

Core Vocabulary & Do/Don't Handout

Large Group – 101 – Low Trust – 40 mins – szp.guide/corevocab

Materials

- Core list participant handout
- Do's/Don'ts handout
- Pens/pencils for participants

Setup

- On a flipchart or whiteboard, draw a star (or asterisk) with “new word” next to it and check mark with “check in” next to it

Facilitator Framing

- The goal of vocabulary isn't to read definitions for every word, but to allow your participants to highlight the words that they are most interested in and to clarify those words.
- The length of clarification, or of additional information you provide on any word (which is not required), will impact the amount of words that participants are able to/will ask about. Longer answers = fewer words covered.

Goals & Learning Outcomes

- Participants will be able to clarify questions that they have about foundational LGBTQ vocabulary.
- Participants will be on the same page about common terminology that will be used throughout the rest of the training.
- Participants will have a clearer understanding of the importance of language in relation to creating affirming environments LGBTQ individuals.

Process Steps

1. Frame the activity. For example, “We are going to be diving into vocabulary. Having a common understanding of these terms is important as many of them are going to be used throughout the workshop. Also vocabulary is often the subject where folks have the most questions or misconceptions and we want to make sure to let y'all ask any questions you may have regarding language.”
2. Give participants 1 minute to read through terms, specifying that they **only read the boldface terms, not the definitions**. Tell them to put a star next to new words, and a checkmark next to any word they have a question about or want to “check in on.”
3. Once participants have looked through all the terms, begin with the starred terms on the first page. Ask participants, “What is a term you have starred on the first page?” When someone names a term, ask that participant if they would read the definition aloud to the group. After

reading the definition, check in to make sure the definition is understood. (If you want, you can open it up for any additional questions.)

4. Add tidbits or examples of your own to help contextualize the definitions. (One of our favorite is to highlight why the part of speech is important — see Notes section for why.)
5. Start with the next starred term on that page and repeat.
6. Advise participants that in the resource guide they will find a link to a longer list of terms for them to explore on their own.

Do/Don't Handout

This handout is a handy reference guide for your participants. These are words and phrases that are often well-intentioned, but cause harm or aren't received the way the speaker often means for them to be. You can simply mention it at the end of the vocab for participants to read later and move on, or you can spend 5 minutes working through the handout.

If you spend some time working through the handout, we recommend the following steps:

1. Ask your participants to read down the "avoid saying" column. Ask them what questions they have about those phrases or words.
2. Any questions that come up read the "say instead" and the example. Offer any further clarification you'd like to add.
3. Repeat down the list.
4. Move into wrap-up.

Wrap-up

While you are wrapping up vocabulary, let folks know that terminology is going to continue to come up throughout the workshop. Participants should feel free to ask/inquire about terms they don't know/understand that any point.

Unlock the Magic

Role model imperfection! If you struggled with a term or concept, share that with your group.

Notes

Participants only receive the "Core Vocab" pages and the "Do's and Don'ts" handout. The "Comprehensive list" is simply for you (the facilitator's) reference.

Vocabulary can go for much longer than 20 minutes. It is important to clarify with your co-facilitator (or just prepare yourself) how you are going to decide the amount of time that is appropriate for vocabulary in relation to your training (i.e., are you going to let it go long if there's a ton of questions/pressure, or are you cutting it at 20 minutes no matter what?).

If the same person keeps volunteering starred/checked terms, ask other participants to read the definitions (don't require one person to read all the definitions). Similarly, if someone volunteers a word, but doesn't feel comfortable reading the definition, ask for another volunteer.

Parts of speech matter. Using the correct part of speech for certain words is crucial. Some words are not affirming when they are used as nouns (queer, gay, transgender). As a general rule, when in doubt, **adjectives are always safer.** They add on an aspect of someone's identity rather than reducing them to a single identity. For example, it feels different when you say, "Meg is a blonde," vs. "Meg is blonde."

With identity terminology, no definition is absolute, or applicable to 100% of people who use that term to describe themselves. We like to say that we **embrace the 51/100 rule**, meaning that if we can write a definition for a term that 51 out of 100 people who use that label personally would agree with, we're nailing it. With this in mind, know that 49/100 people might disagree — slightly, or severely — with any definition you provide. That's okay! Someone can use a word to mean something different from the definition here, and you can provide a definition as an "in other cases" context.

