their self-image, including sex hormone therapy, electrolysis treatments, sex reassignment surgeries and legal changes of name and sex status.

Transvestite: a term that was used to describe a person who dresses in clothing of the other sex. See "Crossdresser."

Two-spirit: an English term coined to reflect specific cultural words used by First Nation and other indigenous peoples for those in their cultures who are gay or lesbian, are transgendered or transsexual, or have multiple gender identities. Historically, two-spirit persons were spiritual leaders and healers and revered by their community.

WSW: refers to any woman who has sex with a woman, whether she identifies as lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. This term highlights the distinction between sexual behaviour and sexual identity. For example, women who identify as lesbian can also have sex with men, and not all WSW identify as lesbian or bisexual.