



# LGBTI+ Inclusive Language Guide

An informative list of LGBTI+ terminology to help improve your communication skills with the LGBTI+ community

# Introduction

At the LGBTI Legal Service Inc. we pride ourselves in delivering exceptional service to all of our clients. Our service aims to empower and assist the LGBTI community with their legal matters. A significant aspect of our service involves communicating and engaging with our community. To be best equipped to effectively engage with our community, we must be well versed in the most up-to-date LGBTI specific terminology. We have created an LGBTI language guide that can be used as a point of reference for individuals and organisations when engaging with the LGBTI community. The terms in this guide are not exhaustive. We acknowledge that new terminology arises frequently and that the terms in this guide may have different connotations depending on regional and cultural differences.



# Why it's important to us

We acknowledge and understand that people who identify as LGBTI+ are members of an extremely vulnerable community. It is of significant importance to us here at the LGBTI Legal Service Inc to be aware of the emerging LGBTI terminology in order to assist and advocate for our clients respectfully and appropriately. As part of our commitment to further raise awareness and understanding of LGBTI issues, we publish this guide which defines many unique words and phrases used within the community. We encourage individuals and organisations to confidently adopt and use the terms defined in this guide to enhance effective communication with or about the LGBTI community.

We list below a non-exhaustive list of LGBTI+ terminology, accompanied by definitions and examples. Remember, it is OK not to remember or understand each term. If you feel confused about the use of a term, the best approach is simply to acknowledge this and ask about it in a respectful way.

**We appreciate your engagement with this guide and hope it becomes a handy resource for future reference.**





# A

## ALLY

An ally is a person who considers themselves a friend and active supporter of the LGBTI+ community. This term can be used for non-LGBTI+ allies as well as those within the LGBTI+ community who support each other, e.g. a gay man who is an ally to the trans and gender diverse community.

## ASEXUAL

Being asexual is a sexual orientation that reflects little to no sexual attraction, either within or outside relationships. People who identify as asexual can still experience romantic attraction across the sexuality continuum. While asexual people do not experience sexual attraction, this does not necessarily imply a lack of libido or sex drive.

## AFFIRMING GENDER

Means affirming the gender that matches a person's gender identity. For example, if a person was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, the person affirms their gender as female.

# B

## BISEXUAL

Bisexual or bi is a term used to describe a romantic/emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and nonmonoromantic identities.

## BROTHERBOY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were assigned female at birth, but live their lives through their boy spirit. Brotherboys take on male roles in community and society. Thus, Brotherboys encompass both gender and cultural identities.

# C

## CISGENDER / CIS

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

## COMING OUT

Coming out describes the moment where a person first tells others about their orientation and/or gender identity.

# D

## DEADNAMING

This is when someone is called by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition. It can be viewed as traumatic and distressing.

## DRAG

The term “drag” refers to the performance of masculinity, femininity or other forms of gender expression. A drag queen is someone (usually male) who performs femininity and a drag king is someone (usually female) that performs masculinity.

# G

## GAY

A person who is primarily attracted to members of the same sex. Although it can be used for any sex (for example: gay man, gay woman, gay person) lesbian is sometimes the preferred term for women who are attracted to women. It is preferable to homosexual.

## GENDER AFFIRMATION

Another way of describing someone's 'transition'. To undergo gender affirmation or gender confirmation usually involves some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns and dressing differently.

## GENDER DIVERSE

Refers to people who identify as gender fluid, gender questioning, or genderqueer.

## GENDER DYSPHORIA

Is a recognised medical condition in which a person's sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity or expression, resulting in impaired functioning in daily life. One treatment for gender dysphoria is for the person to undergo a transition. Not all trans and gender diverse people have gender dysphoria and of those who have dysphoria, for many it ceases with access to gender affirming health care.

## GENDER EXPRESSION

Is the way in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, appearance, voice and other forms of presentation.

## GENDER FLUID

Means that a person's gender identity is not fixed. Some gender fluid people feel very masculine on some days, and feminine on others, while some live free from definition entirely.

## GENDER IDENTITY

A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth.

## GENDER NON-CONFORMING

Having or being perceived to have gender characteristics and/or behaviours that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations. The person may or may not identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, or intersex. For example, in the case of Norrie, the High Court of Australia unanimously held that the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995* (NSW) permits the Registrar to register that a person's sex is non-specific.

# H

## HETROSEXUAL

An individual who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to the opposite gender. These people are sometimes referred to as being 'straight'.