These definitions and terms change (sometimes quite rapidly), so don't be alarmed if you haven't seen a term before or have heard a different definition.

Answers to Common Vocab Questions and Helpful Tidbits

Following are little nuggets of info for some of the terms in the Core List:

asexual:

- Another term used within the asexual community is "ace," meaning someone who is asexual. Or "aro" for someone who is aromantic.
- Asexuality is different from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation whereas celibacy is an abstaining from a certain action.
- Not all asexual people are aromantic.

biological sex:

- Often seen as a binary, but there are many combinations of chromosomes, hormones, and primary/secondary sex characteristics that one might embody, so it's often more accurate and helpful to view this as a spectrum.
- Is commonly conflated with gender.

biphobia:

- Example of bi-invisibility and bi-erasure would be the assumption that any man in a relationship with a woman is straight or anyone dating someone of the same gender means they are gay. In neither case do we assume anyone could be bisexual.

- Important to recognize that many of our “stereotypes” of bisexual people - they’re overly sexual, greedy, it’s just a phase - have harmful and stigmatizing effects (and that it is not only straight people but also many queer individuals harbor these beliefs too).

bisexual:

- Can simply be shortened to “bi.”
- Many people who recognize the limitations of a binary understanding of gender may still use the word bisexual as their sexual orientation label (even if their attractions aren’t limited to “men and women”) instead of pansexual. This is often because more people are familiar with the term “bisexual,” whereas for a lot of people “pansexual” is new or unknown.

cisgender:

- “Cis” is a latin prefix that means “on the same side [as]” or “on this side [of].”

coming out:

- A popular misconception is this happens once. Coming out is, however, a continuous, lifelong process. Everyday, all the time, one has to evaluate and reevaluate who they are comfortable coming out to, if it is safe, and what the consequences might be.

gay:

- “Gay” is a word that’s had many different meanings throughout time. In the 12th century it meant “happy,” in the 17th century it was more commonly used to mean “immoral” (describing a loose and pleasure-seeking person), and by the 19th it meant a female prostitute (and a “gay man” was a guy who had sex with female prostitutes a lot). It wasn’t until the 20th century that it started to mean what it means today. Interesting, right?

genderqueer:

- The “queer” aspect of “genderqueer” is the reclaimed, affirmative, empowering usage of “queer.” This is not a slur or derogatory term.
- As an umbrella term, “genderqueer” shows up in a lot of different ways, many of which have their own label. For example, genderqueer might be **(2.a)** combined aspects of man and woman and other identities (bigender, pangender); **(2.b)** not having a gender or identifying with a gender (genderless, agender); **(2.c)** moving between genders (genderfluid); **(2.d)** third gender or other-gendered

homophobia:

- The term can be extended to bisexual and transgender people as well; however, the terms biphobia and transphobia are used to emphasize the specific biases against individuals of bisexual and transgender communities.
- May be experienced inwardly by someone who identifies as queer (internalized homophobia).

homosexual:

- Until 1973 “Homosexuality” was classified as a mental disorder in the DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is just one of the reasons that there are such heavy negative and clinical connotations with this term.
- There are different connotations to the word homosexual than there are to gay/lesbian individuals for both straight and queer people. There was a study done prior to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell about peoples' feelings towards open queer service members. When asked, “How do you feel about open gay and lesbian service members,” there was about 65% support (at the time).” When the question was changed to, “How do you feel about open homosexual service members,” the same demographic of people being asked support drops ~20%.

intersex:

- Often seen as a problematic condition when babies or young children are identified as intersex, it was for a long term considered an “emergency” and something that doctors moved to “fix” right away in a newborn child. There has been increasing advocacy and awareness brought to this issue and many individuals advocate that intersex individuals should be allowed to remain intersex past infancy and to not treat the condition as an issue or medical emergency.

lesbian:

- The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of Black women and other non-European ethnic groups.
- While many women use the term lesbian, many women also will describe themselves as gay, this is a personal choice. Many prefer the term gay because it is most often used as an adjective.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG:

- There is no “correct” initialism or acronym — what is preferred varies by person, region, and often evolves over time.
- The efforts to represent more and more identities led to some folks describe the ever-lengthening initialism as “Alphabet Soup,” which was part of the impetus for GSM and DSG.

passing:

- Passing is a controversial term because it often is focusing on the person who is observing or interacting with the individual who is “passing” and puts the power/authority in observer rather than giving agency to the individual.

