

Sexual Orientation and Violence

A Glossary of Terms

Bisexual: A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to persons of the same or opposite sex.

Gay: A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to persons of the same sex. The term gay may be used to describe both males and females.

Gender: The specific culturally and socially constructed rules, roles and relationships, attitudes and behaviours, values, relative power and influence that a particular society ascribes to women and men.

Gender Identity: An internal, personal sense of being male or female. For transgender people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.

Heterosexism: Negative stereotyping, prejudice or discrimination against people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Heterosexual: A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to persons of the opposite sex.

Homophobia: Unreasonable fear of LGBT persons. Homophobia can lead to behaviours such as name-calling, exclusion, discrimination, hate crimes, and various other acts of violence and abuse.

Homosexual: A person who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to persons of the same sex. In contemporary society, the term homosexual is considered by many gay and lesbian individuals to be offensive and derogatory.

Intersex: A person born with full or partial genitalia of both sexes, or with underdeveloped or ambiguous genitalia. Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and perform surgical operations to conform the infant's body to that assignment. This has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults speak out against the practice.

Lesbian: A female who is sexually, emotionally and/or romantically attracted to persons of the same sex.

LGBT: An acronym meaning "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender".

Queer: Historically, the term queer has been a derogatory label used to describe homosexuality. In recent years however, the term queer has been reclaimed by some members of the LGBT community. As this term is not universally accepted within the LGBT community, this term should only be used to describe individuals who self-identify as queer.

Questioning: A person who is exploring their sexual identity or sexual orientation.

Sex: Biological and physical differences between women and men.

Sexual Orientation: A person's feelings of sexual, emotional and/or romantic attraction towards a partner(s) of the opposite sex, same sex, both sexes, neither sex, or another sex.

Transgender: Broad term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include but is not limited to: transsexuals, cross-dressers and other gender-variant people. Transgender people may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). Transgender people may or may not be attracted to same-sex partners.

Transsexual: An older term originating from the medical and psychological communities. While some transsexual people still prefer to use the term to describe themselves, many transgender people prefer the term *transgender* to *transsexual*. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

Two Spirit (2-Spirited): A term utilized by some Aboriginal persons to describe their sexual orientation. The term two-spirited is utilized in place of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

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