

This **Glossary of Terms** is by no means an exhaustive list, but rather an attempt to provide a basic framework for some of the terminology used within, and in reference to, the LGBTQIA+ communities.

The definitions contained in the following list of terms were developed by the agencies/collectives below. This list is color coded to ease the determination of each definition's origin.

(if you require the list to be coded in a way other than color,
please reach out and we are happy to work with you.)

BAWAR (PURPLE) – www.bawar.org

LGBT Community Center of New Orleans (BLUE) - <http://lgbtccneworleans.org/>

Pacific Center for Human Growth (GREEN) - <http://pacificcenter.org/>

Eli Green & Eric N. Peterson on Trans Academics (RED) –

<http://www.trans-academics.org/lgbttsqiterminology.pdf>

Trans Student Educational Resources (ORANGE) - <http://www.transstudent.org/>

We Are Family (BLACK) – <http://www.waf.org/>

- **Agender** Person who does not identify as having a gender.
- **Ally (Heterosexual Ally, Straight Ally)** Someone who is a friend, advocate and/or activist for the LGBTQIA+ people. A heterosexual ally is also someone who confronts heterosexism in themselves and others. The term ally is generally used for any member of a dominant group who is a friend, advocate or activist for people in an oppressed group (i.e. White Ally for People of Color).
- **Androgynous** Term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly “female” nor “male,” usually based on appearance.
- **Asexual** A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.
- **Bare Backing** Anal sex without the use of a condom.
- **Beard** A "beard" is a person of the opposite sex who marries or dates a closeted lesbian or gay person to cover up their homosexuality. In the past, often lesbians married gay men so that both could "pass" as straight, either for work or for their families.
- **Biphobia** The fear, hatred, or intolerance of bisexual people.
- **Binary Gender System** – A social system in which all people are classified into either one of two categories: male or female. This system is premised on the idea that intersex and transgender people do not exist or that they need to be fixed in order to fit into a binary

system. In the United States, the binary gender system is maintained in ordinary ways such as male/female bathrooms, male/female dormitory room assignments, and identification forms.

- **Binding (or Chest Binding)** Wearing tight clothing, bandages or compression garments (such as binders) to flatten out the appearance of the chest. A wide range of people engage in chest binding, sometimes including trans men and gender-nonconforming individuals who have not had top surgery.
- **Bisexual, Bi** An individual who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men and women. Bisexuals need not have had sexual experience with both men and women; in fact, they don't need to have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual.
- **Boi** For lesbians, a boi is a woman who is biologically female, but has a boyish appearance or presentation. A boi may be lesbian identified or s/he may be trans identified. For gay men a boi is a gay man who is boyish or young in appearance or identity
- **Boston Marriage** In the late nineteenth century, it was common for two unmarried women to share a home. Many women, particularly those who were college educated, lived in long-term unions with other women. These relationships became known as "Boston Marriages." These relationships offered women of a certain class a socially acceptable alternative to a traditional marriage. Certainly some of these relationships had a sexual component, but it cannot be known how many. Today these women would have been called Lesbians, but the term was not coined until 1890.
- **Bottom** A person who is said to take a more submissive role during sexual interactions. Sometimes referred to as 'pasivo' in Latin American cultures. Also known as 'Catcher' (may be considered offensive by some people). (See also 'Top'.)
- **Bottom Surgery** Typically refers to when a person is having their genitalia reconstructed to fit the gender they identify with.
 - *Penectomy* – Removal of the penis, where the shaft of the penis is used to create the neo vagina.
 - *Phalloplasty* – Construction of a penis typically using skin from ones forearm
 - *Vaginectomy* – the closing of the vaginal opening from the bottom and opening from the top internally
 - *Metoidioplasty* – Releasing of an enlarged clitoris so that it resembles a penis
 - *Labiaplasty* – Typically done for MTFs when they use the scrotum to construct a new labia
 - Hysterectomy – removal of uterus (some states require people to have this procedure in order to legally transition)
 - *Oophorectomy* – removal of the ovaries
 - *Scrotoplasty* – construction of the scrotum using labia
- **Butch** – A term used as both a self-description and a means to describe those whose masculinity is considered physically, mentally, aesthetically, or emotionally significant. Butch is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but it is more frequently used as an affirmative self-identification. Butch lesbians are neither “trying to be men”

or “imitate” men; rather, they embody an alternative gender and a unique form of masculinity—rooted in their experience as a woman. As the most visible members of lesbian communities, butch lesbians have been subject to significant forms of discrimination and harassment from the police, in the workplace, and in ordinary interactions. They have also experienced discrimination within lesbian and gay assimilationist cultures that value normative gender expressions. As such, butches have played a significant role in creating a public culture and fighting discrimination.

