



T O G E T H E R
S T R O N G E R

Queer Voices of Bhutan



Disclaimer:

This material is developed as an informative booklet and may contain basic information on safe sex and condom use. This material may only be appropriate for individuals who are at least 13 years and above.

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Queer Terminology:

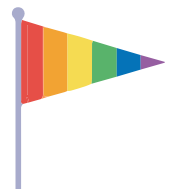
Defining a common Queer language



This queer terminology booklet does not aim to provide the ultimate and fixed definitions.

Sexual identities are very personal and vary from person to person. The information below is simply a general guide to some LGBT+ community terms. When dealing with these terms it is important to remember that gender identity, romantic attraction and sexuality are independent of each other. Some of these terms can be used in a derogatory way and care must be taken when speaking to someone about their sexuality. It is always best to ask the person which terms they prefer.

Note: each of these definitions has been carefully 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 and the context in which each term may be used. This is a working booklet. If you would like to offer any additions, corrections, or disputes about these definitions, please contact us at queervoicesofbhutan@gmail.com and we will be happy to take your comments into consideration. 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 or when one should use/utilize a term, it is always appropriate to ask. This is especially recommended when using terms that we have noted that can have a derogatory connotation.



SOGI

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity - This is an inclusive acronym used to talk about both sexual orientation (the type of sexual, romantic, and emotional attraction that one has towards others) and gender identity (the internal perception of one's gender and how they label themselves, based on how they align or do not align with what they understand gender to be). SOGI is most often used in the United Nations and in the context of international human rights.

SOGIESC

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sex Characteristics. See SOGI. This is an inclusive acronym like SOGI, which includes Gender Expression (the behaviour, mannerisms, interests, and appearance a person uses to express their gender in a particular cultural context) and Sex Characteristics (physical or behavioral traits of a person which are indicative of their sex). The expanded acronym – SOGIESC - is newer and is most often used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), often in the context of international human rights.

SEXUALITY

Romantic Orientation - Who you are romantically attracted to, meaning wanting to be in a romantic relationship with and is unrelated to sexual attraction.

Sexual Orientation - Who you are sexually attracted to, meaning who you get turned on by or who you would want to engage in sexual behaviours with.



Heterosexuality - The attraction to a gender different from their own (commonly used for someone who is gender binary [female or male] and is attracted to the other binary gender).

Homosexuality - The attraction to a gender the same as their own (commonly used for someone who is gender binary [female or male] and is attracted to the same binary gender). Sometimes referred to as *gay*.

Internalised homophobia/ biphobia/ transphobia are words that describe when someone has negative attitudes and beliefs about themselves, because they are sexually and/or gender diverse. The person may feel uncomfortable about or disapproving towards their own sexuality or gender identity. People can express these thoughts and feelings in both internal and external ways.

Lesbian - Women who are attracted only to other women. The term originates from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos which was home to Sappho, a poet, teacher, and a woman who loved other women.

Gay - A term used to describe a man who is emotionally, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to other men. This term is also used to describe a person irrespective of gender who is attracted to the members of the same gender.

Bisexual - When you are attracted to two or more genders. This term is generally used to describe being attracted to men and women, but can apply to being attracted to any two or more genders, though not necessarily simultaneously in the same way or to the same degree. Note that you do not have to be equally attracted to each gender.

Pansexual - When you are attracted to all genders and/or do not concern gender when you are attracted towards someone. Pansexual people may refer to themselves as gender-blind, asserting that gender and sex are not determining factors in their romantic or sexual attraction to others.

Pansexuality may be considered a sexual orientation in its own right or a branch of bisexuality, to indicate an alternative sexual identity. Because pansexual people are open to relationships with people who do not identify as strictly men or women, and pansexuality therefore rejects the gender binary, it is often considered a more inclusive term than bisexual. The extent to which the term bisexual is inclusive when compared with the term pansexual is debated within the LGBTIQ+ community, especially the bisexual community.

Bicurious - People who are open to experiment with genders that are not only their own, but do not know if they are open to forming any sort of relationship with multiple genders.

The term is sometimes used to describe a broad continuum of sexual orientation between heterosexuality and bisexuality. Such continuums include mostly heterosexual or mostly homosexual, but these can be self-identified without identifying as bisexual.

