

Safe Zone Network: General Education Workshop

Glossary

Last Updated Fall 2017



In thinking about terminology related to the LGBTQ+ community, we agree with this statement by the LGBT Resource Center at UC Riverside: “Each of these definitions has been carefully researched and closely analyzed from theoretical and practical perspectives for cultural sensitivity, common usage, and general appropriateness. We have done our best to represent the most popular uses of the terms listed; however there may be some variation in definitions depending on location. Please note that each person who uses any or all of these terms does so in a unique way (especially terms that are used in the context of an identity label). If you do not understand the context in which a person is using one of these terms, it is always appropriate to ask. This is especially recommended when using terms that we have noted can have a derogatory connotation” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Part 1: Gender and Sexuality As Continua

Gender Identity: “One’s internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s)” (TSER, 2017). There are many different gender identities, and, because it is a person’s *internal* sense of self, you cannot know someone’s gender identity just by looking at them.

Two useful terms when thinking about gender identity are transgender and cisgender:

Transgender (trans): “An umbrella term for people whose gender differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life” (TSER, 2017). A **trans woman** is a person who was assigned male at birth but who identifies as a woman. A **trans man** is a person who was assigned female at birth but who identifies as a man. Some people do not identify strictly as a woman or a man. These individuals may identify as **non-binary** or

agender. See part 3 of the glossary for more information on these identities.

Transgender is an adjective, not a noun. In other words, you would not say that someone is “a transgender” (this is derogatory). Instead, you could say that someone is a transgender *person*. Also note that the word transgender does not have an “-ed” at the end (i.e. you would not say that someone is a “transgendered” person).

Cisgender (cis): A term used to describe a person who identifies with the sex that they were assigned at birth. A **cis woman** is a person who was assigned female at birth and who identifies as a woman. A **cis man** is a person who was assigned male at birth and who identifies as a man. The term cisgender is not a slur. Rather, using the word “cisgender” alongside “transgender” in discussing gender identity challenges the underlying assumption that the terms “woman” and “man” always refer to someone who is not transgender unless otherwise specified.

Cisgender is an adjective, not a noun. In other words, you would not say that someone is “a cisgender.” Instead, you could say that someone is a cisgender person. Also note that the word cisgender does not have an “-ed” at the end (i.e. you would not say that someone is a “cisgendered” person).

Gender Expression/Presentation: “The physical manifestation of one’s gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine or feminine). Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth (TSER, 2017).

People who are **gender non-conforming** present themselves as feminine or masculine outside of societies expectations. Not everyone who is gender non-conforming is transgender. For example, someone who is assigned male at birth and identifies as a man would not be transgender even if he painted his nails and enjoyed wearing more stereotypically feminine clothing. He would be a cisgender gender non-conforming person. Again, you cannot know somebody’s gender *identity* simply based off of their gender *expression*.

Sex Assigned At Birth: The category of female, male, and/or intersex that a person is assigned by medical professionals after they are born based on their anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones. Sometimes this is referred to as “biological sex”; however you should avoid using this language because it implies that a person’s assigned sex is more authentic than the sex they identify

with. This belief can be particularly marginalizing to transgender and intersex people.

Intersex: A term used to describe “someone with a less common combination of hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy that are used to assign sex at birth” (TSER, 2017). There are many different types of intersex conditions, such as Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Klinefelter Syndrome, and Turner Syndrome. In the past, the term “hermaphrodite” was used to describe people who would now be considered intersex; however this term is highly pejorative and should not be used.

In the U.S., children who are intersex must be assigned either female or male on their birth certificate, and some intersex people still undergo medical procedures to “normalize” their body during infancy and early childhood. These practices (which are not medically necessary) are highly controversial and have been criticized by countless intersex activists as being highly traumatic.

Being intersex is **not** the same thing as being transgender; however there are people who are both intersex and transgender.

