

**GUIDE TO**  
**LGBTQIA+**  
**TERMS**



**TRANSGENDER**

**GAY**

**INTERSEX**

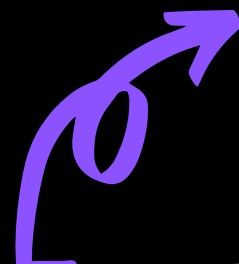
**LGBTQIA+**

**LESBIAN**

**QUEER/  
QUESTIONING**

**BISEXUAL**

**ASEXUAL  
/ ALLY**



# AN INTRO TO THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

## WHAT DOES LGBTQIA+ MEAN?

The term LGBT is an initialism used to refer to the non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender individuals, topics and communities.

Over time the term has evolved to include a 'Q' for Queer or Questioning, 'I' for Intersex, 'A' for Asexual or Ally and a '+' in LGBTQIA+ in order to be more inclusive and acknowledge that there are varying identities.

# WHAT DOES ACRONYM

## LGBTQIA+ MEAN?

L - Lesbian

G - Gay

B - Bisexual

T - Transgender

Q - Queer or Questioning

I - Intersex

A - Asexual or Ally

+ - Pansexual, Non Binary etc

# WHAT DOES **LESBIAN** MEAN?

refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation toward women. Some nonbinary people also identify with this term

# WHAT DOES **GAY** MEAN?

Used in some cultural settings to represent men who are attracted to men in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in same-gender sexual behavior identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution.

# WHAT DOES **BISEXUAL** MEAN?

A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

# WHAT DOES TRANS MEAN?

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not align with their gender assigned at birth

The term Often includes people who identify as transgender, trans woman, trans man, gender non-conforming, gender diverse or gender variant.

## HOW TO RESPECT TRANS PERSONS

- Don't assume gender based solely on physical appearance.
- Ask people what pronouns they use
- Use their preferred pronouns
- Use their preferred name in conversation and when introducing the person.
- Don't ask about their body parts...it's not cool!
- Make an effort to use gender neutral language in your everyday conversations. This is very cool!

# WHAT IS **TRANSITIONING**?

ACCEPTANCE & SUPPORT ARE CRUCIAL  
IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS.

Transitioning refers to activities that trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity

This may include changes to their name, sex designation, dress, the use of specific pronouns, and possibly medically supportive treatments such as hormone therapy, gender affirming surgery or other procedures.

Each person decides what will meet their own individual needs.

# WHAT IS THE **TRANSITION** PROCESS?

This is unique for everyone. There is no set list of steps or stages in order to transition but there are few common steps to explore and consider in order to determine what's best on an individual basis.

- Social Transition – Coming out as trans to friends and family, express use of preferred name and/or pronoun.
- Medical Transition – This can include many different options, therapies and procedures. It's important to do research, consult with a doctor (a physician is a particular medical speciality, and you don't need to see a specialist to get information on gender affirming health care, just a knowledgeable doctor.)
- Legal Transition – This may include a legal name change, updating I.D. to match gender identity and more.
  1. Changing your name
  2. Changing gender marker via Department of Home Affairs.
  3. Changing other official documents, such as driver license, school and university certificates, and bank details



# WHAT DOES QUEER MEAN?

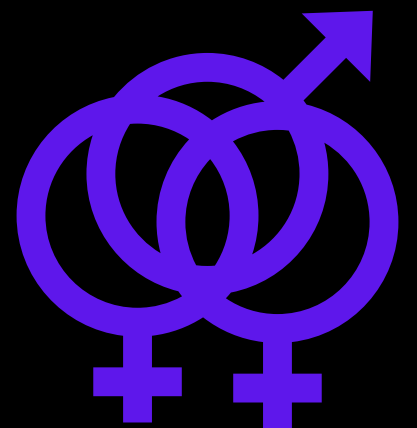
Over the years this term has meant a few things and unfortunately, it hasn't always been good, but the term has evolved, today Queer is used as an umbrella term to refer to the entire LGBTQIA+ community.

Queer is one word, one syllable meant to include all the unique and diverse individuals who make up this community.

We chose to use Queer because one of Q's top priorities is to ensure we are connecting and building a stronger community and we cannot do that without ensuring everyone is included, not just the 'LGBT' members.