Polysexual - When you are attracted to many genders.



What Is the Difference Between Polysexuality, Bisexuality, Pansexuality, Pomosexuality, and Polyamory?



Polysexuality, bisexuality, and pansexuality all refer to sexual orientations that mean a person is attracted to at least two genders. Bisexual individuals are attracted to people of their own gender and at least one other gender. Pansexual people do not take gender into consideration when forming attraction.

Pomosexual people prefer to resist conventional categories of sexual identity, and often challenge assumptions about gender and sexuality.

Polyamory refers to the practice, state or ability of having more than one sexual loving relationship at the same time, with the full knowledge and consent of all partners involved.

Polysexual vs. Pansexual

Pansexual people are attracted to people regardless of their gender. But gender may or may not be a factor for polysexual people. And although they may be attracted to people of multiple genders, they're not attracted to people of all genders.

Polysexual vs. Bisexual

Because bisexuality means a person is attracted to more than one gender, it can be seen as a form of polysexuality. Some people may even use the terms interchangeably.

While bisexual people are not necessarily attracted to both cis men and cis women, the word "bisexual" is historically associated with this gender binary. For this reason, some people prefer the term polysexual because it ignores gender binaries altogether.

People may also refer to the "bisexuality umbrella," a term for all groups of orientations that are attracted to more than one gender.

Asexual - Not experiencing sexual attraction (note that you can also be aromantic and you do not necessarily have to be asexual and aromantic at the same time). Often referred to as “Ace”, this is an umbrella term used for individuals who do not experience, or experience a low level, of sexual desire. This identity can include those who are interested in having romantic relationships, and those who are not. People of different sexual orientations and gender identities can be asexual.

Monosexual - Being attracted to only one gender.

Allosexual - When you are not asexual (attracted to at least one gender).

Monosexuality is attraction to one gender. Lesbian or gay can fall under this category. People who identify as exclusively heterosexual can also be considered monosexual, as they are attracted to one gender.

Allosexuality is the converse of asexuality; it means you have sexual attraction and desire sex. The usage of the term allosexual is rooted in the asexual community. It's meant to reframe an assumption of attraction. The term 'allosexual' helps eliminate the idea that being 'asexual' is abnormal.

Androsexual - Being attracted to masculine gender presentation.

Gynosexual - Being attracted to feminine gender presentation.

Questioning - People who are debating their own sexuality/gender. This term refers to someone who is not sure how they identify. Someone can be questioning their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity.

Demisexual - When you only experience sexual attraction after forming a strong emotional bond first or a romantic bond. Often referred to as “Demi”, this is a term used to describe someone who can only experience sexual attraction after they form a close emotional connection. This bond does not have to be romantic or platonic (intimate and affectionate but not sexual) in nature.

Grey Asexual - When you only experience attraction rarely, on a very low scale, or only under certain circumstances.



Perioriented - When your sexual and romantic orientation targets the same gender (for example being heteroromantic and heterosexual or being biromantic and bisexual).

Varioriented - When your sexual and romantic orientations do not target the same set of genders (for example being heteroromantic and bisexual or being homoromantic and pansexual).

Heteronormative - The belief that heterosexuality is the norm and that sex, gender, sexuality, and gender roles all align. It assumes the gender binary (i.e., that there are only two distinct, opposite genders) and that sexual and marital relations are most fitting between people of opposite sex.

Heteronormativity is the belief that heterosexuality is the only natural expression of sexuality in our society. This belief system can be harmful to sexual minorities because it creates a hierarchy among sexual practices that can reinforce heterosexism and homophobia. It is also often associated with beliefs in birth-based gender expression (e.g., the genitals you are born with determine your gender identity), a clear gender binary, and traditional gender roles. Heteronormative culture can reinforce homophobia, heterosexism (discrimination in favour of opposite-sex relations), and the belief that same-sex relationships are non-conforming.

Homonormativity - a term that describes the privileges of certain people or relationships within the queer community (usually cisgender, white, gay men). This term also refers to the assumption that LGBTIQ+ people will conform to mainstream, heterosexual culture; for example, by adopting the idea that marriage and monogamy are natural and normal.

