

SAY WHAT??

A Glossary Of Terms

Ally: A person who supports and honors. sexual diversity, acts accordingly to challenge homophobic and heterosexist remarks and behaviors, and is willing to explore and understand these forms of bias within him or herself.

Bisexual: A person (male or female) who has significant sexual and/or romantic attractions to both males and females or someone who identifies as a member of this community.

Closet: Used as slang for the state of not publicizing one's sexual identity, keeping it private, living an outwardly heterosexual life while identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender, or not being forthcoming about one's identity. At times, being in the closet also means not wanting to admit one's sexual identity to oneself.

Coming Out: To disclose one's own sexual identity or gender identity. It can mean telling others or it can refer to the time when a person comes out to him/herself by discovering or admitting that their sexual or gender identity is not what was previously assumed. Some people think of coming out as a larger system of oppression of LGBT people-that an LGBT person needs to come out at all shows that everyone is presumed heterosexual until demonstrated otherwise. But this word need not apply only to the LGBT community. In some situations, a heterosexual may feel the need to come out about their identity as well.

Dyke: A derogatory slur for lesbians. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride.

Fag(got): A derogatory slur for gay men. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride. Derived from the word faggot (literally "small bundle of sticks"), an allusion to the Inquisition-era practice of burning people at the stake for suspected homosexual practices.

F-to-M: A female-to-male transgender person.

Gay: A man who has significant sexual and/or romantic attractions to other men, or who identifies as a member of the gay community. At times, "gay" is used to refer to all people, regardless of sex, who have their primary sexual and/or romantic attractions to people of the same sex. Lesbians and bisexuals may feel excluded by this word.

Gay Bashing: Physical attacks on people because of *their perceived* sexual orientation.

Gender: The continuum from masculine to feminine. Gender is how people perceive themselves with regards to masculinity and femininity, and it is also how others expect them to behave. Gender is largely culturally determined.

Gender Identity: How a person chooses to identify themselves on the gender spectrum, regardless of the genitalia.

Heterosexism: The unchecked assumption that everyone is heterosexual. The failure to include, or even consider, the existence of lesbian, gay or bisexual people and their lives. Institutional or cultural prejudice which privileges heterosexuals.

Heterosexual: A person (male or female) who has significant sexual and/or romantic attractions to primarily members of the other sex.

Homophobia: The fear and hatred of or the discomfort with people who love and sexually desire members of the same sex. Homophobic reactions often lead to intolerance, bigotry and violence against anyone not acting within heterosexual norms. Because most LGBT people are raised in the same society as heterosexuals, they learn the same beliefs and stereotypes prevalent in the dominant society, leading to a phenomenon known as "internalized homophobia."

Homosexual: The formal or clinical term that was coined in the field of psychology, sometimes meaning only "gay male," but at times encompasses lesbians and occasionally bisexuals. The word is often associated with the proposition that same sex attractions are a mental disorder and is therefore distasteful to some people.

Intersex: A person in whom the physiological sex that they were born is ambiguous. An intersex person may have been born with biological characteristics of both males and females. (Many people say *hermaphrodite*, despite political objections to that word.)

Lesbian: A woman who has significant sexual and/or romantic attractions to other women, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. Bisexual women may not feel included by this term.

LGBT: An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. At times, a Q will be added for "Queer" and/or "Questioning", an A for "Ally", and/or a TS for "Two Spirit".

Lifestyle: This is a word that is often used outside the LGBT community to describe living life as an LGBT person, i.e. the "gay life-style." Many people do not find this word particularly appropriate or positive because it seems to trivialize personal identity, as well as not make space for the large variety of lifestyles that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people live.

M-to-F: A male-to-female transgender person.

Post-op Transsexual: A transsexual (see definition) who has had sex reassignment surgery.

Pre-op Transsexual: A transsexual (see definition) who has not yet had sex reassignment surgery. (Not all transsexuals want to have any surgery, and among those who do want it, many can't afford it.)

Queer: Originally a derogatory slur, it has recently been reclaimed by some to be an inclusive word for all of those within the sexual minority community. Because of the original derogatory nature of the word, it is not necessarily accepted by all.

Sexual Behavior: The physical activity that a person engages in; actions. (This may be different than identity or orientation).

Sexual Identity: How one labels oneself (publicly and/or internally) With regard to the sex to which one is attracted. (Which may differ from behavior or orientation).

Sexual Orientation: A person's sexual feelings - determined by whom one is attracted to. (This may be different from behavior or identity).

Transgender: An umbrella term encompassing the diversity of gender expression, including (but not limited to) drag queens and kings, intersex people, post-op transsexuals, pre-op transsexuals; and transvestites. Transgender people may be homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

Transsexuals: People who find their gender identity (their sense of themselves as male or female) to be in conflict with the anatomical sex they were born. Some transsexuals may live part-time or full-time in their self-defined gender. Some undergo hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery, while others do not. Transsexuals may be homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

Transvestite: The clinical term for "cross dresser." A person who dresses in clothing of the opposite sex. Generally transvestites do not alter their bodies. Cross dressers may be gay, lesbian, heterosexual or bisexual. Some may do it for pay or performance (i.e. drag queens or kings), while some may do it for personal comfort, and others may do it for sexual gratification.



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