

# Glossary of Terms

on sexuality and gender identity

Definitions sourced from [The Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity](#).

This glossary is a general guide and is not meant to be a comprehensive list of terminology or identities. When referring to an individual, the terms they use to describe themselves supersede the definitions provided here.

## **agender** (*adjective*)

A term meaning “without gender,” people who are agender do not identify anywhere on the gender spectrum, but rather see their gender as non-existent.

## **androgynous** (*adjective*)

Identity or umbrella term for a kind of non-binary gender implying some combination of conventionally masculine and feminine aspects.

## **aromantic** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe those who do not experience romantic attraction.

## **asexual** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe a person who either:

1. Does not experience sexual attraction
2. Does not experience a desire for sex, or
3. Experiences these to a lesser degree than most

## **assigned sex** (*noun*)

Assigned sex is the classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs, often at birth.

## **bisexual** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe those who experience sexual or sexual and romantic attraction to two genders, not necessarily to the same extent. Its romantic orientation counterpart is *biromantic*.

## **cisgender** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe people for whom their gender identity and assigned sex match, and who fit the societal expectations surrounding their birth-assigned sex. It is the opposite of *transgender*.

## **demisexual** (*adjective*)

Someone who only experiences sexual attraction after an emotional bond has been formed. This bond does not have to be romantic in nature. Its romantic orientation counterpart is *demiromantic*.

## **gay** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe self-identified men who are romantically/sexually attracted to other self-identified men. It has also been used as an umbrella term for everyone who has same-gender attraction.

## **gender** (*noun*)

Gender is a system that operates in a social context to classify people. An individual's gender is comprised of both their gender identity and their gender expression.

**gender expression** (*noun*)

How a person outwardly expresses their gender identity, whether through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body modifications.

**gender fluid** (*adjective*)

Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may change from day to day. They may feel they are a woman some days and a man on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.

**gender identity** (*noun*)

A person's individual experience of gender. It is their internal sense of being a man, a woman, or any other gender.

**gender non-conforming**

(*adjective*)

A community-generated term to describe those who depart from the socially-sanctioned binary gender norms of masculine or feminine. It is often more commonly used to refer to youth, without placing the label *transgender* on anyone at a young age.

**genderqueer** (*adjective*)

A term used by some individuals to describe their gender identity as neither entirely feminine or masculine. It should be noted that not all people who fit this definition are okay with the term or are comfortable with using it for themselves. For this reason, no one should be called "genderqueer" without their consent.

**grey-asexual** (*adjective*)

*aka Grey-a or Grey-sexual*

Someone who identifies with the area between asexuality and sexuality, for example because they experience sexual attraction very rarely, only under specific circumstances, or at a low intensity.

**homosexual** (*noun or adjective*)

A term used to describe someone who is sexually attracted to those who identify as the same gender, or a gender similar to, the one they do. However, this term has a history of medicalization and criminalization, and should not be used for someone without their consent. Its romantic orientation counterpart is *homoromantic* (*adj.*).

**intersex** (*adjective*)

A term used to describe people who are born with anatomy or chromosome patterns that do not fit typical definitions of male or female.

**lesbian** (*noun*)

A term used to describe self-identified women who are romantically/sexually attracted to other self-identified women.

**LGBTQ2S+** (*adjective*)

An acronym used to refer to the rainbow community. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and Two-Spirit. The plus sign (+) acknowledges that the acronym does not include all members of the community and recognizes other terms not represented in the acronym.

**nonbinary** (*adjective*)

*aka non-binary*

An umbrella term to describe gender identities that do not fit within the gender binary system of man/woman.

**pansexual** (*adjective*)

A term for someone who experiences just physical or physical and emotional attraction to a person regardless of gender or sex. Its romantic orientation counterpart is *panromantic*.

**polyamory** (*noun*)

The practice of having, or desiring an intimate relationship with more than one person at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved.

**polysexual** (*adjective*)

Someone who is attracted to two genders but does not want to use the term bisexual for fear of erasing non-binary identities, or someone who is attracted to more than two genders. Its romantic orientation counterpart is *polyromantic*.

**queer** (*adjective*)

An umbrella term for a social/intellectual/political movement that seeks to encompass a broad range of sexual identities, behaviours and expressions. It has also been reclaimed as a personal identity for some, after its historical use as a slur. However, not all individuals are comfortable with the reclamation of the word, and it should not be used to describe someone without their consent.

**questioning** (*adjective or verb*)

A term referring to those who are unsure of, or exploring their gender identity, sexual orientation or romantic orientation, or those who are wary of claiming a social label for any reason.

**romantic orientation** (*noun*)

A term used to describe the direction of a person's romantic or emotional attraction. It is not a set of absolute categories, and may or may not coincide with the individual's sexual orientation.

**sexual orientation** (*noun*)

A term used to describe the direction of a person's physical attraction. It is not a set of absolute categories, but commonly used terms include *gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual*, *asexual*, and *pansexual*, among others.

**trans** (*adjective*)

An umbrella term to describe those whose gender identity or expression is different than those typically associated with their assigned sex.

**transgender** (*adjective*)

A person who identifies either fully or in part with a gender other than the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex - often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people, like *cisgender* people, can claim any identity in relation to their sexual/romantic orientation.

**transsexual** (*noun or adjective*)

An older term for those who medically transition or seek to medically transition with Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), surgeries, and/or other procedures. However, like *homosexual*, this term has a history of medicalization and still carries a clinical connotation, and therefore should not be used for people without their consent.

**two-spirit** (*adjective*)

*aka 2-Spirit or Two-Spirited*

A term coined at the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations Gay and Lesbian Conference in Winnipeg in 1999 which is used by Indigenous members of the LGBTQ+ community. It is often described as meaning people who possess both masculine and feminine spirits, however it is used across Turtle Island to distinguish the Indigenous views of gender and sexuality from the Western gender binary, violently imposed on Indigenous communities through colonialism. It should be noted that Two-Spirit is not a catch-all term for Indigenous people in the LGBTQ community, they must choose to adopt the term for themselves.