Erasure - Ignoring the existence of genders and sexualities in the middle of the spectrum.

Queer erasure is a heteronormative cultural tendency to remove queer groups intentionally or unintentionally from record, or to dismiss or downplay their significance. Queer erasure (inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and asexual erasure) can be found in a number of written and oral texts, including popular and scholarly texts. Queer historian Gregory Rosenthal refers to this form of erasure by describing the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ history from public perception through targeted urban planning and development resulting in the “displacement of queer peoples from public view”.

Bisexual erasure or **bisexual invisibility** is the tendency to ignore, remove, falsify, or re-explain evidence of bisexuality in history, academia, the news media, and other primary sources. In its most extreme form, it can include the belief that bisexuality is invalid.

Bisexual erasure may include the assertion that all bisexual individuals are in a phase and will soon choose a side, either heterosexual or homosexual. One reason for this is the belief that bisexual individuals are distinctively indecisive. Bisexual erasure often results in bisexual-identifying individuals experiencing a variety of adverse social encounters, as they not only have to struggle with finding acceptance within society but also within the LGBTIQ+ community.

Another common variant of bisexual erasure involves accepting bisexuality in women while downplaying or rejecting the validity of bisexual identity in men.

Lesbian erasure is the tendency to ignore, remove, falsify, or re-explain evidence of lesbian women or relationships in history, academia, the news media, and other primary sources. Lesbians may also be ignored within the LGBT community and their identity may not be acknowledged.

Straightwashing (also called **hetwashing**) is portraying **LGB** (lesbian, gay, bisexual) or otherwise queer characters in fiction as heterosexual (straight), making LGB people appear heterosexual, or altering information about historical figures to make their representation comply with heteronormativity.

Straightwashing is seen most prominently in works of fiction, especially television and cinema, whereby characters that were originally portrayed as homosexual, bisexual or asexual are misrepresented as heterosexual.

Other forms of erasure include, but not limited to, asexual erasure, gay erasure, transgender erasure, intersex erasure and homosexual erasure.

Monoamorous - People who have or are open to having relationship with only one other person at a time. The term, monogamous, is also sometimes used.

Microaggression - Is a term that describes unintentional forms of discrimination towards people who are considered a minority or 'different'. It can be written, said or expressed in other nonverbal ways (e.g., only letting heterosexual couples to go to a dance together). A micro-aggression can happen 'casually' or without other people noticing. At first they might be able to be 'shrugged off', but over time they can build up and start to affect someone's mental health.

Stereotypes - Are oversimplified and over-generalised views about individuals or a group of people, which are assumed to be true and mistaken for reality, and are usually negative in some way. They usually start as a way for people to make quick decisions, like the stereotype that women are more caring than men to talk to about personal problems.

Stereotypes can lead to prejudice when they are believed to be true for every single person in a particular group, and result in people changing their behaviour toward that group in a negative way.

Intersectionality - The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, socio-economic background, disability, sex and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression.

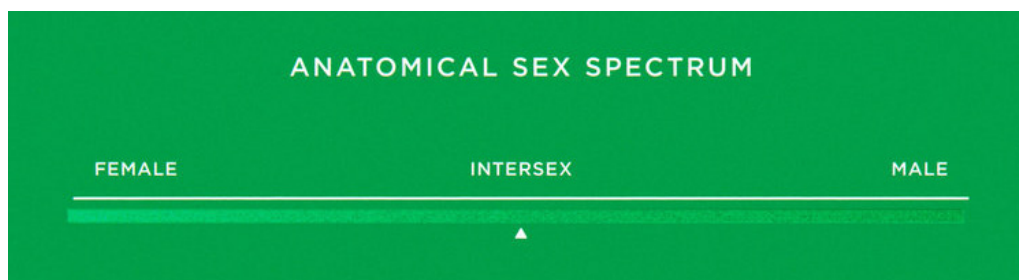
Queer - An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don't apply to them. Some people may use queer, or more commonly *gender queer*, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTIQ+ people to describe themselves. It is a reclaimed slur for anybody in the LGBTIQ+ community or who do not identify as cisgender and/or heterosexual/ heteromantic. Queer is often used as an umbrella term referring to anyone who is not straight and not cisgender.

