



LGBT Foundation Training Academy – Terminology

Please remember that people use different words to describe themselves and their attraction to others, and language changes or evolves over time.

These are common best practice definitions of LGBT+ terminology, if you're ever unsure you can do your own research or, better still, ask if it's ok if they explain what that identity means to them.

Sexual Orientation

A way of describing who a person is sexually and/or romantically attracted to.

Sexual activity does not indicate sexual orientation, so people who have sexual relations with someone of the same gender may not necessarily identify as LGBTQ+. This is why terms such as men who have sex with men (MSM) are used in some contexts.

It can also describe someone's lack of sexual attraction, known as asexuality.

Gender Identity

A person's internal feelings and convictions about their gender. This can be the same or different to the gender they were assigned at birth.

Everybody has a gender identity.

Gender identities include "woman", "man", "non-binary" etc.

Lesbian

A woman who is largely or exclusively emotionally, sexually, and/or physically attracted to other women.

Some non-binary people also identify as lesbian.



Gay

Someone who is romantically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

The term can be used to describe anyone regardless of gender identity but is more commonly used to describe men.

Bisexual

Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender and other genders

Pan or Pansexual

Someone who is emotionally, sexually, and/or physically attracted to others regardless of gender identity.

Trans or Transgender

An umbrella term to refer to anyone whose gender identity doesn't completely match the gender they were given at birth, including trans women, trans men, and non-binary people.

Some people who do drag or cross dress consider themselves trans, some don't.

Non-Binary

Somebody who identifies as neither a man nor a woman, or who identifies as both a man and a woman.

May refer to themselves as: genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, or in a number of other ways.



Cisgender or Cis

Someone whose gender identity completely matches the gender they were given at birth; someone who is not transgender.

Also abbreviated to “cis”

Intersex

Someone who has one or more variation in sex characteristics that are different from society’s expectations of “male” or “female” bodies.

This can be due to differences in primary and secondary sex characteristics including external and internal genitalia, hormones, and/or chromosomes.

Queer

An overarching or umbrella term used by some to describe members of the LGBTQ+ community. The term has been reclaimed by members of the community from previous derogatory use, and some members of the community may not wish to use it due to this history. When Q is seen at the end of LGBTQ+, it typically refers to queer and, less often, questioning.