

LGBTIQ+ Glossary

General

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

LGBTIQ+ –LGBTIQ+ is short for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer. It is important to recognise that this acronym does not cover all forms of sex, gender and sexuality 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 LGB, LGBT, or LGBTIQA+ (the A representing ‘Asexual’) might be used depending on the context.

Ally – Someone who is not LGBTIQ+, but who supports LGBTIQ+ people and advocates for their civil rights, and challenges homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexism. An ally might also be someone who is LGBTIQ+ but supports another part of the community they don’t personally identify as.

Sex

Sex – Relating to an individual’s sex characteristics, including chromosomes, physical anatomy and hormones, as well as secondary sex characteristics

Intersex – An umbrella term for people who are born with variations in sex characteristics that mean their bodies do not fit into social or medical norms of male or female bodies. There are around 40 different intersex variations, and people may discover they’re intersex at many different points in their life. Not all people born with variations in sex characteristics know or identify with the term intersex. Being intersex does not pre-determine any particular gender identity, and the majority of intersex people identify as men or women, though some intersex people might also be non-binary or transgender.

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 documents.

Gender

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

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

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 identity – An individual's sense of self and internal understanding of their gender.

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.

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.

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. 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.

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

Sexual orientation

Asexual/Aromantic – Someone who experiences limited or no sexual and/or romantic attraction.

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. This is a term most commonly associated with men but can also be used to describe women.

Heterosexual/Straight – Someone who is exclusively sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals of the gender.

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

Pansexual – someone whose 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.

Sexual Orientation – An individual's sexual and/or romantic attraction or orientation towards persons of the same gender, persons of a different gender, or persons of any gender

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. Queer was historically a derogatory term and remains a slur for some people, though for others it is a term of celebration and resilience.

Questioning – Not all people are certain about their sexuality or their gender identity, and some people might still be exploring and discovering this. These people might want to describe themselves as questioning. For some people this might be temporary before they find a term that feels right for them and their experiences. For other people this might be ongoing, and they may use it to indicate that while they are not heterosexual and/or cisgender they don't want to use a specific label.

¹ These definitions have been adapted from resources from the *Australian Human Rights Commission* and *Pride and Diversity*. The ACTPS also acknowledges the contribution that *Transformation Solutions* has made to the development of this glossary.