Ally - A supporter of the LGBTIQ+ community that does not identify as LGBTIQ+. Also known as heterosexual Ally and Straight Ally, is someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBTIQ+ people. A heterosexual ally is also someone who confronts heterosexism in themselves and others. The term ally is generally used for any member of a dominant group who is a friend, advocate or activist for people in an oppressed group (i.e., White Ally for People of Color).

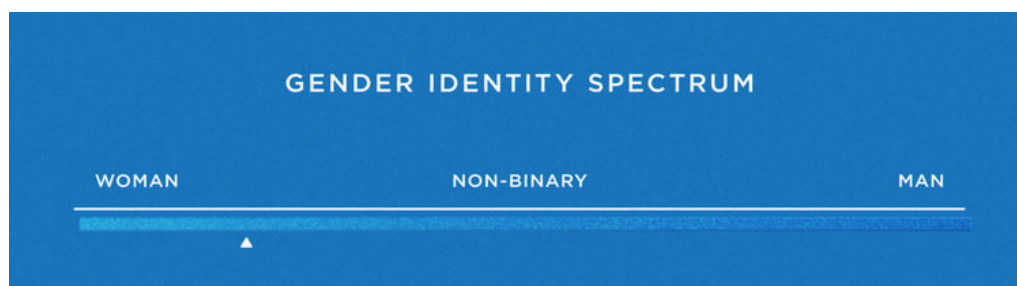
GENDER & SEX



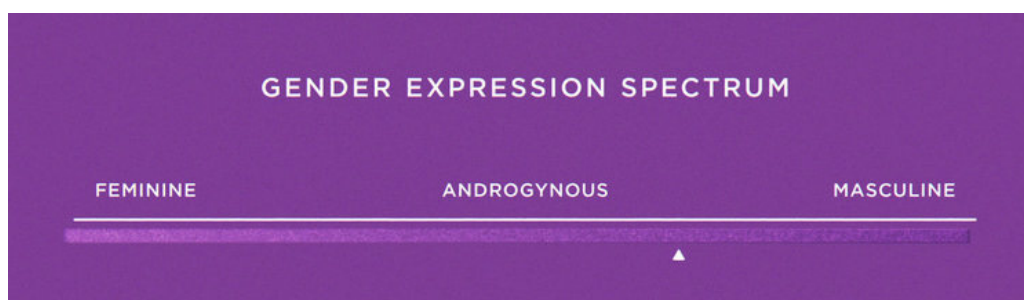
Sex - *merriam-webster.com* defines sex as: either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures.



Gender - WHO (World Health Organization) defines gender as: "The socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed."



Gender Presentation - The gender you present yourself as. This is sometimes referred to as *gender expression*.



Gender expectation - Is a term that describes the expectations others have about our assigned sex at birth that affects how we are told to behave.

Gender norm - Is a term to describe a range of standards and expectations that apply to a specific gender in a particular society, culture and/or community. These can change throughout time. For example, it is common for newborn baby girls to be dressed in pink and boys in blue. However, a long time ago it was the opposite way around.

Non-binary & Gender Queer - These terms are actively debated within the LGBTIQ+ community. Both terms are similar in scope. Non-binary refers to people whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary (i.e., either male/man or female/woman) and was coined as a descriptive term, used to describe experiences that fall outside of the binary gender model. Gender queer refers to people who have a non-normative or queer gender. Gender queer is often used to refer to people who reject labels and conformity to specific gender norms. Non-binary tends to be more of an umbrella term, which encompasses gender queer people, along with other non-binary genders.

Gender non-conforming - This term is used to refer to someone who does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate gender expression for their perceived gender.

Misogyny - The fear of the power of femininity that leads to the belief or attitude that masculinity, and specifically maleness, is not only desired, but more powerful and naturally dominant over femininity, and specifically femaleness. Misogyny represents itself in: men claiming public spaces (i.e. cat-calling); maleness being understood as the default (i.e. World Cup vs. Women's World Cup); men being overrepresented in media, television and film roles; and overwhelming statistics related to men's violence against women.

