

# 2021 GLOSSARY



**BRAVO**

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization A Division of Equitas Health



# BRAVO GLOSSARY

**When reading this glossary, here are a few things to keep in mind:**

- Definitions vary across communities; not all LGBTQ+ individuals utilize or identify with the following definitions.
- Mirror and use terms that LGBTQ+ individuals use for themselves and ask for consent before sharing with others.
- BRAVO will update this glossary as needed to reflect the ever-changing nature of language and will continue to add new and commonly used terms.

**Agender:** A person who identifies as not having a gender or being genderless. They can exist outside of the gender binary, be gender non-conforming, and/or identify as transgender.

**Allosexual (Allo):** Experiencing sexual attraction to others.

**Androgynous or Androgyne:** A person whose gender expression and/or identity is between, across, or outside of the binary and/or does not conform to gender norms.

**Aromantic (Aro):** Experiencing little to no romantic attraction towards others.

**Asexual (Ace):** Experiencing little to no sexual attraction to others or only experiencing sexual attraction in specific circumstances.

**Assigned Sex (assigned sex at birth):** The sex assigned to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy and commonly referred to as female, male, and intersex. Sex characteristics (i.e., external and internal anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes) develop in individual bodies in diverse ways and are not as definitive, or binary, as the categories of male and female suggest.

**Binding:** The process of tightly wrapping one's chest in order to minimize the size of one's chest.

**Biphobia:** A range of negative attitudes, feelings, and fears towards bisexual people or bisexuality, which may include negative stereotyping or denial of the existence of bisexuality.

**Bisexual (Bi):** A person who is attracted to more than one gender.

**Bottom Surgery:** Colloquial way of describing gender-affirming genital surgery.

**Cisgender (Cis):** A person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth align in culturally expected ways (e.g., someone assigned male at birth and identifies as a man).

**Cis Man:** Someone who identifies as cisgender and as a man.

**Cisnormativity:** Systemic or individual behaviors that support the belief that cisgender is the only “normal” way to identify. The assumption that everyone is cisgender or should be.

**Cis Woman:** Someone who identifies as cisgender and as a woman.

**Closeted:** A person who is keeping their sexual orientation and/or gender identity a secret from themselves or others. Often used in a derogatory or disempowering way.

**Coming Out:** Publicly and/or privately communicating your sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Demiromantic:** Experiencing little to no romantic attraction until forming a close emotional bond with someone.

**Demisexual:** Experiencing little to no sexual attraction until forming a strong emotional connection with someone.

**Drag:** The theatrical performance of one or multiple genders. Performers typically identify as Drag Kings and/or Drag Queens.

**Dyke:** A masculine presenting lesbian. While often used in a derogatory way, some in the LGBTQ+ community have reclaimed the term as a way to self-identify.

**Female:** One of the sex categories assigned to newborns based on observed biological characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, and genitalia.

**Femme:** A person who identifies as feminine (physically, mentally, and/or emotionally).

**Femmephobia:** The fear, aversion, hatred, and de-valuing of anything and anyone that is considered feminine, regardless of gender identity.

**Gay:** A sexual orientation that is most often associated with men who are attracted to men, though some people use gay interchangeably with other sexual orientations.

**Gender:** How the dominant culture socially constructs and reinforces masculinity and femininity through norms, scripts, and stereotypes.

**Gender Affirming Surgery (GAS):** Surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with their gender identity. Also referred to as gender confirming surgery (GCS).

**Gender Affirming Care:** An array of procedures and treatments that transition one’s body to be more congruent with their gender identity. This can encompass, but is not limited to, surgery or hormone therapy.

**Gender Binary:** Describes the system in which a society classifies people into one of two categories (men and women) each with associated norms, scripts, and stereotypes.

**Gender Dysphoria:** Medical terminology used to diagnose distress experienced by some individuals whose gender identity does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) includes gender dysphoria as a diagnosis. While many transgender individuals experience gender dysphoria, there are many who do not.

**Gender Expression:** How a person presents their gender. This can include, but is not limited to, behavior and appearance, such as clothing, hairstyle, makeup, body language, mannerisms, and voice.

**Gender Fluid:** Someone who moves between socially constructed binary genders and whose gender identity and/or expressions vary over time.

**Gender Identity:** An internal sense of awareness that all people have. For most, it can be described as a kind of “man-ness,” “woman-ness,” a combination of both, or neither. Gender is not limited to two categories; gender is not binary.

