

An LGBT Glossary of Terms

A comprehensive list of terms that you may come across when discussing lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people.

Term	Definition
Sexual orientation	a person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.
Sex	registered to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.
Lesbian	refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.
Gay	refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality – some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.
Homosexual	this might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same sex or gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used.
Bisexual	refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards both men and women.
LGBT	the acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (sometimes LGBTQ – Queer or questioning, which can be self identified, but not labelled by someone else as a description).
Coming out	when a person first tells someone /others about their identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.
Homophobia	the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as lesbian or gay.
Biphobia	the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bisexual.
Transphobia	the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as trans.

Term	Definition
Gender identity	a person's internal sense of their own gender. This could be male, female, or something else e.g. non-binary.
Gender stereotypes	the ways that we expect people to behave in society according to their gender, or what is commonly accepted as 'normal' for someone of that gender.
Questioning	the process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
Trans	an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were registered with at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, gender queer.
Queer	in the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation, but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.
Cisgender	a word to describe someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were registered with at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.
Non-binary	an umbrella term for a person who identifies outside of the 'gender binary' (in other words, outside of 'male' or 'female').
Transsexual	this was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one registered with at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.
Gender variant	someone who does not conform to the gender roles and behaviours that they were registered with at birth. This is usually used in relation to children or young people.
Asexual	asexuality means having little to no sexual attraction to others.