Misgender - To refer to someone (especially a trans person) by using a word, like a pronoun or form of address (i.e. sir, ma'am), that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. The act of misgendering can be done intentionally and with malice, or with ignorance; both are considered harmful. A related term, un-gender, refers to the mental process by which a person tries to understand someone within a gender construct they don't identify with, most especially after learning about one's trans status.

Gender Fluid - Is a gender identity which refers to gender which varies over time. A gender fluid person's identity may change constantly with time. The change can often be dramatic and rapid and always depends on the person who is going through the change. A gender fluid person may also identify as multi gender, non binary, and /or transgender. Gender fluid person may feel more comfortable using gender neutral pronouns and have an androgynous gender expression.

Cisgender - When you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth. Cisgender is used to describe non-transgender people - someone whose assigned sex at birth matches their identified gender.

Cissexism - Is a term that means viewing cisgender as the norm and superior to other identities outside of this norm, usually through prejudice or discrimination.

Misgendering - Referring to someone using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

Mx - An honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: Mx. Ugyen is a great teacher.

ze / zir (“zee”, “zerr” or “zeer”) - Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable or do not embrace *he/she* use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.



LOVE IS LOVE

Transgender - When you identify with a gender different than that you were assigned at birth. This term is used to describe someone whose gender identity or expression does not conform to what is expected based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

trans*: originally used to include explicitly both transsexual and transgender, or (now usually) to indicate the inclusion of larger identities under the transgender umbrella such as gender fluid, agender, non-binary etc alongside transsexual and transgender.

Transsexual - When you have had Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) to change the sexual organs you were born with to that of a different gender that someone identifies with.

Male to Female (MtF) - When somebody that is assigned as a male at birth identifies as a female.

Female to Male (FtM) - When somebody that is assigned as a female at birth identifies as a male.

Trans Woman - Someone who is assigned as a male at birth, but identifies as a woman.

Trans Man - Someone who is assigned as a female at birth, but identifies as a man.

Trans Feminine - Someone who identifies as feminine, but identifies as neither a man nor a woman. They must also be assigned male at birth.

Trans Masculine - Someone who identifies as masculine, but identifies as neither a man nor a woman. They must also be assigned female at birth.

Transition (aka Gender Affirmation) - Is a term for the process that someone may go through to align their gender expression with their gender identity to make them feel more comfortable in their skin. This can be done in a few different ways. Social transitioning means changing things like names, pronouns, identification and gender expression. Medical transitioning means accessing different types of options through the healthcare system such as hormones, hormone blockers, surgery and therapies.

Transitioning - The process of using medical means to change your sex.

Affirming gender - Means affirming the gender that matches a person's gender identity. For example, if a person was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, the person affirms their gender as female.

Binary - The genders at each end of the gender spectrum (male and female).

Non-Binary - An umbrella term for genders that fall somewhere in the middle of the gender spectrum and are neither strictly male nor female. This can be used as gender identification without further explanation. Sometimes the term, gender queer, is used.

Agender - Not identifying with any gender. Sometimes referred to as being genderless or gender void.

Bigender - Identifying as two genders, commonly (but not exclusively) male and female. Sometimes you feel like both genders at the same time and sometimes you fluctuate.

Polygender - When you identify with multiple genders at once. Sometimes referred to as multi-gender.

Neutrois - When you identify as agender, neither male nor female, and or genderless.

Gender Apathetic - When you really do not identify nor care about any particular gender. You are fine passing off as whatever and you really do not have an opinion towards your own gender.

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

Coming Out - A lifelong process of self-acceptance. Publicly identifying one's orientation may or may not be part of coming out.

Cross-Dressing - To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. "Cross-dresser" should NOT be used to describe someone who has transitioned to live full-time as the other sex or who intends to do so in the future. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression and is not necessarily tied to erotic activity. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual orientation.



Hijra - Hijras are biological males who reject their “masculine” identity in due course of time to identify either as women, or “not-men”, or “in-between man and woman”, or “neither man nor woman”. Hijras can be considered as the western equivalent of transgender/transsexual (male-to-female) persons but Hijras have a long tradition/culture (in India and some part of South Asia) and strong social ties formalized through a ritual called “reet” (becoming a member of the Hijra community). After acquiring a “reet”, the Hijra comes under the patronage of a senior Hijra who is known as a “guru”. The Hijra is then known as the guru’s “chela”. Gurus have substantial control over their chelas’ lives as well as their health-seeking behaviour.

