

# Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Definitions

**A-Romantic:** A romantic orientation characterized by a persistent lack of romantic attraction toward any gender. (Source: <http://www.asexualityarchive.com/glossary/>)

**A-Sexual:** A person who generally does not feel sexual attraction or desire to any group of people. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Ally:** Typically any non-LGBT person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people, though LGBT people can be allies, such as a lesbian who is an ally to transgender people. (Source: <http://www.revelandriot.com/resources/lgbtq-and-trans-definitions/>)

**Binary Genderism (Binarism):** Describes the system in which a society splits its members of male and female sexes into gender roles, gender identities and attributes. (Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_binary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_binary))

**Bisexual:** An individual (male or female) who is attracted to, and may form sexual and affectionate relationships with, both males and females. A bisexual person may not be equally attracted to both genders, and the degree of attraction may vary over time. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Biphobia:** The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Cis-gender:** A term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth. (Source: <http://www.basicrights.org/uncategorized/trans-101-cisgender/>)

**Coming Out:** The process of acknowledging one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to other people. For most LGBT people this is a life-long process. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Cross-dresser:** Someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Drag Queen/King:** A person who consciously performs "masculinity," or "femininity," usually in a show or theatre setting, presenting an exaggerated form of masculine or feminine expression, often times done by the opposite gender of the gendered performance. (Source: <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>)

**Demi-Sexual:** A demi-sexual does not experience sexual attraction unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person. The bond may or may not be romantic in nature. (Source: <http://www.asexualityarchive.com/glossary/>)

**Gay:** A person who forms sexual or affectionate relationships with those of the same gender; often used to refer to men only. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Gender:** A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. See "Gender Identity" and "Gender Expression" for more on gender. (Source: [http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt\\_resources\\_definiton\\_of\\_terms](http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms))

**Gender Binary** – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Gender Dysphoria:** The overall psychological term used to describe the feelings of anguish and anxiety that arise from the mismatch between a transgender person's physical sex and their gender identity, and from parental and societal pressure to conform gender norms. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Gender Expression:** A term which refers to the ways in which we each manifest masculinity or femininity. It is usually an extension of our "gender identity," our innate sense of being male, female, etc. Each of us expresses a particular gender every day – by the way we style our hair, select our clothing, or even the way we stand. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Gender Identity:** The sense of "being" male, female, genderqueer, agender, etc. For some people, gender identity is in accord with physical anatomy. For transgender people, gender identity may differ from physical anatomy or expected social roles. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Gender Identity Disorder (GID):** The psychological classification found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) which is used to diagnose trans people and children. GID is frequently, abusively and inappropriately used with children to cure homosexuality and enforce gender conformity. There is a current movement to have this diagnosis removed from the DSM-IV as trans people consider the label of mental illness as an incorrect assessment of their situation. (Source: <http://www.siue.edu/lgbt/definitions.shtml>)

**Gender Queer:** A term which refers to individuals or groups who "queer" or problematize the hegemonic notions of sex, gender and desire in a given society. Genderqueer people possess identities which fall outside of the widely accepted sexual binary (i.e. "men" and "women").

Genderqueer may also refer to people who identify as both transgendered AND queer, i.e. individuals who challenge both gender and sexuality regimes and see gender identity and sexual orientation as overlapping and interconnected. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Gender Role:** The socially constructed and culturally specific behaviour and appearance expectations imposed on women (femininity) and men (masculinity), and that society uses to differentiate females from males. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Heteronormativity:** The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Heterosexual:** An individual (female or male) who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with members of the other gender; also referred to as "straight." (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Heterosexism:** The institutionalized assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Homophobia:** The irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against, homosexual people or behaviour. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Homosexual:** A person who has sexual and affectional attractions predominantly to the same gender; because this term is associated historically with a medical model of homosexuality, most homosexual people prefer the terms lesbian, gay, or bisexual. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Intersex:** A person whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers of "female" and "male." For example: people born with both "female" and "male" anatomy (penis, testicles, vagina, uterus); people born with XXY. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Lesbian:** A woman who forms sexual and affectionate relationships with other women. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQA, TBLG:** These acronyms refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, [Two-Spirit,] Queer or Questioning, and Asexual or Ally. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Outing:** Publicly revealing another person's sexual orientation or transgendered identity/status without permission. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Passing:** Describes a person's ability to be accepted as their preferred gender/sex or race/ethnic identity or to be seen as heterosexual. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Pansexual:** A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions, not just people who fit into the standard gender binary (i.e. men and women). (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Queer:**

- An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTIQ people
- A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid.
- A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer.

(Source: [http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt\\_resources\\_definiton\\_of\\_terms#twospirit](http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms#twospirit))

**Questioning:** An apt term or self-label sometimes used by those exploring personal and political issues of sexual orientation, sexual and gender identity. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Reclaimed Language:** Many LGBT people have chosen to positively use and hence reclaim words or terms that were previously used by others in only derogatory and hurtful ways. Some examples are dyke, fag, faggot and queer, all words that have been reclaimed to be embraced positively. Although these terms are used positively by those reclaiming them, it is still offensive to have them used against us by others whose intent is to hurt. Although many LGBT people have reclaimed these terms, there are still other LGBT people who consider any usage of these terms offensive. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Sex:** A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because usually subdivided into 'male' and 'female', this category does not recognize the existence of intersexed bodies. (Source: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>)

**Sexual Orientation:** The type of sexual, romantic, and/or physical attraction someone feels toward others. Often labeled based on the gender identity/expression of the person and who they are attracted to. Common labels: lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, etc. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Transgender (TG):** Is someone whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations of masculinity or femininity; transgender is also an umbrella term used to describe the continuum of individuals whose gender identity and expression, to varying degrees, does not correspond with their genetic or physical gender, or does not conform to society's assigned gender roles and expectations. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Trans-sexual (TS):** An individual who presents oneself and lives in the gender “opposite” to their genetic/physical gender at birth. A transsexual is someone who may psychologically feel like the other sex and has somehow been trapped in the wrong body. (Source: <http://youthsafe.net/definitions.html>)

**Transphobia:** The fear or hatred of transgender people or gender non-conforming behavior. Like biphobia, transphobia can also exist among lesbian, gay, and bisexual people as well as among heterosexual people. (Source: <http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>)

**Transvestite (TV):** A person, especially a man, who wears the clothes of the opposite sex, often for sexual pleasure. (Source: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/transvestite>)

**Two-Spirit:** An English translation of terms in various languages to describe a concept that appears in Native cultures across North America. Traditionally, the two-spirit person was one who had received a gift from the Creator, that gift being the privilege to house both male and female spirits in their bodies. This greater vision was a gift to be shared with all, and as such, two-spirit people were revered as leaders, mediators, teachers, artists, seers, and spiritual guides. They were treated with the greatest respect, and held important spiritual and ceremonial responsibilities.

Nowadays, two-spirit is the term by which many First Nations LGBT2IQ people identify themselves. In a broader sense, two-spirit is a term that can encompass an integration of alternative sexuality and/or alternative gender with Native spirituality. (Source: <https://www.pflagcanada.ca/en/glossary-e.html>)