

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ally: A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other

Asexual: Often called “ace” for short, asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others.

Bisexual: A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one gender, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Cisgender: Someone who identifies as their sex assigned at birth

Closeted: Describes a person who is not open about his or her sexual orientation.

Coming out: A process of self-acceptance that continues throughout one’s life. People establish a gay, lesbian, bi or transgender identity first to themselves and then may reveal it to others. There are many different degrees of being out.

Some may be out to friends only, some may be out publicly, some may be out only to themselves.

Gay: A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Gender expression: A person’s way of showing their gender identity to others through means such as dress and/or manner.

Gender identity: One’s internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (boy or girl), or something in-between. For transgender people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.

Gender nonconforming: A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society.



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Intersex: People with internal and/or external sex characteristics that do not easily fit into the male and female binary.

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.

Preferred pronouns: A third-person pronoun by which an individual wishes to be referred to in order to indicate their gender identity such as "he" "she" or they."

Sexual orientation: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transitioning: A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

Queer: Traditionally a negative term, queer sometimes is used by some people in the GLBT community to describe themselves and/or their community. Some value the term for its defiance, and some like it because it can be inclusive of the entire community. Nevertheless, some within the LGBTQ+ community dislike the term. This word should be avoided unless referring to someone who self-identifies as queer.



Remember that these definitions are just a starting point. The LGBTQ+ community is incredibly diverse, and not all identities are included here. It's okay not to 'know it all.' What truly matters is listening to young people and respecting how they define themselves. Keep the conversation open, inclusive, and full of understanding.