- **Chest or Top Surgery** Typically refers to when a person is having their chest reconstructed to fit the sex they seek to identify with – this may mean having fuller breast implants or having breasts removed.
- **Cisgender** A term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.
- **Cissexism** – A term used to describe beliefs and practices that privilege cisgender people over transgender people. Cissexism is rooted in the belief that transgender people are in some way inferior or abnormal; as such it results in systems that marginalize and alienate transgender people.
- **Ciscentric** – A term used to describe a person, idea or system that places the needs and interests of cisgender people at the center and to the neglect of the needs and interests of trans people.
- **Closeted** Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation.
- **Coming Out** A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People often forge an identity - such as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender - first to themselves and then may reveal it to others. Publicly identifying one’s orientation may or may not be part of coming out.
- **Cross-Dressing** To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. “Cross-dresser” should NOT be used to describe someone who has transitioned to live full-time as the other sex or who intends to do so in the future. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression and is not necessarily tied to erotic activity. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual orientation.
- **Cross-Hormonal Therapy** The use of testosterone (FTM) or estrogen (MTF) to biologically produce secondary physical characteristics.
- **Cunnilingus** Lesbian act of oral sex, from Latin *cupere*, “female pudenda,” and *lingua*, “tongue”; punned as “cunning linguist.”
- **Defense of Marriage Act** The Federal Defense of Marriage Act did two things. First it said that no state shall be required to recognize the laws of another state in regard to same-sex marriage. Second, it defined the words "marriage" and "spouse" in Federal Law. The Defense of Marriage Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996. Essentially it: Allowed each state to deny any marriage-like relationship between persons of the same sex which had been recognized in another state. In June of 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that the Defense Against Marriage Act was unconstitutional.
- **Down Low** Pop-culture term used to describe men who identify as heterosexual but engage in sexual activity with other men. Often these men are in committed sexual

relationships or marriages with a female partner. This term is almost exclusively used to describe men of color.

- **Drag Queen/Drag King** Used by people who present socially in clothing, name, and/or pronouns that differ from their everyday gender, usually for enjoyment, entertainment, and/or self-expression. Drag queens typically have everyday lives as men. Drag kings typically live as women and/or butches when not performing. Drag shows are popular in some gay, lesbian, and bisexual environments. Unless they are drag performers, most trans people would be offended by being confused with drag queens or drag kings.
- **Dyke** – Originally a derogatory slur to describe masculine women, this term was re-appropriated by working-class women (though not exclusively) to describe their sexual orientation toward other women; it is distinct from the word lesbian in that it connotes a defiance and resistance to middle-class norms of respectability. The term is still used to degrade women.
- **Faggot** – A slur commonly used today by young people, particularly males, to humiliate, degrade or otherwise harass other boys and men by attacking their masculinity. The victim may or may not be perceived as actually gay. While the slur is used to degrade gay males, it is often used as a means to police the gender of all males—attacking those who act too feminine. It is also used as a form of sexism; when a male fails at something or appears weak, the slur functions to associate failure/weakness with femininity or gayness. Masculinity is re-associated with strength and success. Some gay men have re-appropriated the term to diffuse, affirm and resist norms of respectability.
- **Fellatio** The oral stimulation of a penis, either flesh or synthetic.
- **Femme** – This term describes a gender identity, historically embraced by lesbian, trans or queer- identified women, who identify, stylize and/or express themselves in a feminine manner. Femme identities, communities and cultures emerged from the shared social experiences of lesbian, trans and queer women whose gendered interactions with society were distinctive from both hetero-feminine and masculine women.
- **Fluid Bond** Relationships that chose to stop practicing safer sex, often by the discontinuance of barrier protection, are sometimes referred to as fluid bonded.
- **Gay** The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., *gay man, gay people*). In contemporary contexts, *lesbian* (n. or adj.) is often a preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as “homosexuals” an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.
- **(Mis)Gendering** – A term used to describe the process by which people categorize other people’s gender, based on perceived morphology, without regard to how the other person self- identifies. These misperceptions can cause the mis-gendered person to feel distress, anxiety, depression, and invisible. To avoid misgendering someone who is androgynous, genderqueer, or trans, simply ask what pronouns they prefer.
- **Gender Bending** – A term used to describe the practice of playing with or blurring of binary gender roles.

