

# Core Vocabulary

**agender** – *adj.*: a nonbinary gender identity describing a lack of gender.

**ally** – *noun*: a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

**asexual** – *adj.*: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to “ace.” Asexual people are not necessarily celibate, and may still enjoy sex but do not actively desire it.

**aromantic** – *adj.*: experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Like asexuality, it exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for a relationship, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to “aro”

**bigender** – *adj.*: of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity is a combination of two gender identities or is sometimes one and sometimes another. Some bi-gender people have two separate personas depending on gender, but others can have shades of grey between the two.

**biological sex** – *noun*: a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.” Now considered to be an outdated term. Instead use **AGAB**, or “assigned gender at birth”. **AFAB** stands for “assigned female at birth” and **AMAB** stands for “assigned male at birth”. This is the correct terminology to use when referring to a trans person in a clinical or legal sense.

**biphobia** – *noun*: a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. **biphobic** – *adj.*: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward bisexual people.

**bisexual** – **1** *noun & adj.*: a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. **2** *adj.*: a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. It is not to be used interchangeably with “pansexual”, as they are two different things. See “pansexual” for explanation.

**biromantic** – *adj.*: a person who experiences solely romantic attraction for people of two gender identities. Someone who is homoromantic may have sexual attraction that differs from their romantic attraction, for example someone may identify as both biromantic and asexual.

**cishet** /“siss-het”/ – *adj.*: an abbreviation for someone who is cisgender and heterosexual.

**cisgender** /“siss-jendur”/ – *adj.*: a gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”

**coming out** – **1 noun**: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). **2 verb**: the process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others. Often you will hear the phrase “to come out of the closet”. This means the same thing.

**deadname/deadnaming** – *noun/verb phrase*: the previous name of someone who has changed that name, especially the pretransition first name of a trans person/the use of the birth or other former name of a transgender or non-binary person without the person's consent.

**demisexual** – *adj.*: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior unless the person in question already has a nonsexual, emotional attraction to a specific person. Demisexual people can be of any gender identity or romantic orientation. This is a micro label on the ace spectrum.

**demiromantic** – *adj.*: only developing romantic feelings for another person when a strong emotional connection is already present. Demiromantic people can be of any gender identity or sexual orientation. This is a micro label on the aromantic spectrum.

**demiboy** – *noun*: someone who identifies partially as a man, but not fully. A demiboy may use he/they pronouns, or something similar.

**demigirl** – *noun*: someone who identifies partially as a woman, but not fully. A demigirl may use she/they pronouns, or something similar.

**gay** – **1 adj.**: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. **2 adj.**: an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

**gender expression** – *noun*: the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

**genderfluid** – *adj.*: a nonbinary gender identity that describes when someone shifts between genders over a period of time. This can be daily, hourly, or over weeks, and can encompass any gender identity.

**gender identity** – *noun*: the internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

**genderqueer** – **1** *adj.*: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. **2** *adj.*: an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

**heteronormativity** – *noun*: the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking what her husband's name is (for example) Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

**homophobia** – **1** *noun*: an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. **homophobic** – **2** *adj.*: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

**homosexual** – *adj. & noun*: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

**homoromantic** – *adj.*: a person who experiences romantic attraction solely for people of the same gender identity. Someone who is homoromantic may have sexual attraction that differs from their romantic attraction, for example someone may identify as both homoromantic and asexual.

**internalized homophobia** –

*adj.-noun*: homophobia occurring in a gay person, often associated with self-loathing, self-censure, and self-censorship. Internalizing homophobia is what happens when the biases, prejudices, and hatred towards gay folks that has been reinforced by society (aka societal homophobia) is turned inward back on the gay individual.

**intersex** – *adj.*: term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

**lesbian** – *noun & adj.*: women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women or nonbinary people.

**LGBTQIA+; GSM; DSG** – *abbr.*: shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQIA+ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, intersex, asexual. (sometimes people add a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans\* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay

[or Genderqueer]]. LGBTQ+ is the most commonly used acronym when speaking in a less formal situation.

**misgendering** – *verb*: to refer to (someone, especially a transgender person) using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

**neopronouns** – *noun*: pronouns that have not been traditionally used. All pronouns other than she/her/hers/herself, he/him/his/himself, they/them/theirs/themself are considered neopronouns. For example, xe/xem/xir/xirself would be neopronouns. Used in a sentence that would be: “Alex went shopping because xe wanted new clothes, and xir friends went with xem, because xe did not want to go by xirself.”

**nonbinary** – *adj.*: a gender identity that falls outside of the boundaries (binaries) of male or female. It is not a third gender, and is an umbrella term that encompasses all gender identities outside of strictly male and strictly female.

**omniromantic** – *adj.*: a person who experiences solely romantic attraction for people of all gender identities. Someone who is omniromantic may have sexual attraction that differs from their romantic attraction, for example someone may identify as both omniromantic and asexual.

**omnisexual** – *adj.*: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for all genders, but unlike pansexual people, omnisexual people can have preferences based off of gender. It is not the same as bisexual, as bisexual people only like 2 genders, and not all. *Often shortened to “omni.”*

**pansexual** – *adj.*: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for all people regardless of gender identity, or being “genderblind”. It is not the same as bisexual, as bisexual people only experience attraction to 2 genders, and not all. Bisexual people can also have gender preferences, whereas pansexual people do not. *Often shortened to “pan.”*

**panphobia** – *noun*: a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward pansexual individuals. Panphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. **panphobic** – *adj.*: a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward pansexual people.

**panromantic** – *adj.*: a person who experiences solely romantic attraction for people regardless of gender identity, or being “genderblind”. Someone who is panromantic may have sexual attraction that differs from their romantic attraction, for example someone may identify as both panromantic and asexual.

**passing** – **1** *adj. & verb*: trans\* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans\*. **2** *adj.*: an LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

**queer** – **1** *adj.*: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight and/or cisgender. **2** *noun*: a slur used to refer to someone who isn’t straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all

LGBTQ people. The term “queer” can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer people” instead of “LGBTQ people”).

**questioning** – *verb & adj.*: an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

**romantic attraction** – *noun*: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantically intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

**sexual attraction** – *noun*: a capacity that evokes the want to engage in sexually intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

**sexual orientation** – *noun*: the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

**straight** – *adj.*: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

**transfemme/transfeminine** – 1 *adj.*: to be transgender with intended feminine traits. 2 *noun*: to be transgender but not fully identify as a woman.

**transgender** – 1 *adj.*: a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. 2 *adj.*: an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

**transman** – *noun*: an AFAB person who identifies as a man.

**transmasc/transmasculine** – 1 *adj.*: to be transgender with intended masculine traits. 2 *noun*: to be transgender but not fully identify as a man.

**transphobia** – *noun*: the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans\* people, the trans\* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. **Transphobic** – *adj.*: a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans\* people.

**transwoman** – *noun*: an AMAB person who identifies as a woman.