Dyadic: someone who is not intersex

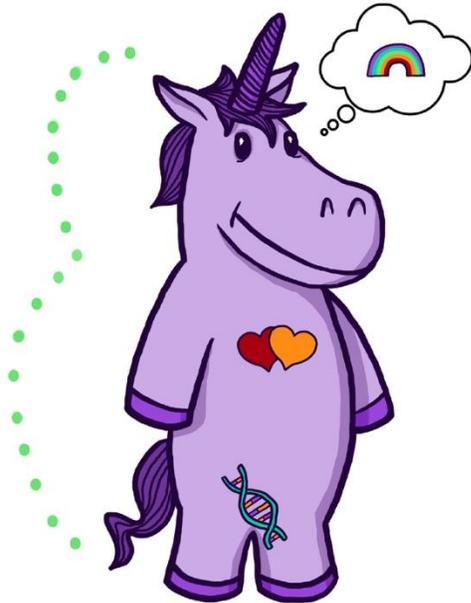
Romantic Orientation: the types of identities, expressions, and sexes that a person is emotionally attracted to. Some people do not experience romantic attraction, or they experience it only under limited circumstances. These individuals might identify as **aromantic** or **demi-romantic** respectively.

Sexual Orientation: the types of identities, expressions, and sexes that a person is sexually attracted to. Some people do not experience sexual attraction, or they experience it only under limited circumstances. These individuals might identify as **asexual** or **demi-sexual** respectively.

To better understand the relationship between these different continua of gender and sexuality, check out this graphic from TSER! Oftentimes, when we think about identity, being cisgender and heterosexual is assumed, placing an undue responsibility on LGBTQA+ people to have to explicitly state our identities. This is an example of cisgender and heterosexual privilege (which you will read more about in Part 2 of this glossary). It is important to remember that everyone exists somewhere on or outside of these continua. Take a moment to fill out the Gender Unicorn as relates to your own identity.

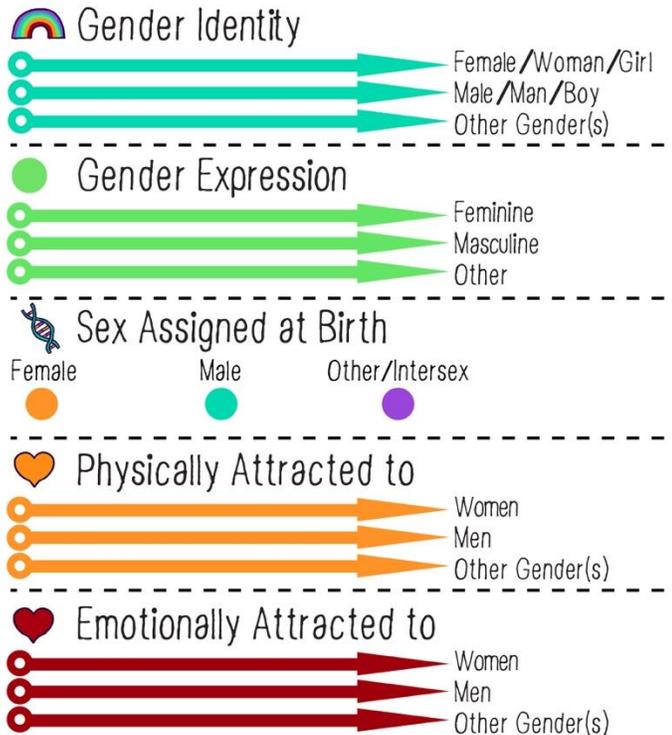
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



Part 2: Understanding Power and Privilege

Privilege: “Unearned access to resources (social power) only readily available to some people as a result of their advantaged social group membership” (Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 2007). People may have privileges based on their race, gender, sexual or romantic orientation, social class, religion, disability status, national origin, or other social markers.

Cisgender privilege: Benefits derived automatically by being cisgender that are denied to transgender and non-binary people.

Heterosexual privilege: Benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people.

Stereotype: “A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. Some stereotypes can be positive. However, they can have a negative impact, simply

because they involve broad generalizations that ignore individual realities" (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Prejudice: "A disposition or attitude (most often negative) toward a particular group" (Martin & Nakayama, 2004).