- **Gender Expression** Refers to how an individual expresses their socially constructed gender. This may refer to how an individual dresses, their general appearance, the way they speak, and/or the way they carry themselves. Gender expression is not always correlated to an individual's gender identity or gender role.
- **Gender Identity** Since gender is a social construct, an individual may have a self-perception of their gender that is different or the same as their **sex assigned at birth**. Gender identity is an internalized realization of one's gender and may not be manifested in their outward appearance (gender expression) or their place in society (gender role). It is important to note that an individual's gender identity is completely separate from their sexual orientation or sexual preference.
- **Gender Identity Disorder (GID)** A controversial DSM-IV diagnosis given to transgender and other gender-variant people, **which was replaced in 2013 in the DSM-V by Gender Dysphoria**. Because it labels people as "disordered," Gender Identity Disorder is often considered offensive. The diagnosis is frequently given to children who don't conform to expected gender norms in terms of dress, play or behavior. Such children are often subjected to intense psychotherapy, behavior modification and/or institutionalization.
- **Gender Dysphoria** A current, controversial classification in the DSM-V, named in prior editions as Gender Identity Disorder. While trans rights activists successfully lobbied for the removal of GID from the DSM-IV in 2013, this classification remains, however the long-term goal is to end medicalized discrimination against transgender communities by de-pathologizing trans identities all together. From the National LGBTQ Task Force: "because there is no other medical diagnosis available for transgender people to seek reimbursement of medical expenses under, we recommended that some version of gender dysphoria appear in the DSM-V as a stop-gap measure. There is a continuing need for the medical and insurance industries to update their procedures for reimbursement so that gender dysphoria can be removed entirely in the future...We must understand that as long as transgender identities are understood through a "disease" framework, transgender people will suffer from unnecessary abuse and discrimination from both inside and outside the medical profession."
- **Gender Neutral** This term is used to describe facilities that any individual can use regardless of their gender (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms). This term can also be used to describe an individual who does not subscribe to any socially constructed gender (sometimes referred to as "Gender Queer").
- **Gender Non Conforming (GNC)** A person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.
- **Gender Confirmation Surgery/Sexual Reassignment Surgery** – Refers to a surgical procedure to transition an individual from one sex to another. This is often paired with hormone treatment and psychological assistance. A "Transsexual" individual must go through several years of hormones and psychological evaluation and live as the "opposite" or "desired" gender prior to receiving the surgery (see intersex). **Preferred Term: Gender Confirmation Surgery**

