

Foundational LGBTQIA+ Concepts and Terminology

LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIA+
adjective

An acronym and umbrella term that includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Aromantic, Asexual, and all sexually and gender diverse people. The '+' refers to the existence of many different identities.

Queer
adjective

An umbrella term describing people who think of their sexual orientation or gender identity as being beyond traditional societal norms. Some people view the term queer as more fluid and inclusive than traditional categories for sexual orientation and gender identity. Although queer was historically used as a slur, it has been reclaimed by many as a term of empowerment. Nonetheless, some still find the term offensive.

Affirm
verb

The act of recognizing, respecting, honoring, and/or supporting a person's gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or sex development through sensitive and effective communication, as well as welcoming and inclusive environments.

Ally
noun

A person who actively supports the rights of a marginalized community even though that person is not a member of that community; for example, a straight person who campaigns for the rights of gay people.

Coming out
verb

The process of identifying and accepting one's own sexual orientation or gender identity (coming out to oneself), and the process of sharing one's sexual orientation or gender identity with others (coming out to friends, family, etc.).

Pronouns
noun

Words like she, he, or they, which are used to refer to a person without use of the person's name. While many people have 'she' or 'he' pronouns in English, some people have less binary pronouns, such as 'they' or 'ze.' Some people do not have any pronouns at all, and just use their names instead.

Sex Development Concepts and Terminology

<p>Sex development <i>noun</i></p>	<p>The physical process by which bodily sex characteristics emerge or become apparent at various stages throughout a person's life, including in utero, at birth, in childhood, at puberty, in adolescence, or across adulthood. Intersex variations in physical sex development do not fit traditional notions of female or male bodies.</p>
<p>Assigned female at birth/Assigned male at birth <i>noun</i></p>	<p>Refers to the sex that is assigned to an infant, most often based on the infant's physical characteristics.</p>
<p>Intersex <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes variations in physical sex development that do not fit traditional notions of female or male bodies. These variations may be apparent at birth or noticed at any subsequent stage of physical development. A related term sometimes used is differences in sex development, though at present the term intersex is most acceptable to community members.</p>

Gender Identity Concepts and Terminology

<p>Gender identity <i>noun</i></p>	<p>A person's inner sense of being a girl/woman/female, boy/man/male, both, neither, something else, or having no gender.</p>
<p>Agender <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person who identifies as having no gender, or who does not experience gender as a primary identity component.</p>
<p>Bigender <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person whose gender identity combines two genders.</p>
<p>Cisgender <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>A person whose gender identity is consistent with societal expectations based on their sex assigned at birth; for example, a person assigned female sex at birth whose gender identity is woman/female. The term cisgender comes from the Latin prefix cis, meaning 'on the same side of.'</p>
<p>Gender diverse <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes people whose gender is beyond the binary paradigm of girl/woman/female or boy/man/male (e.g., non-binary, gender queer, and gender fluid people).</p>
<p>Gender dysphoria <i>noun</i></p>	<p>Distress experienced by people when their body does not align with their gender identity. Dysphoria can also occur when gender identity is not affirmed socially, politically, or in other ways.</p>
<p>Gender expression <i>noun</i></p>	<p>The way a person communicates their gender to the world through mannerisms, clothing, speech, behavior, etc. Gender expression varies depending on culture, context, and historical period.</p>

<p>Gender fluid or Genderfluid <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person whose gender identity is dynamic and may evolve over time. A person who is genderfluid may always feel like a combination of more than one gender, or may feel more aligned with a certain gender some of the time, another gender at other times, multiple genders sometimes, and sometimes no gender at all.</p>
<p>Gender queer or Genderqueer <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>An umbrella term that describes a person whose gender identity is beyond the traditional binary gender paradigm of girl/woman/female or boy/man/male. Some people use the term gender expansive. A related term is gender non-conforming; however, some people consider this term to be outdated.</p>
<p>Legal gender affirmation <i>noun</i></p>	<p>Describes changes to gender markers and name on official government-issued documentation, such as a driver's license or passport.</p>
<p>Non-binary <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person whose gender identity is beyond the traditional binary gender structure of girl/woman/female and boy/man/male. Sometimes abbreviated as NB or enby.</p>
<p>Pangender <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person whose gender identity is comprised of multiple genders beyond the traditional cultural parameters that define gender.</p>
<p>Psychological gender affirmation <i>noun</i></p>	<p>Refers to the individual process of gender identity exploration, discovery, and self-acceptance.</p>
<p>Questioning <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person who is unsure about, or is exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.</p>
<p>Social gender affirmation <i>noun</i></p>	<p>Non-medical actions taken to support a person living in greater alignment with their own gender identity and gender expression. Examples include changes to name, pronouns, clothing, hairstyle, chest binding, genital padding, and genital tucking. These actions are sometimes referred to as 'social transition,' but the term 'social affirmation' is more accurate.</p>
<p>Transgender <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>Describes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not correspond based on traditional societal expectations; for example, a person assigned female sex at birth who identifies as a man (transgender man); or a person assigned male sex at birth who identifies as a woman (transgender woman). Transgender can also include people with gender identities beyond the binary gender paradigm of girl/woman/female and boy/man/male, for example people who are gender fluid or non-binary. Sometimes abbreviated as trans.</p>
<p>Two-Spirit <i>adjective</i></p>	<p>A term used among Indigenous American, American Indian, and First Nations people that encompasses diversity in spiritual, sexual, gender, and cultural identity, and may also relate to a person's community roles and contributions.</p>