# WHAT DOES INTERSEX MEAN?

'Intersex' is an umbrella term to describe people who are born with natural sex characteristics (including genitals, gonads and chromosome patterns) that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.



# INTERSEX INFO, STATS & FACTS

Intersex acceptance starts with information!

- 1.7% of the population are born Intersex, that's 129 million people. (source IHRA.org).
- The DNA traits and variations related to Intersex are naturally occurring in humans.
- There is no evidence to suggest surgery on intersex infants benefits the child, yet it is commonly practiced worldwide.
- In 2015, Malta became the first country to ban surgeries on intersex children.
- Intersex individuals face daily discrimination in all aspects of their lives. In fact, there's a significant lack of legal protections, adequate healthcare and basic human rights for intersex folks.
- Intersex is a spectrum, there are many variations of Intersex that only sometimes present as physical traits.

# MYTHS ABOUT BEING INTERSEX

Myth:

Intersex is a medical condition

Fact:

Intersex is not a medical condition

Variations of intersex are always visible at birth

Variations of intersex traits may be visible at birth, yet other traits manifest during puberty.

Intersex also speaks to sexual orientation and gender identity

Intersex relates to natural biological sex characteristics, and although there is a natural possibility of interaction, it is unrelated to sexual orientation or gender identity

# MYTHS ABOUT BEING INTERSEX

Myth:

Intersex people are not normal and require surgery

Fact:

Your biological sex is not normal, it is just common. Intersex people have the right to self determine and exist amongst society without the fear of being pathologized, of discrimination or exclusion.

Intersex are hermaphrodites

Terming intersex people using disorders of sexual development is highly stigmatizing and suggests that something needs to be corrected

# WHAT DOES **ASEXUAL** MEAN?

Asexual refers to a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction and who chooses to call themselves asexual.

Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no attraction or desire for sexual activities, to those who experience low levels, or only under specific conditions will they experience sexual attractions.

Ace is a common term used by individuals whose identity falls within asexuality

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEXUAL & ROMANTIC ATTRACTION

When getting to know the Ace Umbrella it will be helpful to understand what the difference is between sexual and romantic attraction.

For many of us, these two concepts are so intertwined we forget sexual and romantic attraction are two different types of feelings and experiences. Our individual desires for each type of attraction influences what we look for with respect to experiences and interactions in a relationship.

# SEXUAL ATTRACTION

The desire for sexual contact or relationship with another person.

This type of attraction can manifest overtime as relationships grow. However sexual attraction can also happen quite quickly.

# ROMANTIC ATTRACTION

The desire for an emotional connection with another person. This type of attraction often evolves slowly over time and may involve a casual relationship or friendship that grows with time.

When someone refers to the butterfly feelings, this is romantic attraction.



# WHAT DOES THE + MEAN?

The "+" aims to include those who identify as demisexual, non-binary, gender fluid, pansexual, polyamorous, and many more.

# WHAT DOES PANSEXUAL MEAN?

Pansexuality is the attraction to people regardless of their gender. Pansexual people are sexually attracted to people of every gender identity. People of any gender identity can and do identify as pansexual. Some people use the terms "bisexual" and "pansexual" interchangeably, but there are distinctions between the two.

# WHAT DOES NON-BINARY MEAN?

People whose gender is not male or female use many different terms to describe themselves, with non-binary being one of the most common.

Other terms include genderqueer, agender, bigender, and more. None of these terms mean exactly the same thing - but all speak to an experience of gender that is not simply male or female.

# BASIC FACTS ABOUT NON-BINARY PEOPLE

- Being Non-binary is nothing new
- Non-binary people aren't confused about their gender identity or following a new fad - non-binary identities have been recognized for millennia by cultures and societies around the world.
- Some, but not all, non-binary people undergo medical procedures to make their bodies more congruent with their gender identity. While not all non-binary people need medical care to live a fulfilling life, it's critical and even life-saving for many.
- Most transgender people are not non-binary. While some transgender people are non-binary, most transgender people have a gender identity that is either male or female, and should be treated like any other man or woman.
- Being non-binary is not the same thing as being intersex. Intersex people have anatomy or genes that don't fit typical definitions of male and female. Most intersex people identify as either men or women. Non-binary people are usually not intersex: they're usually born with bodies that may fit typical definitions of male and female, but their innate gender identity is something other than male or female.