Discrimination: "Prejudice + power. Discrimination occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally afforded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression" (USC LGBT Resource Center, 2017).

Microaggressions: Brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative [slights and insults towards member(s) of an oppressed group] (Nadal, 2012). Microaggressions are sometimes referred to as "death by paper cuts" to emphasize the way in which these smaller instances of insult accumulate to have significant impacts on members of an oppressed group. (Some) examples of LGBTQ+ microaggressions are:

- Constantly misgendering trans people. It serves to devalue and disrespect their identities and pronouns.
- Saying "you are [some identity], you have a [boyfriend/girlfriend]!" This invalidates people's right to self-identify regardless of their romantic/sexual behavior.
- Introducing people as "my gay best friend." People are made up of more than just their sexual orientation, and many people feel that this reference reduces them to just their sexuality.
- Saying "no homo" and "that's so gay." These phrases devalue LGBTQ+ identities and serve as a way of "othering" those who are not heterosexual and cisgender.

Oppression: "The systematic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society" (Racial Equity Tools, 2017).

Institutional oppression: "Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc." (USC LGBT Resource Center, 2017).

Internalized oppression: “The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes applied to the oppressed group” (USC LGBT Resource Center, 2017).

The following are some of the dynamics that describe and/or contribute specifically to the oppression of LGBTQA+ folx:

Cissexism: “Systematic prejudice in the favor of cisgender people” (TSER, 2017); cissexism is a set of individual, societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that both assume and privilege being cisgender and conforming to traditional binary gender norms.

Heterosexism: “The individual, societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that favor heterosexuality and assume that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, or acceptable sexual orientation. This creates an imbalance in power, which leads to systemic, institutional, pervasive, and routine mistreatment of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals” (UT Austin Gender and Sexuality Center).

Cisnormativity: “The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is cissexual, and that cisgender identities are more normal, valid, and worthy of respect than transgender people’s identities” (Williams, 2017).

Heteronormativity: “The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality, bisexuality, and other sexual orientations” (Williams, 2017).

Transphobia: “Systemic violence against trans people, associated with attitudes such as fear, discomfort, distrust, or disdain” (TSER, 2017). Transphobia can be seen within the LGBTQA+ community, as well as in general society.

Transmisogyny: “Originally coined by the author Julia Serano, this term designates the intersectionality of transphobia and misogyny and how they are often experienced as a form of oppression by trans women” (TSER, 2017).

Homophobia: “The irrational fear, hatred, or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as non-heterosexual, including the fear of being read as part of the ‘gay’ community. Homophobic behavior can range from telling gay jokes, to verbal abuse, to acts of physical violence” (Williams, 2017).

Biphobia: “The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexual, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQIA community, as well as in general society” (Williams, 2017).

HIV-phobia: The irrational fear or hatred of persons living with HIV/AIDS” (Williams, 2017). HIV-phobia can be seen within the LGBTQA+ community, as well as in general society.

Ally: In the most general sense, an ally is “a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in their personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population” (Washington and Evans, *Becoming an Ally*). For LGBTQ+ individuals, allies are people who confront transphobia, biphobia, homophobia, and HIV-phobia alongside among other systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, and xenophobia. Allies challenge heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves and in others. Allyship is an action. Saying that you are an ally to a community is not enough and must be coupled with consistent commitment to dismantling systems of oppression.

Part 3: More Terminology

The following are some commonly used terms that describe different identities and experiences related to gender and sexuality. Part 3a includes terms primarily related to gender identity, gender expression, and assigned sex. Part 3b includes terms primarily related to romantic and sexual attraction. Note that this division is imperfect and that many terms have overlapping meanings across the different continua. Also note that this is not an exhaustive list and that language is always expanding and changing:

Part 3a: Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Assigned Sex

Ag/Aggressive: “A term originating within communities of color to describe a masculine lesbian. Also known as ‘stud’” (Williams, 2017).