There are regional variations in India in the terms used to refer to Hijras; for example, “Kinnars” (Delhi) and “Aravanis” (Tamil Nadu). Hijras may earn by blessing new-born babies, or dancing at ceremonies (badhai). Some Hijras may engage in sex work for lack of other job opportunities, while others are into begging (mangti). The term ‘Hijra’ is often seen as discriminatory in Bhutan.

Androgyne - This term overlaps a lot between gender identification and presentation. It can be used to describe others and as an identification. This term is used to describe people who are neither male nor female or are both male and female. Basically anyone who does not fit into a binary gender category.

Intergender - Somebody whose gender is somewhere between male and female.

Demigender - When you feel as if you are one part a defined gender and one or more parts an undefined gender. Terms can include demigirl, demiboy, demiagender, etc.

Greygender - Somebody with a weak gender identification of themselves.

Aporagender - Somebody with a strong gender identification of themselves that is non-binary.

Maverique - A non-binary gender that exists outside of the orthodox social bounds of gender.

Novigender - A gender that is super complex and impossible to describe in a single term.

Designated gender - A gender assigned at birth based on an individual’s sex and/or what gender society perceives a person to be.

AFAB - Assigned Female At Birth.

AMAB - Assigned Male At Birth.

AFAB/AMAB - These acronyms can serve to disrupt the gender binary model. Assigned Female/Male At Birth serves to remind that gender was arbitrarily assigned based on genitalia at birth. Alternatives: **FAAB/MAAB** (Female/Male Assigned At Birth).

Intersex - A biological difference in sex that is when people are born with genitals, gonads, and/or chromosomes that do not match up exactly with male or female. Intersex individuals can have any romantic/sexual orientation and can have any gender identification.

This term refers to people who naturally have biological traits which do not match what is typically identified as male or female. There are many different intersex variations. Some intersex people have XXY chromosomes; some have ambiguous genitalia or internal sex organs. Some intersex people have internal sex organs or hormones released during puberty which don't match their genitalia. Being intersex is a naturally occurring variation in humans; it is not pathological. Being intersex is not linked to sexual orientation or gender identity; intersex people can have different sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.



Dyadic - Someone who is not intersex and when their genitals, gonads, and chromosomes can all match into either a male or female category.

Social Dysphoria - Discomfort experienced when acting in ways socially different than your gender or being addressed in ways different to your gender.

Body Dysphoria - Discomfort experienced because of the difference between gender and your sex, role, or gender expression.

Butch - A term used to describe someone whose gender expression is more masculine than feminine. This is commonly used in describing women or lesbians.

Femme (Fem) - A term used to describe someone who's gender expression is more feminine than masculine. This is commonly used in describing women or lesbians.

Binarism - Putting gender strictly into two categories (male and female) and refusing to acknowledge genders outside of male and female.

Open Relationship - A relationship in which those involved agree that they may have sexual or romantic relations with others. Open relationships may be understood as consensually non-monogamous, but not all open relationships are polyamorous.

Outing - involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. This can cause social, physical, emotional, or economic danger for the person being 'outed'. Outing someone can sometimes be done as an act of hate.

Two-spirit - is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfil roles of both feminine and masculine genders.

Privilege - Refers to the social, economic and political advantages or rights held by people from dominant groups on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, etc. For example, cisgender men often experience privilege that people of other genders do not have.

LGBT+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and many more.. (The “+” that is usually included after the acronym encompasses a list of other identities that fall under the queer umbrella. The “+” aims to include those who identify as queer, intersex, asexual, demisexual, non-binary, gender fluid, pansexual, polyamorous, questioning and many more.

There are plenty of acronyms to go around when talking about sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, so here are some additional ones that you might run into that tend not to be added to the LGBTIQ acronym.

This list of letters can and does continue. As previously mentioned, the terms that are used to talk about LGBTIQ people are constantly evolving. In an effort to be inclusive, while maintaining the practicality of a shorter acronym, some people use symbols in the acronym.



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