# HOW TO BE RESPECTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE OF NON-BINARY PEOPLE

It isn't as hard as you might think to be supportive and respectful of non-binary people, even if you have just started to learn about them.

- You don't have to understand what it means for someone to be non-binary to respect them.
- Use the name a person asks you to use.
- Try not to make any assumptions about people's gender.
- If you're not sure what pronouns someone uses, ask. Different non-binary people may use different pronouns.
- Advocate for non-binary friendly policies.
- Understand that, for many non-binary people, figuring out which bathroom to use can be challenging. It'll be safest in.
- Talk to non-binary people to learn more about who they are

# WHAT DOES BEING GENDER DIVERSE MEAN?

Gender diversity is an umbrella term that is used to describe gender identities that demonstrate a diversity of expression beyond the binary framework. For many gender diverse people, the concept of binary gender - having to choose to express yourself as male or female - is constraining. Some people would prefer to have the freedom to change from one gender to another, or not have a gender identity at all. Others just want to be able to openly defy or challenge more normalised concepts of gender.

For gender diverse people, their identity is about presenting something more outwardly authentic to the world, whether they understand themselves to be differently gendered, or have no gender at all. It is important to recognise that many cultures throughout history have recognised gender diversity beyond masculine and feminine. Today the internet has provided a platform where people can explore common experiences with gender diversity and a lot of the language used to describe these experiences is still evolving.

There are often misunderstandings that report of there being hundreds of genders, each with unique rules, language and pronouns. A lot of these claims are exaggerated, taking into account very niche and specialised terms, or very personal explorations of gender.

# WHAT DOES **POLYAMOROUS** MEAN?

Polyamory (from Greek πολύ poly, "many", and Latin amor, "love") is the practice of, or desire for, intimate relationships with more than one partner, with the informed consent of all partners involved.

People who identify as polyamorous may believe in an open relationship with a conscious management of jealousy and reject the view that sexual and relational exclusivity are necessary for deep, committed, long-term loving relationships.

Others prefer to restrict their sexual activity to only members of the group, a closed polyamorous relationship which is usually referred to as polyfidelity.

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LGBTQIA+ ALLY

BECOMING A TRUE ALLY TAKES TIME,  
THOUGHT, UNDERSTANDING & ACTION.

- A person who creates a safe and confidential space for those who identify on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.
- Someone who understands and challenges common issue such as heterosexism, transphobia, cissexism and homophobia.
- Someone who will actively speak up when witnessing acts of aggression, bullying, oppression against queer individuals.

**ASK ME  
ABOUT MY  
PRONOUN?**

**THEY / THEM**

# **PRONOUNS**

**HE / HIM**

**SHE / HER**



# PRONOUNS

## WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?

Pronouns are words that are used in place of nouns. If you say "That's Raina, She is nice," the word "she" is the personal pronoun which is being used in place of "Raina".

## WHAT ARE GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS?

A gender neutral or gender inclusive pronoun is a pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed.

There are many different pronouns that exist in the world, and you are the only person who can decide which pronoun is the right one for you.

# HOW TO ASK ABOUT PRONOUNS

There are many respectful ways to ask someone about their pronouns.

- Hi, my name is Gloria and I use she/her/hers pronouns. You?
- Sorry, I forgot to ask. I use they/them pronouns. How about you?
- Can you remind me which pronouns you use?

## WHEN IN DOUBT...

There are some situations when we are unsure or unable to ask what pronouns an individual prefers. Here are a couple things you can do...

- Stick to using they/them/theirs as it's a safe, gender neutral approach that rarely offends anyone.
- Use their name in place of any pronoun: "Sam was feeling hungry, so Sam went to the kitchen for a snack."



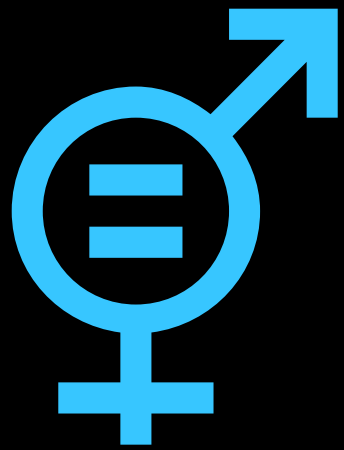
# DID YOU KNOW?

