

LGBT+ SEXUALITY AND GENDER

LGBT+ refers to the community of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, as well as other people who don't identify as heterosexual or cisgender.

Here are a few key words you may have seen or heard that relate to gender and sexuality. But remember: language changes all the time and people identify with, and define, terms and labels differently. We should let people choose the label that feels best for them if they want to use one.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

Gender: How a person sees or feels about themselves. Also refers to ideas about human behaviour, actions and roles in relation to 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.

Sex: Our biological sexual characteristics, which are the external genitals, internal reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormones. Doesn't always fit neatly into 'male' and 'female' categories.

Sexuality: Someone's sexual behaviours, attractions, likes, dislikes, and preferences. Sexual orientation makes up a part of someone's sexuality.

Ally: Someone who supports the LGBT+ community and challenges discrimination against LGBT+ people.



Ace: An umbrella term used specifically to describe a lack of, varying, or occasional experiences of sexual attraction. This encompasses asexual people as well as those who identify as demisexual and grey-sexual.

AFAB: 'Assigned female at birth'. Someone is AFAB if they were born with a vagina and vulva.

AMAB: Assigned male at birth'. Someone is AMAB if they were born with a penis and testicles.

Aro: An umbrella term used specifically to describe a lack of, varying, or occasional experiences of romantic attraction.

A

B

Biphobia: The discrimination and hatred of bi people.

Bi (or bisexual): Someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender.



C

Cisgender or cis: Someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Coming out: When someone tells others about their LGBT+ identity.

Important! Coming out is personal and different for everyone. It is always up to you whether you share parts of your identity with others, and when and how you do that. If someone does this without your consent, this is called 'outing'



Gay: Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender. Gay is a common, informal word for 'homosexual'. It's often used to describe men who are exclusively attracted to other men.



Gender dysphoria: The distress or discomfort someone might feel when their sex assigned at birth doesn't match their gender.

Gender fluid: Someone whose feelings about the relationship between their body and gender identity changes over time and isn't fixed.

G

Gender neutral: Someone who doesn't identify with any gender.

D

Deadname: To dead name someone is to use the name a transgender or non-binary person was given at birth, but they no longer use. Some people who are cis have deadnames and use the term.



Demisexual: Someone who only feels sexual attraction to someone after a strong emotional bond has been formed.

Heterosexual: Someone who is attracted to people of a different gender, usually a man who is only attracted to women or a woman who is only attracted to men.



Homophobia: Prejudice and discrimination towards people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or who are attracted to people of the same gender as themselves.

H

LGBT+ SEXUALITY AND GENDER

I
Intersex: If someone's genitals, chromosomes or hormones don't fit with the traditional definition of male or female they may use the word intersex to describe themselves.

L
Lesbian: Often used to describe women who are exclusively attracted to other women but is also used by some people who are non-binary.



M
Misgendering: Referring to someone as the wrong gender or using the wrong pronouns.



REMEMBER! If someone shares that they use a different name or pronoun, it's important you respect them. How would you feel if someone called you the wrong name?

P
Pansexual: Someone who is attracted to others regardless of their gender identity.

Pride: Usually used to refer to the worldwide celebration of LGBT+ cultures, Pride started as, and still is, a protest and fight for LGBT+ rights.

Pronoun: Words that we use instead of names, like 'he', 'her' or 'them' (others exist, too!). Pronouns can be very important to trans and non-binary people as they are closely associated with gender.

ASK! If you're not sure what pronouns someone uses, ask them!



R
Romantic orientation: How someone feels romantically about people of various genders and who they are likely to pursue a romantic relationship with.



Q
Queer: Sometimes used as a broad term to refer to members of the LGBT+ community. Also used as an identity in its own right that rejects specific labels of romantic/sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

IMPORTANT! Queer was historically a slur but has now been reclaimed by some LGBT+ people. Not everyone will be comfortable with how this word is used.

Questioning: Someone who is in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.



S
Sexual orientation: How someone feels sexually about people of various genders and who they are likely to pursue a sexual relationship with.

REMEMBER! Sexual activity is not necessarily representative of sexual orientation. People who have sex with someone of the same gender may not identify as LGBT+.

T
Transgender or trans: Someone whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth.

Transition: The process a trans person goes through of changing their gender expression to match their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

CHOICE: There are three main types of transition: social, medical and legal. Someone who is transitioning may do so in one, some, or all of these ways. But not every trans person chooses to transition and those who don't are still valid and deserve to have their gender respected.

Transphobia: Prejudice and discrimination towards someone who is trans that is based on their trans identity.



N
Non-binary: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