Sexual Orientation Concepts and Terminology

Sexual orientation <i>noun</i>	How a person experiences their physical, emotional, and romantic attachments to other people.
Aromantic <i>adjective</i>	Describes a person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others, and/or does not have interest in forming romantic relationships. Aromantic people may still have intimate relationships.
Asexual <i>adjective</i>	Describes a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexual people may still engage in sexual activity.
Bisexual <i>adjective</i>	A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and physically attracted to women/females and men/males. Some people define bisexuality as attraction to all genders.
Gay <i>adjective</i>	A sexual orientation describing people who are primarily emotionally and physically attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender as themselves. Commonly used to describe men who are primarily attracted to men, but can also describe women attracted to women.
Heterosexual/ Straight	A sexual orientation that describes women who are primarily emotionally and physically attracted to men, and men who are primarily emotionally and physically attracted to women.
Lesbian <i>adjective, noun</i>	A sexual orientation that describes a woman who is primarily emotionally and physically attracted to other women.
Pansexual <i>adjective</i>	A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and physically attracted to people of all bodies and gender identities, or whose attractions are not related to other people's gender.
Questioning <i>adjective</i>	Describes a person who is unsure about, or is exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Medical Care Concepts and Terminology

Anatomical inventory <i>noun</i>	A form of documentation for tracking retained organs and any surgical interventions. Clinicians can use anatomical inventories to help guide individually tailored preventive screenings and care. Study staff can use the inventory to systematically and comprehensively ask participants about retained organs and body modifications. Sometimes referred to as an 'organ inventory.'
Binding <i>verb</i>	The process of wrapping the chest tightly to create the appearance of a flatter chest. The most common way for people to bind is by wearing an undergarment called a binder. People may use other materials to bind such as cloth strips or bandages.

Chest reconstruction <i>noun</i>	Surgical procedure to create a masculine chest. Also known as top surgery.
Colpocleisis <i>noun</i>	Surgical closure of the vagina/front hole.
Gender-affirming care <i>noun</i>	The provision of evidence-based health services that support a person living in greater alignment with their own gender identity and gender expression. Some examples include pubertal suppression, gender-affirming mental health care, gender-affirming primary and preventive care, gender-affirming hormone therapy (e.g., estradiol- or testosterone-based regimens), and gender-affirming surgical procedures.
Gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) <i>noun</i>	Hormone therapy (typically estradiol- or testosterone-based regimens) to align secondary sex characteristics with gender identity. This is sometimes referred to as 'medical gender affirmation' or 'medical gender transition.'
Gender-affirming surgery (GAS) <i>noun</i>	Surgeries to modify a person's body to be more aligned with that person's gender identity. Types of GAS include chest and genital surgeries, facial surgeries, body sculpting, and hair removal. This is sometimes referred to as 'surgical gender affirmation' or 'surgical gender transition.'
Hysterectomy <i>noun</i>	Surgical removal of the uterus.
Mastectomy <i>noun</i>	The surgical removal of a breast or breasts.
Metoidioplasty <i>noun</i>	Surgical procedure to create a new phallus/penis using existing genital tissue, after the clitoris has been enlarged using testosterone therapy.
Orchiectomy <i>noun</i>	Surgical removal of one or two testicles.
Penectomy <i>noun</i>	Surgical procedure to remove a penis.
Phalloplasty <i>noun</i>	Surgical procedure to create a new phallus/penis
Prostatectomy <i>noun</i>	Surgical removal of the prostate.
Salpingo-oophorectomy <i>noun</i>	Surgical removal of a fallopian tube and ovary, or of both fallopian tubes and ovaries.
Vaginoplasty <i>noun</i>	Surgical procedure to create a new vagina, i.e., a neovagina.