



2SLGBTQ+ Terminology

Some common terms from within queer communities



On the follow pages, you will find a list of terms from A to Z that come from within queer communities. These are just some of the terms you will hear used by individuals. The definitions you see are just the basics and it's important to understand that as in all communities, there are deep levels of nuance in these terms. We encourage everyone reading this to do more research as you see fit on anything you read below.

It is important to note that one should never make assumptions about anyone. If you're unsure about someone's identity, find a safe and comfortable way to ask. Don't ask deeply personal or revealing questions and keep an open heart and mind with loved ones as they navigate their lives.



A

Ally

A person with a position of privilege (cisgender/heterosexual/white) who not only supports and celebrates queer identities, but also interrupts and/or challenges queer-phobia, transphobia and more.

Asexual

An individual who does not experience sexual attraction to another person, regardless of their gender identity. Asexual people can desire and experience romantic relationships and connections to another person, while others do not. Asexuality is itself a spectrum, with no two asexual people being exactly the same or having the same desires. Asexual individuals often feel left out or ignored by the larger queer discourse.

Ace

shorthand term for Asexual individuals

B

Bisexual

An individual that is attracted to more than one gender identity. We used to consider bi individuals as being attracted to men and women alike, but more and more individuals are identifying as bi and being attracted to people outside of the gender binary

Biphobia



fear, hatred or aversion to individuals that identify as bisexual, or bisexual identities. Bisexual people can face discrimination against them even within queer circles and communities.

Butch

A person that exhibits or expresses gender roles that are traditionally considered more masculine

C

Cisgender

An individual that identifies with their assigned-at-birth gender. As well, cisgender individuals tend to be perceived by society at large as their assigned-at-birth gender, and this is and of itself creates a level of privilege not afforded to transgender people. The prefix *cis* is a latin word, meaning “on the side of” or “not across from”

Cissecntrism

A system that focuses on and reinforces the bias for cisgender people, and treats the needs and desires of transgender people as secondary to the needs to cisgender individuals.

Cissexism

This is the belief that cisgender people are considered “normal” and that cisgender identities are more important than transgender people.

Coming out

The process of becoming aware of, and sharing with others, your identity, be that of your sexual or gender identity. Also commonly referred to as “coming out of the closet”. This is an ongoing and often difficult process for the person going through it, and may take longer than you might expect, and may only happen in some circles. Some individuals may choose to only come out to close friends, family, work or otherwise, or



any combination of those, and it is up to the individual to determine where and how they are comfortable being out.

Crossdresser

This is a term that traditionally refers to an individual that dresses in a manner that is often associated with a different gender than their own assigned identity. Some crossdressers prefer to dress in private only, while others prefer to do so in a more public manner. Some crossdressers are trans identified, while others are not, and it's important not to impose those identities on anyone.

D

Drag

a performer than tends to dress in an elaborate and flamboyant manner to denote a member of a gender different from their own. The most prominent drag performers are drag queens, often cisgender males performing as an exaggerated female character, but there are drag kings as well, which tend to be cisgender women performing as exaggerated male stereotypes. Drag is often associated with queer communities, and transgender individuals are often mistaken for drag performers. It is important to note that drag performers and transgender individuals are different and while there are drag performers that can and do identify as trans, it is not always the case.

Dyke

a lesbian, traditionally associated with my butch presenting lesbians.

F

Fag

or faggot. A gay male. This term, while traditionally used as an insult, has also been reclaimed by some gay males. The word faggot literally translates to “a small bundle of



sticks”, and is an allusion to the outdated practice of burning suspected homosexual people at the stake.

Femme

A term that some queer people use to describe expressions of gender that are perceived as being more feminine. Commonly used in lesbian communities

G

Gay

A person who is mostly attracted to individuals of the same gender as themselves. Commonly used to referred to men, but all manner of genders can and do identify as gay.

Gender

A social construct denoting concepts of masculine and feminine traits in our culture.

Gender binary

the view that there are only two distinct genders that are polar opposites and static in nature.

Gender expression

how one expresses their gender through such things as mannerisms, name and pronoun choice, dress, voice and more. Someone expression of gender might not accurately reflect their gender identity, and it’s important to make assumptions based on appearance.

Gender identity



an internal sense of gender, an understanding of oneself as male, female, neither, both or otherwise on a spectrum. People who question their gender might find themselves feeling unsure of their identity, or may take time to land on an identity that feels right to them.

Gender non-conforming

An individual that does not conform to societies expectations of traditional gender roles and expressions.

