

Basic* Vocabulary Related to Sexuality

Sexual Orientation / Sexuality – To whom one is sexually attracted.

Lesbian – A woman emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to females and/or women.

Gay – A man emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to males and/or men.

Bisexual – A person emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to both males and/or men and females and/or women. Attraction is not necessarily evenly split between sexes/genders.

Pansexual/Omnisexual - A person emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to all or many genders or sexes.

Asexual – A person who does not experience sexual attraction.

Same Gender Loving – A person emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex or gender as themselves.

Straight/Heterosexual – A person emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of a different sex or gender from their own.

Polyamory – Usually refers to having emotional, romantic and/or sexual relationships with more than one partner.

Queer – 1. A formerly pejorative slur that has been reclaimed as a positive identity label. Often, queer is used in a strongly political or radical manner to designate

going against mainstream expectations in regards to gender, sexuality or politics. 2. An umbrella term that replaces LGBTQI and other similar acronyms. 3. A term that usually designates a non-normative sexual orientation. 4. A term that usually designates a non-normative gender identity or expression.

LGBTQI – An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and intersex communities.

Coming out – Usually refers to one's acceptance of their own sexual orientation or gender identity, or to sharing one's sexual orientation or gender identity with others.

Basic* Vocabulary Related to Gender Identity and Expression

Sex – Anatomical, hormonal, chromosomal and reproductive composition of the body. Usually male, female or intersex.

Gender – Refers to the socially constructed roles, activities, behaviors and attributes that a given society assigns to each sex.

Gender Identity – A person's internal sense of belonging to a particular gender category.

Gender Expression – How one conveys one's gender identity to others.

Trans* / Transgender - 1. An umbrella term used to describe many different people whose gender identities and expressions do not conform to the gender they were assigned at birth. 2. May describe a person who has taken social, medical or surgical steps to physically bring their body in line

with the gender with which they identify (may also be called transexual).

Cisgender – A person whose gender identity and expression conforms to the gender they were assigned at birth.

Genderqueer / Gender Non-Conforming / Gender Bending / Gender Fluid – 1. Terms that often designate a non-normative or non-binary gender identity or expression. 2. May refer to someone who is not comfortable identifying as a man or woman. 3. May refer to a gender identity that purposefully breaks social norms or rules regarding gender. 4. A term that falls under the transgender umbrella. The person may or may not wish to take social, medical or surgical steps to physically bring their body in line with the gender with which they identify.

Transman or FTM – A person usually assigned female at birth who has taken social, medical or surgical steps to physically masculinize their body. FTM stands for female to male.

Transwoman or MTF – A person usually assigned male at birth who has taken social, medical or surgical steps to physically feminize their body. MTF stands for male to female.

Hormone Replacement Therapy – A medical process wherein a person takes cross-sex hormones to achieve either masculinization or feminization of the body.

Genital Reassignment (or Reconstruction) Surgery – A surgical process wherein a person's genitals are reconstructed to more closely align with the sex with which they identify.

Intersex – A person born with any number of conditions affecting their hormonal, chromosomal, anatomical, or reproductive systems causing them to fall outside of the typical definitions of male or female.

***Please note:** This is a **very basic** vocabulary list designed for people who have little or no exposure to topics related to sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression. This list is **NOT** comprehensive, nor is any given definition comprehensive. See Forge-Forward’s list of “101 Trans Identity Words.” The definitions listed here are contestable, ever changing, and may not speak to the experiences or identities of many. This handout is supplemental to other trainings or workshops.

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