

HANDOUT #1: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY EXPRESSION (SOGIE)

Many Americans refrain from talking about sexual orientation and gender identity or expression because it feels taboo, or because they're afraid of saying the wrong thing. This glossary was written to help give people the words and meanings to help make conversations easier and more comfortable.

Ally | A person who is not LGBTQ but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

Androgynous | Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

Asexual | The lack of a sexual attraction or desire for other people.

Biphobia | Prejudice, fear, or hatred directed toward bisexual people.

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.

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

Closeted | Describes an LGBTQ person who has not disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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.

Gay | A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

Gender dysphoria | Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term—which replaces Gender Identity Disorder—is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

A word on Pronouns...

What is a pronoun? A pronoun is a word used to refer to either the people who are talking (like I or you) or a person being talked about in the third person (like she/her, he/him, and they/them). Since some pronouns are gendered (she/her and he/him), it is important to be intentional about the way we use pronouns as we all work to create as inclusive an environment as possible. Why do pronouns matter? Ask yourself how many times someone has used your name or a pronoun to refer to you today. Chances are this has happened countless times. Now, imagine that your coworker, or a family member, or your doctor or a friend routinely calls you by the wrong pronoun. That would be hard. This is why using a person's chosen name and pronouns is essential to affirming their identity and showing basic respect. The experience of being misgendered—having someone use the incorrect pronouns to refer to you—can be uncomfortable and hurtful. The experience of accidentally misgendering someone can be difficult for both parties. Routinely asking and providing pronouns helps everyone avoid assumptions and feel comfortable interacting.

Thank you to the Human Rights Campaign for their Glossary of Terms and Pronouns 101 article. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms> and [https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC_ACAF_Pronouns_101_\(1\).pdf?_ga=2.145141500.936095917.1569021091-1229681944.1568157644](https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC_ACAF_Pronouns_101_(1).pdf?_ga=2.145141500.936095917.1569021091-1229681944.1568157644) respectively



Gender-expansive | Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

Gender expression | External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, 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 | According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing 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.

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.

Gender transition | The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns, and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions.

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

Intersex | An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all.

Lesbian | A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.

Pronoun Etiquette Tips:

- Create opportunities for people to share their pronouns with you rather than assuming you know their pronouns based on their appearance. For example, when introducing yourself share your pronouns like this:
 - In one on one conversation: Hi, I'm John, and I go by he/him. Nice to meet you.
 - In a meeting: Hi everyone. I'm Mollie. I'm the senior program manager and I go by she/her.
 - In your email signature next to your name: E. Wilson (pronouns: they/them/theirs)
- If you don't know someone's pronouns, it's okay to ask. You can say, "What pronouns do you use?" or "What pronouns do you go by?" or "What pronouns would you like me to use when I refer to you?"
- Always use someone's chosen (preferred) pronouns unless you've been asked not to do so for a specific reason (e.g., safety or privacy concerns).
- Practice! Practice! Practice! It takes intention to consistently use someone's correct pronouns if you previously used different pronouns for that person or if you're using pronouns that are new to you. Take the time to practice referring to the person with the correct pronouns in conversation and in written communication. (Tip: Worried about misgendering someone in an email? Do a quick CTRL+F and search for any use of an incorrect pronoun before hitting send.)
- If you make a mistake, apologize and move on. Help others by gently correcting them if they misgender someone.

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

Living openly | A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity—where and when it feels appropriate to them.

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.

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

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.

Queer | A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ."

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

Same-gender loving | A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay, or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

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

Sexual orientation | An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

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.

Transphobia | The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

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