Gender roles

the behavioral traits expected of an individual based on their perceived gender. A societal construct that works to police an individuals behaviour.

Genderqueer

someone who identifies outside the traditional gender binary. Genderqueer individuals are consider transgender, and is a term under the trans umbrella. {see: Transgender}. Genderqueer individuals are often subject to policing based on gender roles and tropes, and often face erasure of their identities as such

H

Heteronormative

The idea that heterosexual identities, actions and identities are the societal norm.

Heterosexual

an individual who feels physically and emotionally attracted to a member of the same gender. Otherwise known as straight.

Homophobia

fear, hatred or aversion to homosexual individuals and/or homosexual behaviour.



I

Internalized Homophobia/transphobia

An internal experience of shame based or self hatred based on your own feeling of sexual attraction or identity.

Intersex

Intersex people are individuals that are born with external genitalia that does not closely resemble typical male or female genitalia or have the appearance of both male and female genitalia.

L

LGBT

An acronym that refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. LGBT is commonly seen as an out of date acronym now, and not inclusive of all queer identities, notably leaving out 2 spirit peoples, intersex and more. It is more common now to see a variation on 2SLGBTQI+

Lesbian

A female identifying person that is sexually attracted to another female identifying person.

O



Outing someone

The act of, either by purpose or accident, revealing someone's gender or sexual identity without their explicit permission. Outing someone can cause severe emotional, physical, social and/or financial damage and is often considered to be an act of aggression or hate.

P

Pangender

An individual that identifies and/or expresses multiple genders.

Pansexual

An individual that is attracted to, either sexually or romantically, individuals from across a spectrum of genders.

Passing

A phrase used in queer communities to denote someone's ability to not appear to be 2SLGBTQIA+. Passing as a concept is most commonly used in trans communities, and can refer to someones appearance, their voice, mannerisms and more. For some, passing is important and one of their primary goals. Passing tends to minimize queer and trans phobia, and generally leads to a wider degree of a social acceptance for the individual.

Privilege

Referring to a person or group of people with an economic, political, social or rights based advantage over others groups of people. For example: men have traditionally held significant advantage over women

Q



QPOC

Stands for Queer Person of Color. Also often seen as QTIPOC Queer Transgender and Intersex People of Color.

Queer

a term that is widely used in a modern setting to denote different identities amongst the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Queerphobia

referring to hatred, oppression of and/or fear of 2SLGBTQI+ people

R

S

Sex

referring to the biological characteristics associated with assigned at birth characteristics.

Sexual orientation

A persons internal feeling of sexual attraction regardless of who it's to. Sexual orientation can be fluid for many people, and change over time.

T

Transgender



Also commonly seen written as Trans. Transgender is considered an umbrella term that also incorporates non-binary, genderfluid, gender-queer, et al individuals. The word itself refers to an individual that identifies in an opposing direction from the sex they had been assigned at birth. This can include anyone on a trans feminine or trans masculine spectrum or anyone identifying outside the gender binary. Transgender individuals are identities that are decided upon by themselves and in no way does it require hormone treatment or surgery to identify as transgender.

Transition

The process a trans individual undertakes to change their gender expression to reflect their identity. This can involve, but does not require, hormone replacement treatment, surgery and/or aesthetic decisions such as laser hair removal, makeup, etc. Transitioning is not a timeline and as such is not complete at any given point. It is a fluid concept that can and often will change over time

Trans Feminine

A term to describe an individual who identifies as trans and expresses their gender as feminine in nature

Trans Masculine

A term to describe an individual who identifies as trans and expressed their gender as masculine in nature

Transmisogyny

A form of transphobia directed at trans feminine individuals that reinforces male power and privilege.

Transsexual

A term that is considered outdated by some in the trans community. It tends to signify a person whose sexual identity has transitioned from male to female or female to male. This tends to be, but is not always limited to, individuals that seek hormonal and/or surgical options to assist their transition. Considering the medical overtones of the term

it is widely considered inaccurate in a modern-day perspective of trans individuals, but some still prefer this term in reference to themselves.

Transvestite

An outdated term that most in the trans community find offensive, most often was used to refer to cross-dressers. This word tended to be used in conjunction with mental health discussions, and as such is considered problematic in today's day and age. It is more appropriate to refer to someone as a cross-dresser if that is what they prefer.

Two-Spirit

refers to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. As an umbrella term it may encompass same-sex attraction and a wide variety of gender variance, including people who might be described in Western culture as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, gender queer, cross-dressers or who have multiple gender identities.

U

V

W

X



Y

Z