



*Language is constantly changing; we all need to continue learning. All terms should be chosen by a person for themselves.*

**Allyship:** The practice of self educating about heterosexism and cisgenderism, educating others, and actively supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals and causes. Allyship is practiced by cisgender, trans, and genderqueer people as well as straight and LGBTQIA+ identified people who support and advocate with LGBTQIA+ people across communities. While the term “ally” implies a complete identity, “allyship” is an ongoing process.

**Asexual:** A term people may use to describe their experience of little to no sexual attraction to people of any gender. Asexuality is a sexual orientation, and is not the same as celibacy or abstinence. There is great diversity in how members of the asexual community experience sexual and romantic attraction, desire, arousal, and relationships.

**Assigned Sex:** The sex a person is socially considered to be at birth, often based on interpretation of a person’s external genitalia. Assigned sex is not necessary public information. Assigned sex is not the same thing as gender identity.

**Bisexual:** A term people may use to describe their potential to be romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender; an umbrella term that may include people who identify as not monosexual, for example, as multisexual, omnisexual, pansexual, and/or queer.

**Cisgender:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Cisgenderism:** The system of oppression that reinforces the belief in only two, biologically based genders, thereby negating, punishing, and excluding all transgender and genderqueer people.

**Coming out:** (1) The process by which people accept their own state of embodiment, which may include gender identity, sexual orientation, or romantic orientation. (2) The process by which one shares one’s gender identity, sexual orientation, or romantic orientation with others (to come out to friends, etc.).

**Gay:** A term people may use to describe their identity as a man whose romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions are to men. This term is also sometimes claimed as an umbrella term by lesbians and bisexual people.

**Gender Expression:** How you express gender through how you dress, walk, talk, and the language you use for yourself. You can show your androgyny, femmeness, butchness, femininity, masculinity, or different gender expressions, or all or none of these. A person of any gender identity may have any gender expression.

**Gender Identity:** Your innermost sense of yourself as agender, genderqueer, Two-Spirit, gender fluid, woman, man, or all, some, or none of these and other gender identities. Your gender identity is not dependent on your anatomy.

**Genderqueer:** A term people may use to describe their gender identity as neither woman nor man, as between, beyond, or a combination of genders. A rejection of the social construction of gender, gender stereotypes, and the gender binary.

**Heterosexism:** The system of oppression that reinforces the belief that all people are heterosexual. Basic rights & social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives are systematically denied to LGBT+ people.

**Heterosexual:** A woman or a man whose romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions are to people whose gender identity is different from their own and within the gender binary.

**Heterosexual Privilege:** The societal assumption and norm that all people are heterosexual. The basic rights and social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives, that are systematically denied to LGBTQ+ people simply because of their sexual orientation.

**Homosexual/Homosexuality:** Medical terms describing a person who is attracted to, or attraction to, people whose gender identity is the same as their own. Although this term is used by some LGBTQ+ people to describe themselves, it can be derogatory and/or othering and therefore is becoming less widespread.

**Intersectionality:** An understanding of how people who have more than one marginalized identity experience oppression (for example, misogynoir or transmisogyny) differently than people who have only one marginalized identity. “Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them ... People of color within LGBTQIA+ movements; girls of color in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse — all face vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, ableism and more.” - Kimberlé Crenshaw

**Intersex:** “Intersex is a term for biologically/ physically not being strictly male or female sex. Having one of over 30 differences of sex development is the reason this can occur. To clarify, intersex or differences of sex development refer to the biology and/ or appearance





(phenotype) of an individual, whereas gender (how a person identifies) and sexual orientation (who a person is attracted to) are different things.” - From interACT Youth

**Lesbian:** A term people may use to describe their identity as a woman who is romantically &/or sexually attracted to women.

**LGBTQIA+:** The (incomplete) acronym for queer and trans communities including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual people. The acronym has many variations that include additional identities or varying arrangements of letters.

**Non-binary:** The idea that gender isn't just woman and man, but a host of identities. An umbrella term for several gender identities that do not statically fit within the woman-man gender binary. Some non-binary identities are: agender, androgyne, bigender, gender fluid, genderqueer, etc.

**Pronouns:** Binary pronouns are she/her, he/him. There are many nonbinary pronouns including they/them/theirs and ze/hir/hirs. When we use binary pronouns (she or he) without asking, we are asserting a person's gender without their consent. Avoid misgendering people by asking which pronouns they would like us to use or by not using pronouns.

**Queer:** An umbrella term used to refer to LGBTQIA+ people; a term people may use to describe their experiences of sexual orientation, romantic orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression not confined by the gender and sexuality binary. A political orientation emphasizing that the gender and sexuality binary, and associated stereotypes, create harm.

**Romantic Orientation:** How one thinks of oneself in terms of to whom one is romantically attracted. Not dependent on physical experience, but on a person's feelings. A relationship is romantic when people involved say it is. People describe their romantic orientation using a variety of terms including (not limited to) aromantic, panromantic, heteroromantic.

**Sexual Orientation:** How one thinks of oneself in terms of to whom one is sexually attracted or finds sexually appealing. Not dependent on physical experience, but on a person's feelings. People describe their sexual orientation using a wide variety of terms including, but not limited to, bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer, asexual, lesbian, gay, and heterosexual.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term people may use to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression as different from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who identify as trans may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms including genderqueer, non-binary, and transgender. Transgender people may claim/affirm their gender identity through hormones and/or surgery. A transgender identity is not dependent on surgery and is not a sexual orientation.

**Two-Spirit:** “An umbrella term in English that (1) refers to the gender constructions and roles that occur historically in many Native gender systems that are outside of colonial gender binaries and (2) refers to contemporary Native people who are continuing and/or reclaiming these roles within their communities. It is also often used as an umbrella term within grassroots two-spirit societies (such as the Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits, the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, the Northeast Two-Spirit Society, the Two-Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society, and the Two-Spirit Society of Denver) meant to be inclusive of [...] GLBTQ Native people more broadly. [...] The term ‘two-spirit’ can be both an organizing tool and a particular political orientation that centralizes a decolonial agenda around issues of gender and sexuality.” The term describes multiple experiences and frameworks for advocacy; there is no homogenous pan-tribal and pan-historical identity. - Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, & Lisa Tatonetti (Here the authors use the term “Native people”; they are writing *within* a group of Indigenous authors and readers. People who are not Indigenous can show respect by using the terms - and being accountable to - Indigenous people or Native American people.)

*References: AVEN Wiki, Carleton College GSC, GLAAD, UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center, Kimberlé Crenshaw “Why Intersectionality Can’t Wait,” InterAct Youth, Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, Lisa Tatonetti, Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature (UAZ, 2011)*

