



Guide to LGBTQIA+ Terminology

Language is constantly evolving and frequently contested. The below definitions are not definitive nor is it an exhaustive list of terms. The City of Perth supports the right of people to identify their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status as they choose.

+

A symbol that represents everything on the spectrum of sexuality and gender that isn't otherwise captured.

Ally

An ally is a friend and active supporter of the LGBTQIA+ community. Someone outside of the community can be an ally and members within the community can be allies to each other.

Asexual

A sexual orientation where a person experiences little to no sexual attraction, although can experience romantic attraction.

Bisexual

Someone of any gender who is sexually, emotionally or romantically attracted to people from more than one gender.

Cisgender

People whose internal gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisnormative is the assumption that everyone is cisgendered and erases the existence of transgender and gender diverse people.

Gay

Typically, someone who self-identifies as a man and is primarily sexually, emotionally or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men. Some men use other terms to describe their attractions and people of other genders also choose to use this term.





Gender affirmation / sex affirmation / transition

The process a trans or gender diverse person may undertake to live as their defined gender identity. It involves socially, physically and/or legally changing their gender and/or sex. It could include changing names, using different pronouns, presenting differently through clothing or hairstyles etc. But it may also involve physically changing one's body through hormonal therapies, surgeries or cosmetic procedures and/or changing the legal sex markers on officially documents like birth certificates, passports and licenses.

Gender identity

A term to describe someone's own understanding of who they are (e.g., woman, genderqueer, man, no gender, etc.), as distinct from their physical characteristics (Q Life).

Gender queer / non-binary

Terms used to describe a gender identity that doesn't conform to the traditional male-female gender binary. This can include people who are gender fluid, identify as more than one gender, identify as being without a gender (agender), or something else entirely.

Heteronormative

The world view that promotes heterosexual relationships as the normal or preferred sexual orientation and is the main cause of discrimination for people with different sexual orientations.

Homophobia / Biphobia

Negative beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes about people who are not heterosexual.

Intersex

An umbrella term for people with physical characteristics that are seen as different from modern medical norms about 'female' and 'male' bodies. There are a variety of different intersex variations and intersex physical characteristics do not reliably determine someone's gender identity or sexual orientation (Q Life).

Lesbian

Someone who self-identifies as a woman and is primarily sexually, emotionally or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women. Some women use other terms to describe their attractions.

Pansexual

Someone whose sexual, emotional or romantic attraction is not defined by gender.





Pronouns

Pronouns are words used to refer to a person. They include gendered pronouns like he/him and she/her, or gender-neutral pronouns which are sometimes used by gender diverse and non-binary people, like they/them.

Queer

‘Queer’ has been used as a slur in the past but has since been reclaimed by a portion of the LGBTQIA+ community. It is an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of identities and is often used by people wishing to indicate that their sex, gender and/or sexuality sits outside of the normal ideas of sex, gender and/or sexuality.

Sex characteristics

Sex characteristics are biological and physiological characteristics that includes chromosomal configuration, hormonal profile, reproductive organs and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, body hair and voice (WA Department of Health, 2019).

Sexual orientation

The terms used to describe an individual’s sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction to another person. Someone can identify with a sexual orientation/sexuality regardless of their sexual or romantic experiences.

Transgender & gender diverse

People whose gender identity is not typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people may or may not take steps to live as their affirmed gender through dress, legal status and/or medical treatment and surgery. Trans people have the same range of sexual identities as anyone else and their sexuality is related to their gender identity, not their sex assigned at birth.

A variety of terms may be used by transgender people to describe themselves including: man, woman, transwoman, transman, trans masculine, trans feminine, trans or non-binary. The terms ‘sistergirls’ and ‘brotherboys’ are sometimes used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to refer to transgender people.

Transphobia

Negative beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes about people who are transgender or gender diverse.