## HOMOSEXUAL

A term used to describe someone who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used and many sections of the gay and lesbian community find 'homosexual' derogatory and offensive.

## HOMOPHOBIA

The irrational fear, dislike or prejudice against people who are or are perceived to be lesbian and gay people.

# I

## INTERSEX

Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of innate bodily variations of sex characteristics. Intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit typical definitions for male or female bodies.

# L

## LESBIAN

A woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some women refer to themselves as gay, rather than lesbian.

## LGB

The acronym used for lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals.

## LGBTI+/LGBTIQ+

The acronym used for lesbian, gay, bi and trans individuals, the 'I' refers to intersex and the '+' attempts to stand for all other terms, since it is not possible to enumerate them all.

# M

## MISGENDERING

Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect or does not align with their gender identity. This can occur when using pronouns, gendered language or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify.

# N

## NON-BINARY

Gender identities that are not exclusively male or female are identities which are outside of the gender binary. People can be both male and female, neither, or their gender may be more fluid.

# O

## ORIENTATION

Orientation is an umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual (sexual orientation) and/or romantic (romantic orientation). Orientations include, but are not limited to, lesbian, gay, bi, ace and straight.

## OUTED/OUTING

Revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone may effect their employment, personal safety or religious or family situations.

## OUT

Those who are open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in their personal, public and/or professional lives.



# P

## PANSEXUAL

A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to people of more than one gender or regardless of gender. Some people use the term pansexual rather than bisexual in order to be more explicitly inclusive of non-binary gender identities.

## PRIDE

The celebration of LGBTI+ identities, and of the global LGBTI+ community's resistance against discrimination and violence. Pride events are celebrated in many countries around the world and are growing in popularity each year.

# Q

## QUEER

An umbrella term used for diverse sexual orientations or gender identities that are not heterosexual and do not fit within a gender binary. For some people, especially older LGBTIQ people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was a derogatory term.

## QUESTIONING

Those who are unsure of, or exploring and discovering their sexual orientation or gender identity.

# S

## SEX

Refers to a person's biological and hormonal sex characteristics. Sex is different from gender.

## SEXUALITY

A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are typically attracted; sexual orientation. Including heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

A person's emotional, physical, or romantic attractions to another person or people. Note: sexual orientation and gender identity are two different constructs. If a person identifies as transgender, they may also identify their sexual orientation as straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

## SISTERGIRL

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were assigned male at birth, but live their lives through their girl spirit. Sistergirls take on female roles in community and society. Thus, Sistergirls encompass both gender and cultural identities.

## SOGI

Sexual orientation and gender identity.

## SOGII

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex.

## STRAIGHT

Is sometimes used to refer to a heterosexual person.

# T

## TRANS

The word Trans is used to acknowledge that there are many identities in the gender diversity spectrum. Trans is an umbrella term that includes all identities within the gender identity spectrum, including (but not limited to) people who identify as transgender, transsexual, gender queer, gender fluid, non-binary, sistergirl, brotherboy, transman or transwoman.

## TRANSGENDER

Means that a person does not identify with the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

## TRANSITIONING

Is the process by which a person changes their gender expression to better align with their gender identity. A medical transition is the process by which a person changes their physical sex characteristics via hormonal intervention and/or surgery to more closely align with their gender identity. A social transition is the process of making others aware of one's gender identity, changing name and pronoun in social settings, and changing gender expression.

## TRANS (GENDER) MAN

A transgender person who was assigned female at birth but whose gender identity is that of a man. Trans men should be treated as men and male pronouns should be used.

## TRANS (GENDER) WOMEN

A transgender person who was assigned male at birth but whose gender identity is that of a woman. Trans women should be treated as women and female pronouns should be used.

## TRANSPHOBIA

An irrational fear or dislike of, or prejudice towards, someone based on the fact they are trans or perceived to be trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.







## In compiling this list of terms the following sources were consulted:

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/lgbtiq-communities>

<https://sexualhealthdg.co.uk/lgbt-terminology.php>

<https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>

<https://www.ashurst.com/en/about-us/responsible-business/diversity-and-inclusion/lgbti/>

## ABOUT LGBTI LEGAL SERVICE INC.

The LGBTI Legal Service Inc. offers free and confidential legal advice to Queensland residents who identify as members of the diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex community. Consultations are held in-person at our West End office, via telephone or via videoconference for clients who live outside of Brisbane.

We can assist with many legal issues including family law, domestic violence, criminal law (including victim support), employment law, gender identity, civil law, administrative law and government decisions, discrimination and human rights issues.

## CONTACT US

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