LGBTQIA+ Glossary of Terms

- **Genderqueer** A genderqueer is someone who transgresses boundaries of gender identity and sexual orientation. This term is growing in popularity because it is seen as more inclusive than transgender and transsexual.
- **Gender Variance** Gender variance is behavior that is different from traditionally defined "masculine" in males and "feminine" in females
- **Gender Role** A societal expectation of how an individual should act, think, and/or feel based upon an assigned gender in relation to society's binary biological sex system.
- **Gold Star Lesbian** A gold star lesbian is a lesbian who has never slept with a man and has no intention of ever sleeping with a man.
- **Heteroflexible** A heteroflexible is a person who is straight but has a queer sensibility. They usually have lots of gay friends, identify with gay and lesbian culture and work for gay and lesbian rights. An alternate definition of heteroflexible is heterosexually-identified person who is not opposed to having a same-sex experience.
- **Heterosexual** An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also *straight*.
- **Heteronormative** – This concept describes actions, institutions, ideologies, and systems that assume heterosexuality is the 'normal' sexual orientation. As such heteronormative ideas and behaviors deem other sexual identities and practices as less normal, valuable and/or healthy; certain sex is deemed good (reproductive, monogamous, married, **cis male – cis female sex**) and other sex is deemed bad (gay, lesbian, transgender, polysexuality, pansexuality, etc.). Heteronormativity not only places expectations, demands and constraints on the sexual subject to act in specific ways, it stigmatizes, pathologizes, criminalizes and marginalizes other forms of sexualities. This ideological structure carries into the workplace, legislatures, and prisons and other significant sites, producing discrimination, misconduct, bias and heterosexual privilege.
- **Heterosexism** – A term used to describe beliefs and practices that privilege heterosexuals over homosexuals. Heterosexism is rooted in the belief that homosexual people are in some way inferior or abnormal; as such it results in systems that marginalize and alienate LGBTQ people.
- **Homosexual** (*see Offensive Terms to Avoid*) Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gay and lesbian people. The Associated Press, *New York Times* and *Washington Post* restrict usage of the term. *Gay* and/or *lesbian* accurately describe those who are attracted to people of the same sex.
- **Homophobia** Fear of lesbians and gay men. *Prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of hatred or antipathy toward LGBT people.
- **Hormone Therapy** – A medical term used to describe the use of testosterone or estrogen/progesterone/anti-androgens by trans and/or gender non-conforming individuals. Hormone therapy stimulates the development of secondary sex characteristics. Many trans people choose not to undergo hormone therapy or surgical procedures.
- **Internalized Homophobia** – A term used to describe an LGBTQ person who has adopted degrading societal stereotypes about LGBTQ people, causing them to dislike and resent

their sexual or gender identity; it also causes a disdain for LGBTQ people who do not assimilate into heterosexual gender norms.

- **Intersex** Describing a person who “who expresses a less common combination of hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy that are used to assign sex at birth”. People who naturally (that is, without any medical interventions) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society’s definitions of male or female. Many visibly intersex babies/children are surgically altered by doctors to make their sex characteristics conform to societal binary norm expectations. Intersex people are relatively common, although society’s denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Has replaced “hermaphrodite,” which is inaccurate, outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it means “having both sexes” and this is not necessarily true, as there are at least 16 different ways to be intersex.
- **In the Life** Often used by communities of color to denote inclusion in the LGBTQ communities.
- **Kinsey Scale** Alfred Kinsey, a renowned sociologist, described a spectrum on a scale of 0 to 6 to describe the type of sexual desire within an individual. 0 Completely Heterosexual – 6: Completely Homosexual. In his 1948 work *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. The Kinsey Scale is often used to dissect the bisexual community and describe the differences between sexual orientation and sexual preference.
- **Lambda** The Lambda is the eleventh letter of Greek alphabet. It is also the symbol of kinetic energy. The lambda has been used as a symbol of gay pride and identification since the 1970s. The Gay Activists Alliance first used the lambda as a symbol of the energy of the gay/lesbian movement
- **Latinx** A gender-neutral term used in lieu of the gendered Latino or Latina, encompassing those who identify outside of the binary.
- **Lesbian** A woman whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women.
- **LGBTQQIA** An acronym used to refer to all marginalized sexual identities: “Lesbian, Gay/Gender Neutral/Gender Queer, Bisexual/Bigender, Transgender/Transvestite/Transsexual, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, and Allies/Androgynous/Asexual.”
- **Lifestyle** (*see Offensive Terms to Avoid*) Inaccurate term used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender lives. As there is no one straight lifestyle, there is no one lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender lifestyle.
- **Men Loving Men (MLM)** Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of men to men.
- **Men Who Have Sex with Men** men, including those who do not identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual, who engage in sexual activity with other men (used in public health contexts to avoid excluding men who identify as heterosexual).
- **Openly Gay** Describes people who self-identify as lesbian or gay in their personal, public and/or professional lives. Also *openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender*.