AFAB and AMAB: “Acronyms meaning ‘assigned female/male at birth’ (also designated female/male at birth or female/male assigned at birth). No one, whether cis or trans, gets to choose what sex they’re assigned at birth. This term is preferred to ‘biological male/female,’ ‘male/female bodied,’ ‘natal male/female,’ and ‘born male/female,’ which are defamatory and inaccurate” (TSER, 2017).

Agender: “An umbrella term encompassing many different genders of people who commonly do not have a gender and/or have a gender that they describe as neutral. Many agender people are trans” (TSER, 2017).

Androgynous: Neither clearly masculine nor clearly feminine in appearance or identity.

Bigender: “Refers to those who identify as two genders. Can also identify as multigender (identifying as two or more genders. Do not confuse this term with Two-Spirit, which is specifically associated with Native American and First Nations cultures” (TSER, 2017).

Boi: “A term used within queer communities of color to refer to sexual orientation, gender, and/or aesthetic among people assigned female at birth. Boi often designates queer women who present with masculinity (although, this depends on location and usage). This term originated in women of color communities” (TSER, 2017).

Butch: “An identity or presentation that leans towards masculinity. Butch can be an adjective (she’s a butch woman), a verb (he went home to “butch up”), or a noun (they identify as butch). Although commonly associated with masculine queer/lesbian women, it’s used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman or not” (TSER, 2017).

Cisgender: “Someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity assigned to them based on their sex assigned at birth” (Williams, 2017).

Coming Out: May refer to the process by which one accepts one’s own sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status/identity (to “come out” to one’s self). “Coming out” may also refer to the process by which one shares one’s sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status/identity (to “come out” to friends, family, etc.). Coming out is often a continual, lifelong process and can happen at different levels (e.g. a person may be out to their friends, but not to their family).

Cross Dressing: “The act of dressing and presenting as a different gender. One who considers this an integral part of their identity may identify as a cross-dresser. “Transvestite” is often considered a pejorative term with the same meaning. Drag performers are cross-dressing performers who take on stylized, exaggerated gender presentations (although not all drag performers identify as cross-dressers). Cross-dressing and drag are forms of gender expression and are not necessarily tied to erotic activity, nor are they indicative of one’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Do NOT use these terms to describe someone who has transitioned or intends to do so in the future” (TSER, 2017).

Drag: “Exaggerated, theatrical, and/or performative gender presentation. Although most commonly used to refer to cross-dressing performers (drag queens and drag kings), anyone of any gender can do any form of drag. Doing drag does not necessarily have anything to do with one’s sex assigned at birth, gender identity, or sexual orientation” (TSER, 2017).

Dyadic: Someone who is not intersex

Femme: “An identity or presentation that leans towards femininity. Femme can be an adjective (he’s a femme boy), a verb (she feels better when she ‘femmes up’), or a noun (they’re a femme). Although commonly associated with feminine lesbian/queer women, it’s used by many to describe the distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman or not” (TSER, 2017).

Gender Affirming Surgery: “Refers to surgical alteration, and is only one part of some trans people’s transition...Only the minority of transgender people choose to and can afford to have genital surgery. The following terms are inaccurate, offensive, or outdated: sex change operation, gender reassignment/realignment surgery (gender is not changed due to surgery), gender confirmation/confirming surgery (genitalia do not confirm gender), and sex reassignment/realignment surgery (as it insinuates a single surgery is required to transition along with sex being an ambiguous term)” (TSER, 2017).

Gender Dysphoria: “Discomfort or distress caused by one’s assigned sex and the desire to change the characteristics that are the source” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Gender Fluid: “A changing or ‘fluid’ gender identity” (TSER, 2017).

Gender Pronouns: Ways that people refer to themselves and should be referred to as. It is important to not assume someone’s GPs as it allows people to define themselves and not be addressed by terms based on someone else’s assumptions.

Genderqueer: “An identity commonly used by people who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary. Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither male nor female, may see themselves as outside of or in between the binary gender boxes, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels. Many genderqueer people are cigender and identify with it as an aesthetic. Not everyone who identifies as genderqueer identifies as trans or nonbinary” (TSER, 2017).