**Gender Non-Binary & Genderqueer:** Umbrella terms used to describe someone whose gender identity and/or expression does not conform to the socially constructed gender binary.

**Gray-romantic:** a romantic orientation on the aromantic spectrum. Relates to rarely experiencing romantic attraction.

**Gray-sexual:** A sexual orientation on the asexual spectrum. Relates to rarely experiencing sexual attraction.

**Heterosexism:** Systemic, institutional, or individual behaviors, assumptions, and rules that grant preferential treatment to heterosexual people. Heterosexism reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better, or more “right,” and that heterosexual is the only normal sexual orientation.

**Homophobia:** The systemic and individual oppression of people whose sexual orientation does not conform to heterosexual. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings, such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards people whose sexual orientation does not conform to (or is not perceived to conform to) heterosexuality.

**Homosexual:** A clinical term for people who are attracted to the same gender. Some people find this term offensive because it was historically a diagnosis used to misrepresent queerness as a curable disease.

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** The administration of hormones for those who wish to align their physical secondary sex characteristics to their gender identity.

**Identity Formation:** A complex process in which an individual develops a clear view of themselves and their identity. Sometimes known as identity construction or identity development.

**Intersectionality:** The idea that oppression intersects based on overlapping social and political identities, including but not limited to, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality/sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, disability, national origin, etc. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, a pioneering Black feminist scholar, originated the term in 1989. Intersectionality identifies the relationships between multiple forms of discrimination and considers those relationships when working to promote equity.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term used to describe people who have chromosomes, hormone profiles, or genitals that do not fit into the typical binary medical and social constructions of male and female. Biological sex, like gender, is not binary. About 1.7% of the population is born with intersex traits - comparable to the number of people born with red hair.

**Lesbian:** A sexual orientation that is most often associated with women who are attracted to women.

**LGBTQ+:** The LGBTQ+ acronym includes gender identities as well as identities related to sexual orientation. Fully spelled out the acronym contains lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, with the plus indicating more identities, including (but not limited to) asexual, intersex, pansexual, and two-spirit.

**Male:** One of the categories assigned to newborns based on sex characteristics, such as hormones, chromosomes, and genitalia.

**Minority stress:** Chronic stress faced by members of stigmatized minority groups. Caused by external, objective events and conditions, expectations of such events, the internalization of societal attitudes, and/or concealing one's sexual orientation.

**Monoromantic:** Experiencing romantic attraction to only one gender.

**Monosexism:** Systemic or individual behaviors, assumptions, or rules that grant preferential treatment to monosexual people. Monosexism reinforces the idea that monosexuality is somehow more "right" than bisexuality or pansexuality and/or ignores the existence of bisexuality and pansexuality.

**Monosexual:** Experiencing sexual attraction to only one gender.

**Neutrois:** A non-binary gender, such as gender neutral or null gender, also used to mean genderless and has considerable overlap with agender identity.

**Outing:** A harmful practice of someone revealing another person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or intersex identity to an individual or group without the individual's explicit consent or approval.

**Pansexual:** A person who is attracted sexually, romantically, and/or physically to people regardless of gender. This identity can take many different forms, including people who identity across various sexual orientations. This term can have different meanings to different people and often positions itself as different from bisexual, polysexual, and polyamorous.

**Polyamorous (Poly or Polyam):** A person who has, or is open to having, more than one romantic or sexual relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of all their partners.

**Pronouns:** Gendered words people use in reference to a person without using their name. (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hir, e/em/eirs, etc.).

**QTPOC:** An acronym that stands for Queer and Trans People of Color. May also see as QPOC (Queer People of Color) or TPOC (Trans People of Color).

**Queer:** An umbrella term used to describe LGBTQ+ sexual orientations and/or gender identities. Historically used as a derogatory term for people who were, or perceived to be, LGBTQ+. Many LGBTQ+ people have reclaimed the term as a way of self-identifying or making a political statement against oppression. Typically used within the LGBTQ+ communities.

**Queer Platonic Relationship (QPR):** Describes a very intimate friendship or partnership that does not fit the definition of a traditional romantic coupling but nonetheless can be intense, emotionally intimate, and even romantically intimate.

**Romantic Orientation:** The ways that people experience romantic and emotional attractions. These may be separate from or connected to sexual and/or physical attraction. Sexual orientation and romantic orientation are not necessarily distinct identities; they may be interrelated.

