

LGBTQ+ Glossary of Terms for Business Owners

A

Agender | A person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

Ally | A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ community who support each other.

Androgynous | A gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity.

B

Bicurious | A curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

Bigender | A person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).

Binder | an undergarment used to alter or reduce the appearance of one’s breasts (worn similarly to how one wears a sports bra). Binding is often used to change the way other’s read/perceive one’s anatomical sex characteristics, and/or as a form of gender expression.

Biphobia | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to more than one gender.

Bisexual | A person emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

C

Cisgender | A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cisnormativity | The assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.

Closeted | An individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.”

Coming Out | The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

D

Deadname | The name assigned at birth to someone who is transgender and has since chosen a new name.

Drag King | someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen | someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.

E

F

Feminine-presenting / Masculine-presenting | A way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way.

Femme | Someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. Often used to refer to a feminine-presenting queer woman or people.

G

Gay | A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women, and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Gender Binary | The idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

Gender Dysphoria | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender-expansive | A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

Gender Expression | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Gender-fluid | A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

Gender identity | One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender non-conforming | A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do.

Gender Normative / Gender Straight | Someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

Genderqueer | Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

H

Heteronormativity | The assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is.

Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

Heterosexual / Straight | Experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

Homophobia | The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

Homosexual | A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender.

I

Intersex | Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

J

K

L

Lesbian | A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

LGBTQ | An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer."

M

N

Non-binary | An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

O

Outing | Exposing someone's lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender or gender non-binary identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

P

Pansexual | Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

Passing | Trans* people being accepted as, or able to "pass for," a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans*. Additionally, an LGBTQ/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

Q

QPOC / QTPOC | Initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

Queer | A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ community.

Questioning | A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

R

S

Sex assigned at birth | The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy.

Sexual orientation | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) | Used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex. *"Gender confirmation surgery" is considered by many to be a more affirming term.* In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as "top" surgery and "bottom" surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

Stealth | A trans person who is not "out" as trans and is perceived/known by others as cisgender.

Straight | A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

T

Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transition / Transitioning | Referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).

Transman / Transwoman | An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male or male-to-female transgender people to signify that they are men or women while still affirming their history as assigned female or male sex at birth.

Transphobia | The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

Two-Spirit | An umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.

U

V

W

X

Y

Z