Intersex: A term used to describe “someone with a less common combination of hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy that are used to assign sex at birth” (TSER, 2017). There are many different types of intersex conditions, such as Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Klinefelter Syndrome, and Turner Syndrome. In the past, the term “hermaphrodite” was used to describe people who would now be considered intersex; however this

term is highly pejorative and should not be used. Being intersex is not the same as being transgender, although there are some people who identify as both intersex and transgender.

In the Closet: “Refers to a homosexual, bisexual, trans person or intersex person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

LGBTQA+: A common abbreviation that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, asexual and aromantic. The “+” is used to make space for other identities that are non-heterosexual and non-cisgender that may not be specifically listed. There are many different iterations of this acronym that may include letters to represent additional identities, such as LGBTQIA+ (I for Intersex) and LGBTTTQQIPPAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Pansexual, Pangender, Asexual, Aromantic).

Masculine of Center: A term originating within communities of color describing people whose gender identity or expression falls towards the masculine end of the gender continua; includes a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboy, trans masculine, etc.” (Williams, 2017).

Non-Binary/Nonbinary: “Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person)” (TSER, 2017). Some people who are non-binary identify as transgender; however not all transgender people are non-binary. There are also people who are cisgender and use the term non-binary to describe their gender expression as opposed to their gender identity.

Outing: “When someone discloses information about another’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their knowledge and/or consent” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Pangender: “used to refer to someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression is numerous, either fixed (many at once) or fluid (moving from one to another, often more than two)” (Genderqueer ID, 2012). The prefix pan- means “all” in Greek; however a person who is pangender might identify with many but not all genders.

Passing: “Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or to be seen as heterosexual” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Polygender: A gender identity of multiple genders, but not necessarily *all* gender possibilities. For instance, a non-indigenous person may choose polygender as an identity to show that they do not identify with *all* genders, which would include Two-Spirit and would be culturally inappropriate for that polygender person to identify with. See *Pangender*.

QTPOC: An acronym that stands for Queer and Trans People of Color.

Queer: “1. An umbrella term that embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex folks as well as the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive communities. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of ‘bisexual’ as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Questioning: “A term that can refer to a person who is questioning their gender, romantic orientation or sexual orientation; people who are questioning may be unsure of their sexuality or gender, or still exploring their options” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Stealth: “This term refers to when a person chooses to be secretive in the public sphere about their gender history, either after transitioning or while successful passing. Also referred to as ‘going stealth’ or ‘living in stealth mode’” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Transgender: “An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end” (TSER, 2017).

Transition: “Used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex with which they identify and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression” (Green and Peterson, 2015). People can transition legally (e.g. changing their name and/or gender marker on identity documents),

medically (e.g. gender confirmation surgery, hormone replacement therapy), and/or socially (e.g. using a new name and/or pronouns, expressing their gender differently than they had). A transgender person does not have to medically transition in order to “really be trans.” Some people experience barriers to different types of transitioning (e.g. not having health insurance coverage for gender confirmation surgery). Others might elect not to legally, medically, and or socially transition. Everyone’s transition is different and all of these experiences are valid and should be respected.

Transfeminine: 1. A term used to describe those who were assigned male at birth, but identify as more female than male.. 2. Those who identify as transfeminine, as opposed to simply as MTF or a woman, trans or otherwise, often place themselves feminine of center. That is, they identify more closely with femaleness than maleness, and generally desire a physical appearance that reflects this identification, but do not identify as wholly female or as a woman. It should be noted that transfeminine is not a descriptor of gender expression but of identity. Transfeminine people do not necessarily have to be stereotypically feminine in their interests or even presentation” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Transmasculine: “1. A term used to describe those who were assigned female at birth, but identify as more male than female. 2. Those who identify as transmasculine, as opposed to simply as FTM or a man identify more closely with maleness than femaleness, and generally desire a physical appearance that reflects this identification, but do not identify as wholly male or as a man. It should be noted that transmasculine is not a descriptor of gender expression but of identity. Transmasculine people do not necessarily have to be stereotypically masculine in their interests or even presentation” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Trans man: “Someone assigned female at birth who identifies as a man. This individual may or may not actively identify as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and man [as trans is an adjective]. Unless explicitly discussing trans issues, it is often good to just use man” (TSER, 2017). Some trans men identify as female-to-male (FTM, F2M); however not all trans men identify with this term. It is always best to ask a person what terminology they identify with instead of assuming.