- Some people are looking to “pass” or perhaps more accurately be accepted for the identity that they feel most aligns with who they are. However, “passing” is not always a positive experience.
- Some individuals experience feeling of being invisible to or a loss of their own community when they are perceived to be part of the dominant group.
- The term “passing” comes from conversations about race (a person of color “passing” as white)

queer:

- If a person tells you they are not comfortable with you referring to them as queer, don’t. Always respect individual’s preferences when it comes to identity labels, particularly ones with troubled histories like this.
- People often wonder, “Is queer an ingroup term? Can straight people use it?” Our recommendation is that folks of any identity can use the word queer as long as they are comfortable explaining to others what it means, and why they use it. Because some people feel uncomfortable with the word, it is best to be comfortable explaining your usage.

transgender:

- Trans with an asterisk (“trans*”) is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).
- Trans people can be straight, gay, bisexual, queer, or any other sexual orientation. Remember: this is a gender label, not a sexuality label.
- Because sexuality labels (e.g., gay, straight, bi) are generally based on the relationship between the person’s gender and the genders they are attracted to, trans* sexuality can be defined in a couple of ways. Some people may choose to identify as straight, gay, bi, lesbian, or pansexual (or other labels — using their gender identity as the basis). Some people describe their sexuality using other-focused terms like gynosexual, androsexual, or skoliosexual (see full list for definitions for these terms.)

CORE TERMS

ally /"al-lie"/ – *noun* : a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

asexual – *adj.* : experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to "ace."

biological sex – *noun* : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth."

biphobia – *noun* : a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. **biphobic** – *adj.* : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward bisexual people.

bisexual – **1** *noun & adj.* : a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. **2** *adj.* : a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with "pansexual".

cisgender /"siss-jendur"/ – *adj.* : a gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to "cis."

coming out – **1** *noun* : the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to "come out" to oneself). **2** *verb* : the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

gay – **1** *adj.* : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

gender expression – *noun* : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

gender identity – *noun* : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

genderqueer – **1** *adj.* : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

heteronormativity – *noun* : 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.

homophobia – *noun* : an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. **homophobic** – *adj.* : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

homosexual – *adj. & noun* : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

intersex – *adj.* : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian – *noun & adj.* : women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG – *abbr.* : shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

pansexual – *adj.* : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

passing – **1** *adj. & verb* : 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*. **2** *adj.* : an LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

queer – **1** *adj.* : an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. **2** *noun* : a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur in many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTQ people").

questioning – *verb, adj.* : an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

romantic attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantically intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in sexually intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – *noun* : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

straight – *adj.* : 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.

transgender – **1** *adj.* : a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

transphobia – *noun* : 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. **Transphobic** – *adj.* : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

Comprehensive* List of LGBTQ+ Related Vocabulary Definitions

* This list is neither comprehensive nor inviolable, but a continual work in progress. With identity terms, trust the person who is using the term and their definition of it above any dictionary.

advocate – **1 noun**: a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. **2 verb**: to actively support or plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance or educate others.

agender – *adj.*: 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 /"al-lie"/ – *noun*: a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

androgyny /"an-jrah-jun-ee"/ (androgynous) – **1 noun**: a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; **2 adj.**: occasionally used in place of "intersex" to describe a person with both female and male anatomy, generally in the form "androgynous."

androsexual / androphilic – *adj.*: being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men, males, and/or masculinity.

aromantic /"ay-ro-man-tic"/ – *adj.*: experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to "aro" (pronounced like "arrow").

asexual – *adj.*: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to "ace."

bicurious – *adj.*: a curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

bigender – *adj.*: 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 - *noun*: an undergarment used to alter or reduce the appearance of one's breasts (worn similarly to how one wears a sports bra). **binding** - *adj.*: the (sometimes daily) process of wearing a

binder. 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.

