

LGBTQQ DEFINITIONS

GENDER. A socially constructed system of roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people.

GENDER ROLE. How “masculine” or “feminine” an individual acts as defined by societal norms.

FEMININE. Term used to describe the socially constructed and culturally specific gender behaviors assigned to biological females.

MASCULINE. Term used to describe the socially constructed and culturally specific gender behaviors assigned to biological males.

ANDROGYNOUS. A person who may identify and appear as both, neither, or in between male and female. This person also may or may not exhibit the behaviors of the two genders, thus making it difficult for others to place them into a specific gender category. From the Latin root for male (*andro*) and female (*gyne*).

GENDER NEUTRAL. Anything that is considered by society to be appropriate for all genders.

GENDER EXPRESSION. The ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and emphasizing, de-emphasizing, or changing their bodies’ characteristics. Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

GENDER IDENTITY. An individual’s innermost sense of self as “male/ masculine”, “female/ feminine”, somewhere in between, or somewhere outside of these gender boundaries. Most people develop a gender identity that socially aligns with their biological sex, but many do not.

GENDER DYSPHORIA. Unhappiness or discomfort with the gender role assigned by society to one’s biological sex.

SEXUAL IDENTITY. How people identify their own sexuality.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION. A person's attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex; Includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual.

ASEXUAL. A person who is not sexually active or not sexually attracted to other people.

LESBIAN. A woman who is attracted to other women.

GAY. A person attracted to members of the same sex (often used to describe men, though it can be used for any sex).

BISEXUAL. A person who is attracted to both men and women.

QUEER. A controversial term that some LGBT people still consider derogatory; other, most often academics, political progressives and young people, have embraced the term because of its gender-neutrality and implication of social non-conformity.

QUESTIONING. A person who is unsure about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

TRANSSEXUAL. Individuals who do not identify with their biological or birth-assigned sex, and sometimes alter their bodies to reconcile their gender identity and their physical body/biological sex.

TRANSGENDER. Originally coined to describe non-operative transsexuals, this term is now used as an umbrella term for all those who choose not to conform to society’s

often stereotypical notions of gender expression, including transsexuals, cross dressers, two spirit people and drag queens and kings.

CROSSDRESSER. One who dresses, either in public or private, in clothing that society assigns to the opposite sex. Crossdressing is not necessarily an indication of one's sexual orientation or gender identity. The formerly used term, "transvestite," is not considered offensive by some.

DRAG QUEEN. A male who emulates a woman in appearance and manner, generally for the purposes of entertainment, and not necessarily because the person identifies as a woman. Considered to be a derogatory term by some.

DRAG KING. A female who emulates a man in appearance and manner, generally for the purposes of entertainment, and not necessarily because the person identifies as a man.

SAME GENDER LOVING. A term created by African Americans and used by some people of color who view the labels "gay" and "lesbian" as representatives of an LGBTQ community historically dominated by white people.

PHYSICAL SEX. A classification based on reproductive biology. It is commonly assumed that there are two sexes identified by *genes*, *gonads*, *primary sex characteristics* or *secondary sex characteristics*; it is more accurate to think of physical sex as a continuum with most individuals concentrated near the ends.

GENETIC SEX. The 23rd chromosome pair usually coded XX (F) or XY (M). There are many other chromosomal organizations including XXY and XO.

GONADS. Glands that produce gametes, usually ovaries (F) or testes (M).

PRIMARY SEX CHARACTERISTICS. Physical characteristics present at birth that are used to determine the biological sex of an infant, including the penis and scrotum (M), and the vagina, clitoris and labia (F).

SECONDARY SEX CHARACTERISTICS. Physical characteristics not present at birth that develop during puberty as a result of gonadal and adrenal hormones, including facial hair (M) and breasts (F).

INTERSEX. At least one in 2,000 children is born with this trait, some ambiguity regarding their primary and/or secondary sex characteristics. In these cases, medical personnel cannot easily label the child "boy" or "girl"; most of these children receive cosmetic surgery so that the child's genitalia conform to societal and familial expectations of "normalcy," even though such surgeries are not medically necessary and can damage the child's reproductive organs. Though the term "hermaphrodite" is considered misleading and stigmatizing, it continues to be widely used in the medical profession.

TRANSITION. The period when one is changing from living as one sex or gender to a different conception of sex or gender. A complicated, multi-step process that may include surgically and/or hormonally altering one's body.

PASSING. Successfully assuming a gender role different than the one assigned to a person based on biological sex when interacting with society.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY. A surgical procedure that modifies one's primary and/or secondary sex characteristics through surgery. This process was formerly called a "sex change operation," a phrase now considered offensive.

HOMOPHOBIA. An irrational fear of or aversion to homosexuality or LGB people.

HETEROSEXISM. The attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid or acceptable sexual orientation.

TRANSPHOBIA. Discrimination against transsexualism or transgender people based on the expression of their internal gender identity.