Trans woman: “Someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman. This individual may or may not actively identify as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and woman [as trans is an adjective]. Unless explicitly discussing trans issues, it is often good to just use woman” (TSER, 2017). Some trans women identify as male-to-female (MTF, M2F); however not all trans women identify with this term. It is always best to ask a person what terminology they identify with instead of assuming. The word

“tr*nny” (the t slur) is frequently applied to trans women; however it is highly derogatory and should not be used.

Transsexual: “A deprecated term that is often considered pejorative similar to transgender in that it indicates a difference between one’s gender identity and sex assigned at birth. Transsexual often – though not always – implicates hormonal/surgical transition from one binary gender (male or female) to the other. Unlike *transgender/trans*, *transsexual* is not an umbrella term, as many transgender people do not identify as transsexual. When speaking/writing about trans people, please avoid the word transsexual unless asked to use it by a transsexual person” (TSER, 2017).

Two-Spirit: An identity created by indigenous people for indigenous people as a way to challenge colonial ways of understanding native gender and sexual expression. It should not be used as an identity by non-indigenous people. Two-Spirit is an identity label that describes gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Other terms might be used within different tribal communities, so always respect a person’s self-identification. Overall, the term two-spirit is generally preferred to “berdache,” which is a word that European settlers used to describe a third gender person (woman-living-man) who is Native American (Poynter, 2016).

Part 3b: Romantic and Sexual Attraction

Ag/Aggressive: “A term originating within communities of color to describe a masculine lesbian. Also known as ‘stud’” (Williams, 2017).

Aromantic: “The lack of romantic attraction, and one identifying with this orientation. This may be used as an umbrella term for other emotional attractions such as demiromantic” (TSER, 2017)

Asexual: “The lack of sexual attraction, and one identifying with this orientation. This may be used as an umbrella term for other emotional attractions such as demisexual” (TSER, 2017). Sometimes asexual is shortened to “ace.”

BDSM: “(Bondage, Discipline/Domination, Submission/Sadism, and Masochism) The terms ‘submission/sadism’ and ‘masochism’ refer to deriving pleasure from inflicting or receiving pain, often in a sexual context. The terms ‘bondage’ and ‘domination’ refer to playing with various power roles, in both sexual and social context. These practices are often misunderstood as abusive, but when practiced in a safe, sane, and consensual manner can be a part of healthy sex life. **[Related Terms:** Kink, Leather]” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Bioromantic: A type of romantic orientation in which a person is emotionally and romantically attracted to people of multiple genders.

Bisexuality: “An umbrella term for people who experience sexual and/or emotional attraction to more than one gender (pansexual, fluid, omnisexual, queer, etc.)” (TSER, 2017).

Boi: “A term used within queer communities of color to refer to sexual orientation, gender, and/or aesthetic among people assigned female at birth. Boi often designates queer women who present with masculinity (although, this depends on location and usage). This term originated in women of color communities” (TSER, 2017).

Coming Out: May refer to the process by which one accepts one’s own sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status/identity (to “come out” to one’s self). “Coming out” may also refer to the process by which one shares one’s sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status/identity (to “come out” to friends, family, etc.). Coming out is often a continual, lifelong process and can happen at different levels (e.g. a person may be out to their friends, but not to their family).

Demiromantic: “A person who does not experience romantic attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone” (Williams, 2017).

Demisexual: “A person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone” (Williams, 2017).

Down Low: “Originating within communities of color, used to describe men who identify as heterosexual but who are sexually active with men. Many avoid sharing this information even if they are also sexually active with women” (Williams, 2017).