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- **Outing** The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBT community.
- **Packing** The strategic placement of padding or a phallic object to suggest a realistic bulge. Can be a daily, frequent or infrequent practice for some trans men or gender non-conforming individuals. Can also be used for sexual readiness for penetrating partners. Can also be referred to as a 'non-flesh penis' or, 'penis.
- **Pansexual** not limited in sexual choice with regard to sex, gender, or gender identity.
- **Passing** A term first used to describe the experience of light-skinned African Americans who were perceived as white, the term is now also used to describe the experience of trans people who are perceived as cisgender. The experience of passing is complicated, affording certain privileges while creating other forms of stress, isolation, and invisibility. Thus, while a trans person might feel relief when passing (as they can avoid overt experiences of transphobia), they may also feel that the full range of their experiences are hidden. Using the term 'passing' to refer to someone who is trans or the trans experience can also cause harm. It implies that a trans person's identity depends on conforming to binary & ciscentric ways of being and that, in order for their identities to be validated, they must 'pass' as cisgender. It undermines the truth the cis men are men, trans women are women and that all gender identities outside of the binary are legitimate and to be celebrated.
- **Polysexual** A term used to describe someone who has an enduring or continuing orientation toward sexual encounters and/or intimate relationships that include more than two people. Polyqueer sexualities are sexual encounters/interactions or intimate relationships that, through plurality, challenge heteronormativity.
- **Pride** This is a common name for celebrations commemorating the Stonewall riots (which ushered in the Gay Liberation Movement) and the LGBT/I community in general.
- **Pronoun(s)** A linguistic tool that we use to refer to either participants in a discourse or to something or someone mentioned elsewhere in a discourse. Examples include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, ze/zir/zirs. Other than a person's name, pronouns are often the main way in which we reference an individual. Because it is impossible to know someone's pronouns just by looking at them, asking an individual for their pronouns and using it consistently (as well as providing your own!) is one of the most basic ways to show a person respect. Assertion of the use of only binary pronouns is oppressive to anyone who has a pronoun other than 'she' or 'he'.
- **Queer** Originally a derogatory slur, this term has been reclaimed since the 1980s, primarily among middle-class European Americans in activist, artistic, and scholarly communities, as an umbrella word to encompass all people who diverge from hetero- and homonormative genders and sexualities. Because of its original derogatory nature as well as the theory it has come to embody, it has remained a controversial term in LGBTQIA communities.
- **Questioning** The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

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- **Rainbow Flag** – This symbol was designed in 1978 in San Francisco by artist Gilbert Baker to signify the diversity and unity of the LGBT movement. Originally, there were eight colors in the flag; pink for sexuality, red for light, orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for natural serenity, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony, and violet for spirit. In 1979, the flag was modified to its current six-stripe format (pink was omitted, blue was substituted for turquoise and indigo, and violet became purple).
- **Reparative Therapy** Reparative therapy attempts to change a person's sexual orientation from gay, lesbian or bisexual to straight. The ex-gay movement is faith-based and believes people can willfully change their sexual orientation through counseling and prayer. This type of treatment has been discredited and renounced by every legitimate psychological association in the U.S. (See Sexual Orientation Change Efforts, SOCE)
- **Same Gender Loving** Used within some communities of color, most frequently in the African American community, this term refers to someone who experiences affectional, emotional, sexual and/or spiritual attraction to people of the same gender.
- **Second Parent Adoption** Second parent adoption is a legal procedure that allows same-sex couples (gay and lesbian parents) to adopt their partner's biological or adopted children without terminating the first parent's right as a parent. Second parent adoptions give the child two legal guardians. It protects both parents by giving both of them legally recognized parental status. Not all states recognize second parent adoptions
- **Sex** The classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproduction organs and genitals.
- **Sexual Orientation** This concept describes the idea that people have an intrinsic and enduring or continuing attraction to people of a particular gender and/or sex. While some feel that sexual orientation is primarily genetic or biological, others argue that biology and desire is shaped by social, cultural and political norms, expectations, and obligations—making orientation and identity also historical. Avoid the offensive term “sexual preference,” which is used to suggest that being gay or lesbian is voluntary and therefore “curable.”
- **Sexual Behavior** Refers to an individual’s sexual activities or actions (what a person does sexually). Though often an individual’s sexual orientation is in line with their sexual behavior, it is not always the case.
- **Sexual Preference** (*see Offensive Terms to Avoid*) This term refers to an individual’s choice in regards to attraction. Sexual preference can be based on gender/sex, physical appearance (height, weight, race, ethnicity), or emotional connection. It is important to note that sexual preference denotes a “choice” and has a negative connotation when used to describe the LGBTQ population.
- **Sodomy Laws** Historically used to selectively persecute gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, the state laws often referred to as "sodomy laws" were ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003). "Sodomy" should never be used to describe gay, lesbian or bisexual relationships, sex or sexuality.
- **SOGIE** Acronym standing for Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity/Expression

