

Inclusive Language

For inclusive language relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, Stonewall's [Glossary of Terms](#) is very comprehensive. A few definitions below have other, named, sources.

Ally - a (typically) straight and/or cis person who supports members of the LGBT community.

Asexual (or ace) - someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

Bi / bisexual - refers to an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Biphobia - the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bi based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about bi people.

Cisgender or Cis – someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

Cisnormativity - the assumption that all, or almost all, individuals are cisgender [The Queer Dictionary]

Cissexism - the belief that transgender people are inherently inferior to cisgender people. Examples of cissexist behaviours include dismissing transgenderism as a phase, mental illness, or cry for attention, or considering transgender people to be "freaks," delusional, or sexual deviants [The Queer Dictionary]

Coming out – when a person first tells someone/others about their identity as lesbian, gay, bi or trans.

Deadnaming - is calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.

Gay – refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Gender – often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender dysphoria – used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender expression – how a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not confirm to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

Genderfluid - moving between genders or having a fluctuating gender identity [Wikipedia]

Gender identity - a person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Genderqueer - A person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders [O.E.D]

Gender reassignment – another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act 2010, and it is further interpreted in the Equality Act 2010 approved code of practice. It is a term of much contention and is one that Stonewall's Trans Advisory Group feels should be reviewed.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) – this enables trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will apply for a GRC and you currently have to be over 18 to apply. You do not need a GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.

Heterosexual / straight - refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of the opposite gender.

Heteronormativity - the belief or assumption that all people are heterosexual, or that heterosexuality is the default or "normal" state of human being [The Queer Dictionary]

Heterosexism - the idea that heterosexuality is a normal, natural, or superior state of human sexual orientation, and the system of oppression based on that belief. It is very closely related to homophobia and the two ideas tend to coexist.

Homosexual – this might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used.

Homophobia - the fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people. Homophobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bi.

Intersex – a term used to describe a person who may have biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

LGBTQ – the acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer

Lesbian – refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.

Microaggression - a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalised group [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Non-binary – an umbrella term for a person who does not identify as only male or only female, or who may identify as both.

Outed – when a lesbian, gay, bi or trans person’s sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

Person with a trans history – someone who identifies as male or female or a man or woman but was assigned differently at birth. This is increasingly used by people to acknowledge a trans past.

Pansexual - refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by biological sex, gender or gender identity.

Passing - if someone is regarded, at a glance, to be a cisgender man or cisgender woman. Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were ‘assigned’ at birth. This might include physical gender cues (hair or clothing) and/ or behaviour which is historically or culturally associated with a particular gender.

Pronoun – words we use to refer to people’s gender in conversation - for example, ‘he’ or ‘she’. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they / their and ze / zir.

Queer – an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual and/or not cisgender. Queer is also increasingly used to describe non-normative (i.e. anti-heteronormative and anti-homonormative) identities and politics [Wikipedia]

Questioning – the process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sex –assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are interchanged to mean ‘male’ or ‘female’.

Sexual orientation – a person’s emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.

Trans – an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) Transgender, Transsexual, Gender-queer (GQ), Gender-fluid, Non-binary, Gender-variant, Crossdresser, Genderless, Agender, Nongender, Third gender, Two-spirit, Bi-gender, Trans man, Trans woman, Trans masculine, Trans feminine and Neutrois.

Transgender man – a term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman – a term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

Transfeminine - an umbrella term describing individuals who were assigned male at birth but identify on the female side of the gender spectrum. A transfeminine individual may identify with many aspects of femininity but not wish to describe themselves as "a woman" [Wikipedia]

Transitioning – the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

Transmasculine - an umbrella term describing individuals who were assigned female at birth but identify on the male side of the gender spectrum. A transmasculine individual may identify with many aspects of masculinity but not wish to describe themselves as "a man." [Wikipedia]

Transphobia - the fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.

Transsexual – this was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.