"Acknowledging a persons proper pronoun is how we show respect for the individual and their community while also challenging societies norms."

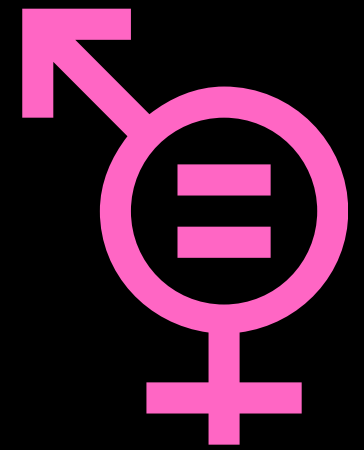
# SUPPORTING GENDER IDENTITY

RESPECTING GENDER IDENTITY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF BEING A QUEER ALLY & CREATING SAFE, POSITIVE SPACES.

- Ask & acknowledge someone's proper pronouns.
- Continue to normalize by including your own pronouns
- When someone accidentally misgenders an individual, gently correct them.
- When you see gender based discrimination, Speak up!



# GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION



THE GENDER SPECTRUM IS LARGE AND  
DISCRIMINATION CAN AFFECT ANYONE OF US

When we hear the term 'gender based discrimination' we often assume this topic is a women's right issue, but that's not accurate, individuals including our transgender, agender, gender-queer and non-binary friends can all be affected as well.

Gender-based discrimination usually refers to discrimination against women, but it can also refer to discrimination against someone on the basis of their gender identity. Different forms of discrimination can also intersect - for example, a transgender woman can face discrimination based on the fact that she is a woman, and based on the fact that she is transgender.

# MISGENDERING & WHY IT MATTERS

USING THE CORRECT PERSONAL PRONOUN FOR SOMEONE IS A WAY TO RESPECT THAT PERSON AND CONTRIBUTE TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT. WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ASK & ACKNOWLEDGE SOMEONE'S PROPER PRONOUN.

If you misgender someone, quickly correct yourself with the correct pronouns and apologize. Making a big deal out of the mistake can make the misgendered person feel worse.

## IMPACT OF MISGENDERING?

Assuming or using incorrect pronouns can make a person feel unwelcome, invisible, disrespected and/or unsafe. Misgendering also implies you have a lack of respect for gender non-conforming, intersex, trans and non-binary members of our community.

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

WHEN GETTING TO KNOW THE QUEER COMMUNITY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY. SEXUAL ORIENTATION CAN BE THOUGHT OF AS HOW WE LABEL AND EXPRESS OUR PREFERENCE OR ATTRACTIONS FOR SEXUAL PARTNERS WHEREAS GENDER IDENTITY IS HOW WE FEEL AND EXPRESS OUR OWN GENDER WHETHER MALE, FEMALE, OR HOW WE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESS OUR OWN GENDER, FOR EXAMPLE: MALE, FEMALE, NON-BINARY, GENDER FLUID, GENDER DIVERSE, OR HAVING NO GENDER AT ALL

## GENDER IDENTITY

Each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere on the gender spectrum. This sense of self is separate from biological sex assigned at birth and is not related to sexual orientation. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others.

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Toward whom a person's sexual desires and drives are oriented - toward only women, or only men, or nobody, or irrespective of gender. It is separate and independent from a person's gender identity. It can be fluid over time. The identity a person uses to describe their sexual orientation may not reflect their sexual behaviours.

# FINDING SUPPORT CONNECT WITH

GENDER DYNAMIX, IRANTI, TRIANGLE, SHE, HER, TRANS  
& INTERSEX AFRICA, D' GAYLE DIAMONDS,  
MATIMBA.ORG, BE TRUE TO ME, INTERSEX SOUTH  
AFRICA, CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MANY MORE  
ORGANISATIONS

## RESOURCES

<https://www.trans101.org.au/>  
<https://www.genderdynamix.org.za/resources>  
<https://www.betrue2me.org/selfresources/>





For more information  
Contact Gender Dynamix  
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