Gay: “1. Used in some cultural settings to represent men who are attracted to men in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in same gender sexual behavior identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution [See: Down Low; MSM]. 2. An umbrella term for sexual orientations that fall outside of straight/heterosexual” (Williams, 2017).

Heteroromantic: A type of romantic orientation in which a person is emotionally and romantically attracted to people of the opposite binary gender.

Heterosexual: Describes someone with a binary gender identity who exclusively experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction to someone with the opposite binary gender identity. For example, men who are only attracted to women and women who are only attracted to men. This is commonly referred to as “being straight.”

Homoromantic: A type of romantic orientation in which a person is emotionally and romantically attracted to people of the same gender.

Homosexual: A clinical term for someone who is attracted to the same sex. Many people in the LGBTQA+ community do not like using this term to describe themselves because it has historically been used in a pathologizing way and to sexualize the LGBTQ+ community (Green and Peterson, 2015).

In the Closet: “Refers to a homosexual, bisexual, trans person or intersex person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work, or with their family” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Lesbian: Someone who is female-identified whose primary sexual and/or romantic attraction is to other people who are female-identified.

LGBTQA+: A common abbreviation that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, asexual and aromantic. The “+” is used to make space for other identities that are non-heterosexual and non-cisgender that may not be specifically listed. There are many different iterations of this acronym that may include letters to represent additional identities, such as LGBTQIA+ (I for Intersex) and LGBTTTQQIPPAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Pansexual, Pangender, Asexual, Aromantic).

Monogamy: The practice of only having one sexual and/or romantic partner at a time.

Monosexual: “Attracted to one gender. May be used for individuals who identify as straight, heterosexual, gay, lesbian, etc.” (Williams, 2017).

MSM: Men who have sex with men, but may not identify as LGBTQA+.

Outing: “When someone discloses information about another’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their knowledge and/or consent” (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Panromantic: “Someone who has romantic feelings for a person regardless of their sex or gender” (Williams, 2017). The prefix pan- means “all” in Greek;

however a person who is panromantic may be romantically attracted to many but not all genders.

Pansexual: "A person who has the potential to be attracted to all or many gender identities and expressions" (Williams, 2017). The prefix pan- means "all" in Greek; however a person who is pansexual may be attracted to many but not all genders.

Passing: "Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or to be seen as heterosexual" (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Polyamory: "Refers to having honest, non-monogamous relationships with multiple partners and can include: open relationships, polyfidelity (which involves multiple romantic relationships with sexual contact restricted to those), and sub-relationships (which denote distinguishing between a 'primary' relationship or relationships and various 'secondary' relationships)" (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Polysexual: "Capable of being attracted to multiple gender(s)" (TSER, 2017). The prefix poly- means "many" in Greek.

QTPOC: An acronym that stands for Queer and Trans People of Color.

Queer: "1. An umbrella term that embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex folks as well as the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive communities. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of 'bisexual' as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride" (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Questioning: "A term that can refer to a person who is questioning their gender, romantic orientation or sexual orientation; people who are questioning may be unsure of their sexuality or gender, or still exploring their options" (Green and Peterson, 2015).

Same Gender Loving (SGL): "A term originating within communities of color used to express same gender attraction. Note that it is often used as an alternative to words that do not culturally affirm the history of people of African descent" (Williams, 2017).

Two-Spirit: An identity created by indigenous people for indigenous people as a way to challenge colonial ways of understanding native gender and sexual expression. It should not be used as an identity by non-indigenous people. Two-Spirit is an identity label that describes gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Other terms might be used within different tribal communities, so always respect a person's self-identification. Overall, the term two-spirit is generally preferred to "berdache," which is a word that European settlers used to describe a third gender person (woman-living-man) who is Native American (Poynter, 2016).

WSW: Women who have sex with women, but may not identify as LGBTQA+.

Citations

<https://www.amazon.com/Safe-Zones-Training-Allies-LGBTQIA/dp/1475825269>

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TSER Definitions

TSER Unicorn

Riverside

Williams

Martin & Nakayama, 2004

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