



Sexual & Romantic Orientation: Who one is attracted to, and what that attraction looks like. Terms like gay, heterosexual, lesbian, queer, bisexual, panromantic, biromantic, etc., are all used to indicate sexual and romantic orientation. For some people, sexual and romantic attraction might not match up completely (Ex. Someone can identify as straight and panromantic, lesbian and aromantic, and so on).

Gender Expression: The ways in which we express gender in more visible or physical ways, such as through clothing, hair, body shape, voice, behavior, and so on. Our gender expression does not always match our gender identity. We are able to adjust our gender expression easily only to a certain degree (Ex. I can cut my hair and wear different clothes, but I cannot change my voice, legal gender marker, or body without significant resources, time, and support).

Gender Identity: An internal aspect of our identity that is central and foundational to who we are. Terms like woman, man, nonbinary individual, etc. are all terms used to indicate our gender identity. Our gender identity does not always match our gender expression, meaning what someone sees and assumes about our gender identity without asking is not always accurate.

Coming Out: The act of sharing that one's sexuality and/or gender identity is something other than what society indicates would typically be expected of them. Many people come out sometime in youth or early adulthood, but this is not always the case! People can change and grow and come into new identities at any point in life, or may be waiting until they truly feel safe and supported enough to do so. Coming out is also not a "1 step" process - because of hetero- and cis-normativity, people often have to come out every time they meet someone new or enter a new environment. No one should ever feel "required" to come out.

LGBTQ: Stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, but this acronym is an umbrella term for a vast number of identities and is meant to be inclusive versus exclusive.

QPOC: An acronym that stands for Queer Person of Color or Queer People of Color.

Queer: A word sometimes used as an umbrella term referencing the entire LGBTQ community, and other times as an individual identity term. Queer is sometimes used interchangeably with LGBTQ. (Note: This term does have a history of being used as a derogatory slur, and consideration of the intent is important in deciding when the use of this term is appropriate).

Lesbian: A term usually used by a woman who is primarily emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to other women.

Gay: A term usually used by people who are primarily emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to people of their same gender. In the past it has been a term primarily used by men who are attracted to other men, but it's grown into being used by people of all genders.

Bisexual: A term usually used by someone who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to two (or more) genders (not necessarily in the same ways or to the same extents).

Pansexual: A term usually used by someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to people of any gender (not necessarily in the same ways or to the same extents).

Aromantic: An orientation that describes a person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others and/or lacks interest in forming romantic relationships.

Asexual (Ace): An identity label for individuals who experience a spectrum of little to no sexual attraction to others. Also often used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as demisexual.

Demisexual: An identity term for someone who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone.



Polyamory: The practice of participating in multiple intimate, romantic and/or sexual relationships at one time.

Gender/Sex Assigned at Birth: The label assigned to a child at birth (male/female/intersex) based on their external anatomy.

Gender: A socially constructed identity centering around notions of "femininity", "masculinity", and "androgyny," which includes aspects of identity and expression.

Intersex: Referring to a person who is born with reproductive or sexual characteristics, features, or anatomy that does not fit 'typical' definitions of 'female' or 'male'; An identity term used by some members of the community. A person who is intersex often also might also identify with another or other gender identity/identities. Being intersex is much more common than most people realize; it's hard to know exactly how many people are intersex, but estimates suggest that about 1-2 in 100 people born in the U.S. are intersex - about the same number of folks who are born with red hair.

Cisgender (Cis): Someone whose gender identity matches with what was assumed of them at birth. There is no one right way to "be" cisgender, and cisgender people can be binary women/men or nonbinary, express themselves in any way, and use the name and pronouns that are comfortable for them.

Transgender (Trans): Someone whose gender identity is different than what was assumed of them at birth may identify as transgender. Transgender people can be any gender, including binary men/women, non-binary, etc., can express themselves in any way, and use the name and pronouns that are comfortable for them. There is no one way to be transgender.

Nonbinary: Someone who does not exclusively fall under the binary gender category of either man or woman. Some nonbinary people feel they fall under the transgender umbrella and others feel they fall under the cisgender umbrella.

Gender Nonconforming (GNC): A person who does not conform to prevailing social and cultural expectations of gender.

Genderqueer: An identity label claimed by people whose gender identity does not fit into the culturally accepted man/woman binary. May be characterized by the desire to challenge or reject binary categories of gender, including gender roles and expression.

Two-Spirit: An identity label used within many Native American and Canadian First Nations indigenous groups to describe an individual that possesses both "masculine" and "feminine" spirits. Coined by contemporary LGBT Native Americans to describe themselves and the traditional roles they are reclaiming.

Gender Fluid: Describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed. They might feel like a mix of multiple genders, and may feel more one gender some days, and another gender other days.

Pangender: An identity label for a person whose gender identity is comprised of many genders.

Transition: Transition is a process aimed at adjusting one's gender expression to match one's gender identity. Social transition, medical transition, and legal transition are all aspects of transition. There is no one way to fully transition, and this process looks different for everyone.

Pronouns: A word used to refer to someone without using their name. "She", "he", and "they" are all common examples of pronouns. It's best practice to introduce yourself with your pronouns, and ask someone for their pronouns.

Gender Affirmation Surgery: Surgeries used to modify one's body to be more congruent with one's gender identity.

Gender Dysphoria: Distress experienced by some individuals whose gender identity does not correspond with their gender/sex assigned at birth. The DSM-5 includes gender dysphoria as a diagnosis.