

LGBTQ Glossary

Sexual orientation: a person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person

Gender identity: a person's internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female, or something else (see nonbinary below)

Sex: assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'

Lesbian: refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women

Gay: refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality –some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian

Homosexual: this might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used

Bisexual: refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender

Trans: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, gender queer

LGBT: the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans

Queer: in the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation, but is still viewed to be derogatory by some

Non-binary: an umbrella term for a person who does not identify as male or female

Gender: variant someone who does not conform to the gender roles and behaviours assigned to them at birth. This is usually used in relation to children or young people

Intersex: a term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people can identify as male, female or non-binary

Transgender man: a term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male

Transgender woman: a term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female

A transsexual person: this was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender

Gender dysphoria: used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth

Transitioning: the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender they identify as. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents

Gender reassignment: is another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected in the Equality Act 2010

Coming out: when a person first tells someone/others about their identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans

Outed: when a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent

Homophobia: the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as lesbian or gay

Biphobia: the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bisexual

Transphobia: the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as trans

Gender stereotypes: the ways that we expect people to behave in society according to their gender, or what is commonly accepted as 'normal' for someone of that gender