

# LGBTIQA+ glossary

## General

**Binary** – In relation to sex, bodies, and gender, binary refers to the understanding of sex and gender as two distinct, opposite, and disconnected forms of male/man/masculine and female/woman/feminine. Sex, gender, and sexuality are now being recognised to have much more diversity than can be captured in a binary understanding.

**LGBTIQA+** – LGBTIQA+ refers to people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Aromantic, and Agender. It is important to recognise that this acronym does not cover all forms of sexual, gender and bodily diversity and is not intended to be limiting. The ‘+’ after the acronym is in recognition of this, and points to the fact that there are other terms and language people might want to use to describe these experiences and concepts. Other versions of this acronym such as LGBT, are sometimes used depending on the context.

**Ally** – Someone who is not LGBTIQA+, but who supports LGBTIQA+ people and advocates for their civil rights, and challenges the discrimination of LGBTIQA+ people. An ally might also be someone who is LGBTIQA+ but supports another part of the community they don’t personally belong to.

## Sex

**Sex** – A person's sex is based upon their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Depending on individual State and Territory legislation, a legal record of a person’s sex may, or may not align with their sex characteristics, and a person’s sex may be recorded differently on different documents.

**Variations of sex characteristics** – Sex characteristics are physical traits including chromosomes, genitals, hormones, reproductive anatomy, and secondary features that develop at puberty. Not everyone is born with sex characteristics that fit medical norms for female or male bodies. Variations in sex characteristics can be determined at birth, during adolescence or later in life. People born with innate variations in sex characteristics are sometimes also called intersex.

**Legal sex** – An individual’s sex marker according to legal documents such as their birth certificate, passport, Medicare record and other Territory or Commonwealth government documents. In many jurisdictions, including for people born in the ACT, an individual’s legal sex may be recorded as M, F or X. An individual’s legal sex marker may or may not reflect their sex assigned at birth or their gender. For example, the vast majority of intersex people have a legal sex that is accordance with a binary (M/F) sex and gender identity. Depending on their state or country of birth it may not be possible for a transgender or gender diverse person to change the legal sex listed on their primary identity documents.

## Gender

**Gender identity** – An individual’s sense of self and internal understanding of their gender.

**Cisgender/cis** – Referring to a person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth, who is not transgender/trans.

**Transgender/trans** – A term used to refer to individuals whose gender is different to their sex assigned at birth. Transgender can be both an umbrella term to refer broadly to this group of people, or an identity term – such as trans man or trans woman. It is important that ‘transgender’ and ‘trans’ are used only as adjectives. Some people connect very strongly with their identity as a trans person, while for some people being trans is just a part of their history or experience. For example, someone who identifies as a man who has a trans history, rather than as a trans man. Being trans isn’t related to someone’s sexuality and trans people might be gay, straight, bisexual or use another term to describe their sexuality.

**Non-binary** – Identity term used to describe people who sit outside the gender binary, or whose identity is not exclusively that of a man or a woman. A non-binary person might also identify as gender fluid, trans masculine or trans feminine, agender or with another term.

**Agender** – A person who does not identify with any gender or who feels an absence of gender. Recognising agender individuals in the LGBTIQ+ acronym ensures that those who do not fit into binary or non-binary gender categories are acknowledged.

**Brotherboy** – A term specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who may use it describe someone who has a male spirit and who takes on man’s roles within their community.

**Sistergirl** – A term specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who may use it describe someone who has a female spirit and who takes on women’s roles within their community.

**Gender expression** – The way in which a person externally expresses their gender, which may or may not, align with their legal sex, or their sex assigned at birth. Gender expression might relate to dress and clothing, hairstyle, make-up, body language and mannerism, as well as the gendered language used to refer to people – pronouns like he, she or they.

**Gender affirmation (or transition)** – A process undertaken to bring a person into alignment with their gender identity. This might be social (such as coming out, using a different name or pronouns, or changing their gender expression), legal (such as legally changing their name or sex marker), and/or medical (such as hormones or surgery). What steps an individual takes depends on what feels right for them. There is no right or wrong way for someone to affirm their gender, and no timeline on when it should happen.

## Sexual orientation

**Sexual orientation** – An individual’s sexual and/or romantic attraction or orientation towards persons of the same gender, persons of a different gender, persons of any gender, or no one at all.

**Asexual** – Asexual individuals experience little to no sexual attraction. Asexual individuals may still experience other forms of attraction, such as romantic, emotional, or intellectual, and can have fulfilling relationships and connections. Asexuality is also a spectrum comprising multiple other identities such as demisexual and others.

**Aromantic** – An aromantic person experiences little or no romantic attraction to others. Aromantic people may still form deep and meaningful relationships that are not based on romance. Understand that these identities exist on a spectrum and that they can overlap.

**Bisexual** – Someone who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender and people of other genders.

**Gay** – Someone who sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals of the same gender.

**Heterosexual/straight** – Someone who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals of a different gender.

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

**Pansexual** – someone who's sexual and/or romantic attraction is not restricted by gender or based on gender. A pansexual person might experience attraction to any person, regardless of their gender identity.

**Queer** – a term used to describe a range of sexuality and/or gender identities, and which is generally used to denote resistance to heterosexuality and/or binary gender norms

*For more information and guidance on inclusive language, please refer to the [ACT Government Inclusive Communication Guide](#). This guide supports the ACT Public Service in meeting our human rights obligations by encouraging equitable and inclusive communication practices.*