

Basic Definitions: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

An enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to person of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, to both sexes or more than one gender, or none.

Asexual	A person who is not interested in or does not desire sexual activity.
Bisexual	An umbrella term for people who recognize and honor their potential for sexual and emotional attraction to more than one gender.
Gay	A man who is sexually attracted to men. Sometimes used by the general public to refer to all people who are attracted to people of the same sex.
Lesbian	A woman who is sexually attracted to women.
Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)	Men who identify as having had sex with men; these men may or may not identify themselves as gay. This distinguishes the difference between sexual identity and sexual behavior.
Pansexual	A person who is attracted to people regardless of gender. Similar identities include “omnisexual” or “fluid.”
Queer	A historically derogatory word in the process of being reclaimed by the LGBTQ community as an umbrella term for LGBTQ identities. The term may also be used to describe an individual identity in which one experiences a fluid or flexible experience of gender and/or sexuality, or rejects the use of other labels.
Questioning	One who identifies as exploring their sexuality or who wishes not to specifically identify themselves within a defined sexual orientation or identity.
Same Gender Loving	A term sometimes used by members of the African American/Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.
Straight	A person who is attracted to people of the “opposite” sex; also sometimes generally used to refer to people whose sexualities are societally normative. Alternately referred to as “heterosexual.”

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GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

The ways in which a person identifies and/or expresses their gender, including self-image, appearance, and embodiment of gender roles. One's *sex* (e.g. male, female, intersex, etc.) is usually assigned at birth based on one's physical biology. One's *gender* (e.g. male, female, genderqueer, etc.) is one's internal sense of self and identity. One's *gender expression* (e.g. masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc.) is how one embodies gender attributes, presentations, roles, and more.

Androgynous	A person who has a combination of masculine and feminine gender expression or the lack of gender identification. Neither clearly masculine nor clearly feminine in appearance.
Cisgender	A term that describes an individual whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
Crossdresser	An individual who dresses in clothing typically worn by members of the opposite gender.
Gender Nonconforming	Behavior or gender expression that does not match traditional gender roles for males or females. Other terms describing the same concept are gender variance or gender diverse.
Genderqueer/Third Gender/Gender Fluid	These terms are used by people who identify as being between and/or other than male or female. They may feel they are neither, a little bit of both, male and female, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels.
Intersex	A general term used for a variety of genetic, hormonal, or anatomical conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.
Transgender	An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
Two-Spirit	A person who identifies with the Native American tradition of characterizing certain members of the community as having the spirit of both the male and female genders.

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OTHER COMMONLY USED TERMS

Biphobia	An aversion toward bisexuality and bisexual people as a social group or as individuals. People of any sexual orientation can experience such feelings of aversion.
Cisgenderism	Cisgenderism is a prejudice similar to racism and sexism. It denies, ignores, denigrates, or stigmatizes non-cisgender forms of expression, sexual activity, behavior, relationship, or community.
Coming Out	A phrase that describes the process of self disclosure and public disclosure of one's sexual orientation or gender identity.
Gender Binary	A system of classifying sex and gender into two distinct categories, male and female, often basing gender on biological sex.
Heteronormativity	The assumption, in individuals or institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities.
Homophobia	Negative attitudes and feelings, dislike of, or discomfort with, expressions of sexuality that do not conform to heterosexual norms.
Internalized Oppression	The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the group.
Monosexism	The assumption that everyone is attracted to only one sex (heterosexual or homosexual) and that bisexual and pansexual identities are inferior or do not really exist.
Transphobia	Negative attitudes and feelings toward transgender individuals or discomfort with people whose gender identity and/or gender expression do not conform to traditional or stereotypic gender roles.