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- **Straight** Pop culture term used to refer to individuals who identify as a heterosexual, meaning having a sexual, emotional, physical and relational attraction to individuals of the “opposite” gender/sex. The term “straight” often has a negative connotation within the LGBTQ population, because it suggested that non heterosexual individuals are “crooked” or “unnatural”.
- **Stone Butch Lesbian** A stone butch is a lesbian who gets her pleasure from pleasing her partner. She does not like to be touched sexually.
- **Straight-Acting** Someone who goes to great lengths to hide their same-sex attraction and who will usually be very invested in appearing traditionally "masculine" or "feminine". They may even go so far as to vilify "feminine" men or "masculine" women. This latter behavior is an example of internalized oppression which is then expressed as sexual prejudice.
- **Stud** A term used by women primarily in communities of color who identify as “butch” or on the more masculine end of the gender scale.
- **Top** A person who is said to take a more dominant role during sexual interactions. May also be known as ‘Pitcher.’
- **Transgender or Trans** An umbrella term (adj.) for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include but is not limited to: transsexuals, cross-dressers and other gender-variant people. Transgender people may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). Use the descriptive term (*transgender*, *transsexual*, *cross-dresser*, FTM or MTF) preferred by the individual. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.
- **Trannydyke or Tranny Dyke** Outdated term describing a transgender person who is attracted to women or people with a feminine gender presentation. This term, plus others that incorporate the root “tranny” are now considered demeaning. Though you may still hear this term it is politically incorrect and may be offensive to some.
- **Transition** Altering one’s birth sex is not a one-step process; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, legal and medical adjustments: telling one’s family, friends and/or co-workers; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more forms of surgery.
- **Transsexual** (also Transexual) An older term which originated in the medical and psychological communities. While some transsexual people still prefer to use the term to describe themselves, many transgender people prefer the term *transgender* to *transsexual*. Unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is not an umbrella term, as many transgender people do not identify as transsexual. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.
- **Transvestite** An umbrella term, which refers to people who wear the clothing of the “opposite” gender. These individuals can be transgender, transsexual, cross dressers, Drag performers, or individuals who express their gender in a unique way. This term is often thought to be outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it was historically used to diagnose medical/mental health disorders.

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- **Transvestic Disorder** A current classification in the DSM-V made up by Ray Blanchard to describe “recurrent and intense sexual arousal from cross-dressing, which may manifest as fantasies, urges or behaviors. Transvestic Disorder is transvestism that causes significant distress or significant functional impairment.” Many advocates, including the National LGBTQ Task Force, have called for its immediate removal, as well as its qualifiers autogonophilia (cisman aroused by the thought or image of himself as a woman) and autoandrophilia (ciswoman aroused by the thought or image of herself as a man), as this diagnosis “pathologizes and invalidates the identities of individuals who do not conform to stereotypical gender roles. This includes all transgender people who are regularly dismissed as tranvestites or fetishists.”
(<http://www.thetaskforce.org/invalidating-transgender-identities-progress-and-trouble-in-the-dsm-5/>)
- **Triangle** The upside down triangle is a symbol used by LGBT people as one of pride, despite its use by Hitler during the holocaust. Women accused of being "antisocial" (not specifically lesbian) were forced to wear an inverted black triangle, while gay men were forced to wear an inverted pink triangle.
- **Two-Spirited** – Native persons who have attributes of both genders, have distinct gender and social roles in their tribes, and are often involved with mystical rituals (shamans). The term ‘two-spirit’ is usually considered to specific to the Zuni tribe. Similar identity labels vary by tribe and include ‘one-spirit’ and ‘wintke’.
- **Tucking** The practice of hiding the penis and testes so that they are not visible in tight clothing. A practice utilized by some trans women or gender non-conforming individuals to facilitate feeling at ease in one’s body and/or read as your gender.
- **Women Loving Women (WLW)** Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of women to women.
- **Zie & Hir** The most common spelling for gender neutral pronouns. Zie is subjective (replaces he or she) and Hir is possessive and objective (replaces his or her).