**Same Gender Loving (SGL):** An alternative to the terms gay and lesbian. SGL is more commonly, but not exclusively, used by members of the African American/Black community.

**Sexual Expression (sexual behavior):** The variety of ways a person expresses their sexuality, including sexual activities in which they like to participate. It is not the same as sexual orientation. Knowing a person's sexual expression does not mean we know their sexual orientation.

**Sexuality:** A complex set of personal, social, and spiritual experiences that go beyond sexual activity. In other words, sexuality is not only about what we do with our bodies. It is also how we experience and express our thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships.

**Sexual Orientation:** A person's emotional, romantic, physical, and/or sexual attraction to others. Attraction is complex and can manifest very differently for different people. Categories commonly used to understand our attractions are by no means inclusive of the vast variety of expressions that make up human sexuality. Sexual orientation may be separate from or connected to romantic attraction. Sexual orientation and romantic orientation are not necessarily distinct identities; they may be interrelated.

**Sexual Preference:** The types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification in which one likes to participate. It is critical not to use this term as a synonym for sexual orientation. Doing so perpetuates the harmful and incorrect notion that sexual orientation is a choice.

**Skoliosexual:** Experiencing sexual attraction primarily to genderqueer, non-binary, and/or transgender individuals.

**Social Stigma:** Negative stereotypes and social status of a person or group based on perceived characteristics, separating that person or group from other members of society.

**Structural Stigma:** Societal conditions, policies, and institutional practices that restrict the opportunities, resources, and well-being of certain groups of people.

**Third Gender:** An umbrella term used to describe people who exist outside of the gender binary. For some people, it means the construction of a new gender.

**Top surgery:** Colloquial way of describing gender-affirming surgery on the chest.

**Trans-feminine:** Someone who identifies as transgender and feminine.

**Transgender (Trans):** People whose gender identity and assigned sex do not align in culturally expected ways. It is an internal identity and not something you can tell or determine in someone else.

**Transition:** The process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes or interventions, such as changing their clothing, name, or gender marker. Sometimes referred to as “gender affirmation process.”

**Trans Man:** Someone who identifies as transgender and a man.

**Trans-masculine:** Someone who identifies as transgender and masculine.

**Transmisogyny:** The intersection of transphobia and misogyny that is directed at trans women, trans people, and gender non-conforming feminine people. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings, such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards trans and gender non-conforming people who either identify as women and/or identify as femme/feminine. Transmisogyny exists both outside and within the LGBTQ+ community.

**Transphobia:** The systemic and individual oppression of people whose gender identity and gender expression do not conform to cisgender identities. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings, such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards transgender, gender non-binary, gender diverse, and gender non-conforming people.

**Trans Woman:** Someone who identifies as transgender and a woman.

**Tucking:** The process of hiding one’s penis and testes with tape, tight shorts, or specially designed undergarments.

**Two-Spirit:** An umbrella term that encompasses several understandings of gender and sexuality among many Indigenous North Americans — has its roots in traditions and cultures that are centuries old.

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO), a division of Equitas Health, developed this glossary. We update this resource continuously as language changes over time. Sources currently include the National LGBT Health Education Center, We Are Family, and The Trevor Project.



# TERMS TO AVOID

Please note, we have listed derogatory terms that should be avoided, have explained why they are problematic, and have listed the affirming terminology that should be used. We do not speak for everyone in the LGBTQ+ community; definitions as well as what is considered problematic will differ among communities and even individuals. It is important to mirror the language that people use for themselves. If you are unsure of what term to use, just ask.

**Problematic:** transgender, a transgender

**Affirming:** transgender people, a transgender person

Transgender is as an adjective, not a noun. Do not say, "Max is a transgender," or "The pride parade included many transgenders." Instead, say, "Max is a transgender man," or "The pride parade included many transgender people."

**Problematic:** transgendered

**Affirming:** transgender

The adjective transgender should never have an extraneous "-ed" tacked onto the end. An "-ed" suffix turns the word into a verb and implies that it is something done to someone, rather than a descriptor for a person's gender identity. It is grammatically correct to refer to transgender people in the present tense, which recognizes and affirms their identity as an adjective, not a verb.

