



A Few Terms and Labels Used in the LGBTQIA+ Community

Ally*- an individual who supports, and advocates for, individuals and/or communities other than their own

Aromantic- an individual who experiences no romantic attraction to other people; may or may not experience sexual attraction

Asexual- an individual who does not experience sexual attraction

Bisexual- an individual attracted to people of either sex

Cisgender- a person whose gender identity matches the gender assigned at birth

Gay- a common synonym for homosexual; often used to describe men who have sex with men/are attracted to men

Gender*- a multi-factorial social construct that ascribes individuals as being "feminine", "masculine", "androgynous", etc.

Gender expression- how an individual acts and dresses to show their gender

Gender identity*- an individual's internal, or psychological, experience of their own gender

Gender non-conforming (GNC)- an individual who acts or dresses in a way that does not align with societal expectations for their gender

Genderfluid- a person whose gender identity switches from one to another

Genderqueer*- a gender identity for individuals outside of the culturally expected, or assumed, gender binary

Heteroflexible- someone who is primarily attracted to people of the opposite gender, but occasionally experiences attraction to people of the same gender

Heteromantic- an individual who experiences romantic attraction to people of a different gender

Heterosexual- an individual attracted to people of a different sex

Homoflexible- someone who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender, but occasionally experiences attraction to people of another gender

Homoromantic- an individual who experiences romantic attraction to people of the same gender

Homosexual- an individual attracted to people of the same sex

Intersex- an individual whose body does not fit the so-called "normal" definitions of "male" or "female"

Lesbian- common label for women who have sex with women/are attracted to women

Men who have sex with men (MSM)- often used by medical practitioners as a descriptor regardless of patient's chosen label

Non-binary- an individual who identifies as neither male nor female

Pansexual- an individual attracted to people of any sex or gender

Polyamorous- a relationship (romantic and/or sexual) involving more than two people

Queer*- 1) a sexual orientation categorized by an interest or attraction to individuals, unfettered by gender identities or labels; 2) an umbrella term for individuals operating outside of or beyond social or cultural constructs of behavior, gender, identity, or sexuality; 3)

[historically] a derogatory term used against [LGBTQIA+] people

Questioning- someone who is unsure of their sexuality or gender

Romantic attraction- an emotional attraction to another person; may or may not be accompanied by sexual attraction

Sex- the physical traits that are often used to categorize an individual as "male" or "female"; usually genitalia

Sex & gender binary- the idea that sex and gender only have two categories (usually "male" and "female")

Sexual attraction- an attraction based on sexual desire; may or may not be accompanied by romantic attraction

Transgender- a person whose gender identity does not match the gender assigned at birth

Transsexual- a person who physically alters their body to match their gender identity, particularly if not the one assigned at birth

Transvestite/crossdresser- someone who routinely wears clothing most often associated with the opposite sex

Two-spirit- a modern, indigenous North American term that describes individuals who fulfill traditionally "third gender" or other gender-variant roles in the culture; NOT interchangeable with other LGBT labels

Women who have sex with women (WSW)- often used by medical practitioners as a descriptor regardless of patient's chosen label

"+"- sometimes added to the end of the LGBTQIA acronym to stand in for letters not listed

*definition from "Traversing Gender: Understanding Transgender Realities" by Lee Harrington, Mystic Productions Press, © 2016

