

Glossary of Useful Terms

Please note: Definitions may vary by individual. If someone explains what a word they identify with means to them, that is the definition you should understand when they use the word.

LGBTQ+: The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer and other sexualities and gender identities other than cisgender and heterosexual. Sometimes also written as LGBTQ or LGBT.

Orientation: Orientation is an umbrella term describing a person's sexual/romantic attraction to other people.

Bi: Bi is an umbrella term used to describe attraction towards more than one gender.

Coming out: When a person first tells someone/others about their orientation and/or gender identity.

Gay: Refers to a man who has an attraction towards only men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

Heterosexual or Straight: Refers to a man who has an attraction towards only women or to a woman who has an attraction towards only men.

Lesbian: Refers to a woman who has attraction towards only women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

Queer: Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of orientation and/or gender identity. Although some LGBTQ people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it. It can also be used as an umbrella term for LGBTQ people, e.g. 'my queer friends', but it is not recommended for straight, cisgender people to use the word queer as an umbrella term for the community as some may still perceive it as a slur in this context.

Gender identity: A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Cisgender or Cis: A term used to describe those who are not transgender. Someone whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender or Trans: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Often used as an adjective e.g. trans man (someone assigned female at birth who identifies as a man), trans woman (someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman).

Transitioning: The process by which a transgender person comes to live in accordance with their gender identity, through changes to their appearance and presentation, sometimes with the aid of medical therapies and procedures. Although many associate transitioning with hormone therapy and surgeries, the definition can vary from person to person and may include only changing pronouns, hairstyle, and clothes, for example.

Non-binary: A gender identity and an umbrella term for people whose identity falls outside the gender binary. Some people do not identify wholly or at all with either binary gender ('man' or 'woman'). Some non-binary people also identify under the transgender umbrella, but not all.

Pronoun: Words we use to refer to people in conversation that are not their name - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as 'they/their'. (Pronouns grammatically also include e.g. 'we' and 'you'.)

