

# LGBTQ2SIA+

This acronym, and its many variations, are constantly being updated as our awareness of diversity and inclusion evolves. The acronym refers to all of the identities that are outside of the heterosexual, cisgender identities. This iteration stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, and more.



Ever felt unsure about what some of the vocabulary used to describe gender identity and sexual orientation actually means? Below are some quick references, and some sources if you'd like to read up more on the topic.

## GENDER IDENTITY

One's innermost concept of self. It includes how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth. A person's gender identity does not imply and is independent from a person's sexual identity or orientation.

**Gender binary:** A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of man or woman.

**Gender dysphoria:** A medical term historically used to describe significant distress that may be experienced when a person's gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth, or the gender expression that is societally expected from them.

**Gender euphoria:** The experience of being aligned with your gender expression and felt sense of who you are.

**Gender expression:** The manner in which a person communicates about gender with their external environment, such as through behaviour, clothing, body characteristics and mannerisms. While a person's gender expression may imply their gender identity, these two concepts are independent and do not necessarily align.

**Transgender / trans:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Gender-expansive:** A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often refers to people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

**Gender-fluid:** A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity. Used by people whose identity shifts or fluctuates.

**Gender non-conforming:** A broad term referring to people whose gender expression does not conform to the societal expectations of their assumed gender. These people may identify as transgender, non-binary, or even cisgender.

**Non-binary:** A person who does not identify exclusively as man or woman, but as being both, somewhere in between, or falling completely outside these categories. Can also be used as an umbrella term to include agender, bi-gender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

**Genderqueer:** Someone whose gender identity is outside the gender binary. They may exhibit both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities, or neither, and may see themselves as being both man and woman or as falling completely outside these categories.

**Agender:** May be used by someone who does not identify with or experience gender.

**Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Two-spirit / 2-spirit / twin-spirited:** Indigenous North American identity in which one person contains feminine and masculine spirits within them.



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. *Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.*

**Lesbian:** A woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

**Gay:** A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

**Bisexual:** A person emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to more than one sex or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. The term has expanded in its usage beyond the gender binary and is sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

**Queer:** Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or people who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ2SIA+ movement. Similar to other reclaimed words, the word is not usually used by non-LGBTQ2SIA+ people.

**Questioning:** A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Intersex:** Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

**Asexual:** People who do not experience sexual attraction or physical desire for other people.

**Pansexual:** Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

**Straight/heterosexual:** A person who is attracted to the gender opposite of what they identify with, and often tends to exist within the gender binary.

## SEXUAL IDENTITY

A person's internally derived perception and felt sense of themselves with respect to whom they are romantically, emotionally, and/or sexually attracted to. This concept is different from the external biological concept of sexual orientation.

## ADDITIONAL TERMS

**Intersectionality:** The complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap or intersect. This term, originally popularized to describe the experience of black women in North America, has been appropriated to describe the ways that discrimination based on gender, sex, race, class, sexuality and ability overlap and intersect with one another.

**Ally:** Someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ2SIA+ people, regardless of their own identity or sexual orientation.

**Coming out:** The process in which a person, on an ongoing basis, acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others. Coming out is a unique process for every LGBTQ2SIA+ person.

**Outing:** Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or gender non-binary identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

**Transition:** A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

**Pride:** A celebration of standing in one's own identity against oppression. Pride Month is a celebration of how far we have come, a remembrance of where we came from, and a reminder of how far we have yet to go.

**Gender-neutral:** The removal of gendered language, ideas, and social institutions where gendered systems result in discrimination and non-inclusion.



## FLAGS

No matter where or how you celebrate Pride, you'll be seeing all sorts of flags - and not just the traditional rainbow. Here are some of the other flags that represent the many sexualities and identities in the queer spectrum.



**Rainbow Pride flag:** Many organizations and businesses use this flag as a symbol to show that their establishment is a safe space for everyone in the community. The colours have the following meanings: Red: Life, Orange: Healing, Yellow: Sunlight, Green: Nature, Blue: Harmony, Violet: Spirit.



**Lesbian flag:** The colours represent the following: Dark Orange: Gender non-conformity, Orange: Independence, Light Orange: Community, White: Unique relationships to womanhood or transgender and nonbinary lesbians, Light Pink: Serenity and peace, Pink: Love and sex, Dark Pink: Femininity



**Bisexual flag:** Pink represents the possibility of same gender attraction; blue represents the possibility of opposite gender attraction. The stripes overlap to form purple, which represents the possibility of attraction anywhere along the gender spectrum.



**Transgender flag:** The light blue is the traditional colour for baby boys, pink is for girls, and the white in the middle is for those who are transitioning, those who feel they have a neutral gender or no gender, and those who are intersex.



**Asexual flag:** Black means asexuality, grey means grey-asexuality (a grey area between asexuality and sexuality) and demisexuality, white means sexuality, and purple means community.



**Pansexual flag:** This flag has colours that represent pansexuality's interest in all genders as partners. The pink represents women, the yellow represents nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people, and blue represents men.



**Non-Binary flag:** The yellow symbolizes gender outside a binary. The white, a mix of all colours, represents those with many or all genders. Purple stands for those who feel both binary male and female or fluid between them. The black is for the agender community, without sexuality or colour.



**Progress Pride flag:** This new flag seeks to take the rainbow pride flag a step further. The white, pink, and light blue reflect the colours of the transgender flag, while the brown and black stripes represent people of colour and those lost to AIDS.

**Sources:**  
Human Rights Campaign  
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The 519's Glossary of Terms

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pride.com  
Rainbow flag (LGBT), Wikipedia article  
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