

LGBTQIA+ Terminology

Aces or asexual people: Individuals who generally do not experience sexual attraction to others of any gender. Some do experience romantic attractions. Asexuality differs from celibacy in that celibates have a sexual attraction, but choose to abstain from sex.

AGs or aggressives: Lesbians who express themselves in a masculine manner, such as by binding their breasts. They are also called studs. The terms are more commonly used in communities of color.

Agender people: Individuals who identify as not having a gender. Some describe themselves as genderless, while others see themselves as gender neutral.

Alloromantic people: Individuals who experience romantic attraction to others of any gender (i.e., people who are not aromantic).

Allosexual or zsexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction to others of any gender (i.e., people who are not asexual).

Allosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that everyone experiences or should experience sexual attraction. Allosexism privileges allosexual or zsexual people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against asexual people.

Androgynes: Individuals who identify androgynously. They have a gender which is both feminine and masculine, although not necessary in equal amounts.

Androsexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction toward men, males, and/or masculinity, regardless of whether they were assigned male at birth.

Aros or aromantic people: Individuals who experience little or no romantic attraction to others of any gender.

Bi or bisexual people: Individuals who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to people of more than one gender or people who are attracted to genders similar to their own and to genders different from their own.

Bigender people: Individuals who experience their gender identity as two genders at the same time or whose gender identity may vary between two genders.

Biromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of more than one gender.

Bois: Individuals assigned female at birth who identify their gender as nonbinary. Because they are not male-identified, they are “bois” and not “boys.”

Butches: Individuals of any gender or sexual identity who present and act in traditionally masculine ways, which could include being the “dominant” partner in sexual relationships.

Cis or cisgender people: Individuals who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth (i.e., people who are not transgender).

Crossdressers: Individuals who, at times, wear clothes traditionally associated with people of a gender different from one's own.

Demigender people: Individuals who feel a partial connection to a particular gender identity. Examples of demigender identities include demigirl, and demiboy, and demiandrogyne.

Demiromantic people: Individuals who do not feel romantic attraction to someone unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Demis or demisexual people: Individuals who typically do not feel sexual attraction to someone unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Dyadic people: Individuals who are born with chromosomes, a reproductive system, and a sexual anatomy that fit into the prevailing standard for "female" or "male" individuals (i.e., people who are not intersex).

Dyadism or binarism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that there are only two "biological" or "natural" sexes—female and male. Dyadism/binarism privileges dyadic people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against people with intersex variations.

Femmes: Individuals of any gender or sexual identity who present and act in traditionally feminine ways, which could include being the "subordinate" partner in sexual relationships.

Gay men: Men who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to other men.

Gender binary: The social system that sees only two genders and that requires everyone to be raised as a man or a woman, depending on the gender assigned to them at birth.

Gender fluid people: Individuals whose gender varies over time. A gender fluid person may at any time identify as male, female, agender, or any other non-binary identity, or some combination of identities.

Gender-nonconforming people: Individuals who do not to adhere to the traditional gender expectations for appearance and behavior of people of their assigned gender. Some identify as transgender, but others (like butch lesbians) do not.

Genderism or cissexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that there are only two genders and that gender is determined by one's gender assignment at birth. Genderism/cissexism privileges cis people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against trans and gender-nonconforming people.

Genderqueer people: Individuals who identify as neither male nor female (but as another gender), as somewhere in between or beyond genders, or as a combination of genders.

Graces, gray A's, or gray asexuals: Individuals whose sexual attraction exists within the gray area between sexual and asexual. They experience sexual attraction infrequently or not very strongly. Other terms that are used to describe this identity are semisexual, asexual-ish, and sexual-ish.

Gray romantics: Individuals whose romantic attraction exists within the gray area between romantic and aromantic. They experience romantic attraction infrequently or not very strongly.

Gynesexual/gynosexual people: Individuals who experience sexual attraction toward women, females, and/or femininity, regardless of whether they were assigned female at birth.

Heteroflexible people: Individuals who are primarily attracted to people of a different sex and who typically identify as heterosexual, but who may engage in same-sex sexual activity in certain situations. As it is defined by the Urban Dictionary, “I’m straight but shit happens.”

Heterosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that all people are heterosexual. Heterosexism privileges heterosexual people and leads to prejudice and discrimination against asexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and other people with non-heterosexual sexual identities.

Heteroromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of a gender different from themselves.

Heterosexual people: Men who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions attraction to women, and vice versa. Also known as “straight.”

Homoflexible people: Individuals who are primarily attracted to people of the same sex and who typically identify as lesbian or gay, but who may engage in sexual activity with people of a different sex in certain situations.

Homoromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to people of a gender similar to themselves.

Intersex: An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural biological variations of individuals who are born with a chromosomal pattern, a reproductive system, and/or sexual anatomy that does not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

Lesbians: Women who experience sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to other women.

Masculine of center (MoC) people: Lesbians, queer women, and non-binary trans people who tend toward the masculine in their gender expression. The term is more commonly used in communities of color.

Monosexism: The societal, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that assume that all people are attracted to only one other sex or gender—that one is either exclusively heterosexual or exclusively lesbian/gay. Monosexism privileges people with binary sexual identities and leads to prejudice and discrimination against bisexual, pansexual, queer, and other people with non-binary sexual identities.

Neutrois people: Individuals who identify their gender as neutral or null. They may also identify as “agender.”

Non-binary gender, gender creative, and gender expansive people:

- Umbrella terms for individuals who do not fit into traditional “male” and “female” gender categories.
- Includes individuals who identify as agender, bigender, gender fluid, genderqueer, and various other genders.

Pangender people: Individuals whose gender identity and/or gender expression is numerous, either fixed (many at once) or fluid (moving from one to another, often more than two).

Panromantic people: Individuals who are romantically, but not necessarily sexually, attracted to others regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

Pansexual people: Individuals who are attracted to others regardless of their gender identity or biological sex.

Polysexual people: Individuals who are attracted to more than one gender and/or form of gender expression, but not to all.

Queer: An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTQ+ people. It is also a non-binary term used by individuals who see their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as fluid.

Queerplatonic: Non-romantic relationships that involve close emotional connections that are often deeper or more intense than what is traditionally found in friendships.

QPOC and QTPOC (pronounced “cutie poc”): Queer people of color, and queer and trans people of color.

Same-gender loving people: Individuals who experience same-gender attraction. The term originated within communities of color as an alternative to “lesbian” and “gay,” which they feel does not speak to their cultural heritages.

Sapiosexual people: Individuals who are attracted to people based on intelligence, rather than gender identity or biological sex.

Sexually fluid people: While many people will experience changes in their sexual orientation over their lifetimes, individuals who are sexually fluid experience changes in their sexual orientations more frequently.

Skoliosexual people: Individuals who are sexually attracted to people with non-binary gender identities.

Studs: Lesbians who express themselves in a masculine manner, such as by binding their breasts. They are also called AGs or aggressives. The terms are more commonly used in communities of color.

Trans or transgender people:

- Umbrella terms for individuals whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth.
- Among individuals who might identify as transgender include trans women and trans men; individuals who cross-dress or who present androgynously; agender, demigender, and genderqueer individuals; and others who cross or go beyond traditional gender categories.

Trans men: Individuals assigned female at birth who identify as male.

Trans women: Individuals assigned male at birth who identify as female.

Two spirit people: A Native American term for individuals who blend the masculine and the feminine. It is commonly used to describe individuals who historically crossed genders. It is also often used by contemporary LGBTQIA Native American people to describe themselves.

Forthcoming in Genny Beemyn, *Campus Queer: The Experiences and Needs of LGBTQ+ College Students* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).