**Problematic:** sex change, pre-operative, post-operative

**Affirming:** transition, gender affirming healthcare

Avoid "sex change" which suggests that individuals change sex or gender rather than affirming their own gender through healthcare options. Referring to surgeries as pre- or post-operative inaccurately suggests that one must have surgery in order to transition and affirm their gender. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people.

**Problematic:** homosexual, homosexuals

**Affirming:** gay

Historically, people used the term "homosexual" in a negative context to diagnose or demonize LGBTQ people. Anti-gay extremists often use the term to suggest that gay people are mentally ill or unhealthy.



**Problematic:** sexual preference

**Affirming:** sexual orientation

The term “sexual preference” implicitly and explicitly suggests that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc., is a choice that can and should be “cured.” Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual’s physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to others.

**Problematic:** gay lifestyle, homosexual lifestyle

**Affirming:** gay culture, LGBTQ+ culture

There is no single lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc., lifestyle. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual individuals lead their lives in infinitely diverse ways. The phrase “gay lifestyle” denigrates LGBTQ+ individuals, suggesting that their orientation is a choice that can and should be “cured.”

**Problematic:** gay marriage, same-sex marriage

**Affirming:** marriage

As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion, or relationship as “gay,” “lesbian,” or “bisexual” unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship “straight” or “heterosexual.”





## NAMES & PRONOUNS

- **Always use a person’s chosen name.**

There are many reasons why someone’s legal name may be different from their chosen name. Legal name changes can take time, money, and resources to process. Therefore, some transgender and non-binary folks do not or cannot change their names legally. Others may not want to change their legal name. Transgender and non-binary individuals deserve respect and safety. Therefore using chosen names is important.

- **Whenever possible, introduce yourself with pronouns and ask for others.**

Introducing yourself with pronouns lets other people, especially transgender and non-binary people, know that you respect people regardless of their gender or pronouns. No matter someone’s gender expression or gender identity, using someone’s pronouns is respectful, affirming, and can be closely connected to personal safety. For example, “My name is Max, and I use he/him pronouns”.

- **Never put quotation marks around someone’s chosen name or pronouns.**

When describing transgender or non-binary people, use accurate and affirming language to describe their gender identity.

- **Remember that sex and gender are different.**

Avoid terms that conflate sex and gender, such as “biological woman” or “man-born-man.” This language is exclusionary and discriminatory to transgender people and intersex individuals. Remember, affirm someone’s present-day/present-tense identity and reflect the language that they use for themselves. For example, transgender women are women, no matter the sex or gender assigned to them at birth.

# GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Gender Pronoun Usage Table

	Subject	Object	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
<b>Feminine</b>	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
<b>Masculine</b>	He	Him	His	His	Himself
<b>Gender Neutral</b>	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
<b>Gender Neutral</b>	Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
<b>Spivak</b>	E	Em	Eir	Eirs	Emself

Gender Neutral Pronunciation Guide

Ze	Hir	Hirs	Hirself	E	Em	Eir	Eirs	Emself
/zee/	/here/	/heres/	/hereself/	/ee/	/em/	/air/	/airs/	/emself/



# COMMONLY USED DEFAMATORY TERMS & SLURS

*Disclaimer: Some LGBTQ+ communities and individuals have reclaimed slurs or derogatory language for themselves. Never use the language below for anyone without their explicit consent.*

**Defamatory:** deceptive, fooling, pretending, posing, masquerading

Gender identity is an integral part of a person's identity. Do not characterize transgender people as "deceptive," as "fooling" other people, or as "pretending" to be, "posing" or "masquerading" as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are defamatory and insulting.

**Defamatory:** she-male, he-she, it, trannie, tranny, shim, gender-bender

Do not use these words as they only serve to dehumanize transgender people.

**Defamatory:** fag, faggot, dyke, queer, homo, sodomite

The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups.

**Defamatory:** deviant, disordered, dysfunctional, diseased, perverted, destructive

The American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association discredited the notion that being gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc., is a psychological disorder in the 1970s. Today, people use words, such as "deviant," "diseased," and "disordered" to portray LGBTQ+ people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society.

**Associating LGBTQ+ people with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, or bestiality**

Being LGBTQ+ is neither synonymous with nor indicative of sexual violence. Such claims, innuendoes, and associations insinuate that LGBTQ+ people pose a threat to society, families, and children in particular. Perpetuating these stereotypes stokes fears that lead to anti-LGBTQ+ violence and discrimination.

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