

The Office for Social Justice and Diversity

LGBTQ 101 Terminology

- **Ally** - a person in a position of privilege and power who seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group.
- **Asexual** - An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction (e.g., asexual person). A person can also be aromantic, meaning they do not experience romantic attraction. (For more information, visit asexuality.org.)
- **Bisexual** - A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree
- **Cisgender** - A term used to describe an individual whose gender identity aligns with the one typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Coming Out** - To disclose one's sexual identity or gender identity. It can mean telling others or it can refer to the time when a person comes out to themselves by admitting that their identity is not what was previously assumed. This is a lifelong process.
- **Discrimination** - the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.
- **Gay** - A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. This term is sometimes used to describe gay men specifically.
- **Gender Expression**: External representation of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
- **Gender Identity**: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or other gender(s).
- **Gender Non-Conforming** - A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.
- **Heterosexual/Straight** - A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.
- **Intersex** - Intersex is an umbrella term describing people born with variations of internal and/or external sex anatomy resulting in bodies that can't be classified as the typical male or female.
- **Lesbian** - A woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.
- **Non-binary** - An identity commonly used by people who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary.
- **Pansexual** - A person whose emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction is to people of all gender identities.
- **Pink Triangle** - Used to identify male prisoners in Nazi concentration camps.
- **Pride** - A month long celebration and recognition of the LGBTQ community and its history. It originated from the Stonewall Riots and began as a protest.
- **Pronouns**: The words we use in place of someone's name when we talk about them. (she/her, he/him, they/them, etc.)
- **Queer** - A term people often use to express fluid and/or nonbinary identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ." *Note - while this term has been embraced by many people in LGBTQ communities, particularly by younger people, this term is not used by all LGBTQ people.*
- **Sex Assigned at Birth** - The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping. Examples:
- **Sexual Orientation**: A person's physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others.
- **Stonewall Riots** - A series of violent encounters that began on June 28, 1969 between LGBTQ patrons of the Stonewall Inn and New York City police. This led to the beginning of the gay rights movement.

- **Transgender** - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. Trans can be shorthand for transgender.
- **Queer** - A term people often use to express fluid and/or nonbinary identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ" as an umbrella term. *Note - while this term has been embraced by many people in LGBTQ communities, particularly by younger people, this term is not used by all LGBTQ people.*