TERMS TO AVOID: LGBTQIA+ Communities

- **“homosexual” (n. or adj.)**
Preferred: “gay” (adj.); “gay man” or “lesbian” (n.); “gay person/people” Please use “gay” or “lesbian” to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-gay extremists to suggest that gay people are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s.
- **“homosexual relations/relationship,” “homosexual couple,” “homosexual sex,” etc.**
Preferred: “relationship” (or “sexual relationship”), “couple” (or, if necessary, “gay couple”), “sex,” etc.

Identifying a same-sex couple as “a homosexual couple,” characterizing their relationship as “a homosexual relationship,” or identifying their intimacy as “homosexual sex” is extremely offensive and should be avoided.

As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion or relationship “gay,” “lesbian” or “bisexual” unless you would call the same activity, emotion or relationship “straight” if engaged in by someone of another orientation.

- **“sexual preference”**

Preferred: “sexual orientation” or “orientation” The term “sexual preference” is typically used to suggest that being lesbian, gay or bisexual is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.” *Sexual orientation* is the accurate description of an individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and straight men and women.

- **“gay lifestyle” or “homosexual lifestyle”**

Preferred: “gay lives,” “gay and lesbian lives” There is no single lesbian, gay or bisexual lifestyle. Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrase “gay lifestyle” is used to denigrate lesbians and gay men, suggesting that their orientation is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.”

- **“admitted homosexual” or “avowed homosexual”**

Preferred: “openly lesbian,” “openly gay,” “openly bisexual” Dated term used to describe those who are openly lesbian, gay or bisexual or who have recently come out of the closet. The words “admitted” or “avowed” suggest that being gay is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.

TERMS TO AVOID: Trans Specific & GNC Specific

- **“transgenders,” “a transgender”**

Preferred: “transgender people,” “a transgender person”

Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, “Tony is a transgender,” or “The parade included many transgenders.” Instead say, “Tony is a transgender man,” or “The parade included many transgender people.”

- **“transgendered”**

Preferred: “transgender” The adjective *transgender* should never have an extraneous “-ed” tacked onto the end. An “-ed” suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. For example, it is grammatically incorrect to turn *transgender* into a participle, as it is an adjective, not a verb, and only verbs can be used as participles by adding an “-ed” suffix.

- **“sex change,” “pre-operative,” “post-operative”**

Preferred: “transition” Referring to a sex change operation, or using terms such as pre- or post-operative, inaccurately suggests that one must have surgery in order to transition. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.

DEFAMATORY TERMS

- **“deceptive,” “fooling,” “pretending,” “posing” or “masquerading”** Gender identity is an integral part of a person’s identity. Do not characterize transgender people as “deceptive,” as “fooling” other people, or as “pretending” to be, “posing” or “masquerading” as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are defamatory and insulting.
- **“she-male,” “he-she,” “it,” “trannie,” “tranny,” “shim,” “gender-bender”** These words only serve to dehumanize transgender people and should not be used.
- **“bathroom bill”** A new term created and used by far-right extremists to oppose non-discrimination laws that protect transgender people.
- **“fag,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “sodomite,” “she-male,” “he-she,” “it,” “shim,” “tranny” and similar epithets** The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups.
- **“deviant,” “disordered,” “dysfunctional,” “diseased,” “perverted,” “destructive” and similar descriptions** The notion that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as “deviant,” “diseased” and “disordered” often are used to portray gay people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society
- **Associating gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people or relationships with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest** Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is neither synonymous with nor indicative of any tendency toward pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest. Such claims, innuendoes and associations often are used to insinuate that lesbians and gay men pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular.

TRANSGENDER NAMES, PRONOUN USAGE & DESCRIPTIONS

- **Always use a transgender person’s chosen name.** Often transgender people cannot afford a legal name change or are not yet old enough to change their name legally. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who lives by a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).
- **Whenever possible, ask transgender people which pronoun they would like you to use.** A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or had some form of surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender.
- **If it is not possible to ask a transgender person which pronoun he or she prefers, consider using the gender neutral pronouns ‘they’ and ‘them’.**
- **It is never appropriate to put quotation marks around either a transgender person’s chosen name or the pronoun that reflects that person’s gender identity.**
- **When describing transgender people, please use the correct term or terms to describe their gender identity.** For example, a person who is born male and transitions to

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become female is a *transgender woman*, whereas a person who is born female and transitions to become male is a *transgender man*.

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