

LGBTQ Terms to Know

GLBT or LGBT: A commonly used and accepted acronym that refers to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals as a group. Occasionally, an “A” is added to the acronym to include allies – (straight, supportive individuals).

Sexual Orientation: Enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings.

Heterosexual (straight): A term used to describe individuals whose sexual orientation is primarily toward individuals of the opposite gender.

Homosexual: A term used to describe individuals (gay or lesbian) whose sexual orientation is primarily toward individuals of the same gender.

Gay: Men whose sexual orientation is primarily toward men.

Lesbian: Women whose sexual orientation is primarily toward women.

Bisexual (Bi): Individuals whose sexual orientation can be toward either gender.

Gender Identity: A person’s sense of being male or female. Resulting from a combination of genetic and environmental influences, awareness of gender identity is usually experienced as a child and reinforced in adolescence.

Gender Expression: A person’s way of expressing and communicating one’s gender identity to self and others.

Transgender: An individual whose gender identity does not match his/her assigned gender at birth.

Female to Male: An individual born female who self-identifies as male.

Male to Female: An individual born male who self-identifies as female.

Cross Dresser / Drag Queen or King / Gender Queer / Gender Blender / Androgynous: These terms describe individuals whose gender expression may always or at times involve the gender opposite from the one assigned at birth.

Two-Spirit: A term used in some American Indian cultures to describe an LGBT individual.

Queer: Queer is an umbrella term used by some LGBT individuals. It includes anyone who a) wants to identify as queer and b) who feels outside of the societal norms in regards to sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Disorders of Sex Development: The terms **Intersex** and **Hermaphroditism** are now being grouped together with other disorders called Disorders of Sex Development (DSD). Most of these are genetic disorders linked to chromosome number and functioning. Although individuals with DSD are sometimes confused with people who are transgender, those with DSD are no more likely to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender than people in the general population. However, people with DSD often face the same type of discrimination as LGBT people.