biological sex – *noun* : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.”

biphobia – *noun* : a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society. **biphobic** – *adj.* : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward bisexual people.

bisexual – **1** *noun & adj.* : a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. **2** *adj.* : a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with “pansexual”.

butch – *noun & adj.* : a person who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally, or emotionally. ‘Butch’ is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but is also be claimed as an affirmative identity label.

cisgender /“siss-jendur”/ – *adj.* : a gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”

cisnormativity – *noun* : 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.

cissexism – *noun* : behavior that grants preferential treatment to cisgender people, reinforces the idea that being cisgender is somehow better or more “right” than being transgender, and/or makes other genders invisible.

closeted – *adj.* : 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.” When someone chooses to break this silence they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)

coming out – **1** *noun* : the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). **2** *verb* : the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

constellation – *noun* : a way to describe the arrangement or structure of a polyamorous relationship.

cross-dresser – *noun* : someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.

demiromantic – *adj.* : little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual connection is formed with someone, often within a sexual relationship.

demisexual – *adj.* : little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

down low – *adj.* : typically referring to men who identify as straight but who secretly have sex with men. Down low (or DL) originated in, and is most commonly used by, communities of color.

drag king – *noun* : someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically.

drag queen – *noun* : someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.

dyke – *noun* : referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is also reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians and gay women as a positive self identity term.

emotional attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in emotionally intimate behavior (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, inter-depending), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

fag(got) – *noun* : derogatory term referring to a gay person, or someone perceived as queer. While often used derogatorily, it is also used reclaimed by some gay people (often gay men) as a positive in-group term.

feminine-of-center; masculine-of-center – *adj.* : a phrase that indicates a range in terms of gender identity and expression for people who present, understand themselves, and/or relate to others in a generally more feminine/masculine way, but don't necessarily identify as women or men. Feminine-of-center individuals may also identify as "femme," "submissive," "transfeminine," etc.; masculine-of-center individuals may also often identify as "butch," "stud," "aggressive," "boi," "transmasculine," etc.

feminine-presenting; masculine-presenting – *adj.* : a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way. Often confused with feminine-of-center/masculine-of-center, which generally include a focus on identity as well as expression.

femme – *noun & adj.* : 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.

fluid(ity) – *adj.* : generally with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, bi and straight).

FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F – *abbr.* : female-to-male transgender or transsexual person; male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

gay – **1** *adj.* : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

gender binary – *noun* : the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

gender expression – *noun* : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

gender fluid – *adj.* : a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

gender identity – *noun* : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender neutrois – *adj.* : see agender.

gender non-conforming – **1** *adj.* : a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). **2** *adj.* : a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as "GNC."

gender normative / gender straight – *adj.* : someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

genderqueer – **1** *adj.* : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

gender variant – *adj.* : someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc).

gynesexual / gynephilic /"guy-nuh-seks-shu-uhl"/ – *adj.* : being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to woman, females, and/or femininity.

hermaphrodite – *noun* : an outdated medical term previously used to refer to someone who was born with some combination of typically-male and typically-female sex characteristics. It's considered stigmatizing and inaccurate. *See intersex.*

heteronormativity – *noun* : 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.

heterosexism – *noun* : behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more “right” than queerness, and/or makes other sexualities invisible.

heterosexual/straight – *adj.* : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

homophobia – *noun* : an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. **homophobic** – *adj.* : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

homosexual – *adj. & noun* : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

intersex – *adj.* : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian – *noun & adj.* : women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

LGBTQ; GSM; DSG – *abbr.* : shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people add a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Sexualities and Genders. Other options include the initialism GLBT or LGBT and the acronym QUILTBAG (Queer [or Questioning] Undecided Intersex Lesbian Trans* Bisexual Asexual [or Allied] and Gay [or Genderqueer]).

lipstick lesbian – *noun* : Usually refers to a lesbian with a feminine gender expression. Can be used in a positive or a derogatory way. Is sometimes also used to refer to a lesbian who is assumed to be (or passes for) straight.

metrosexual – *adj.* : a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.

MSM / WSW – *abbr.* : men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviors from sexual identities: *because a man is straight, it doesn't mean he's not having sex with men.* Often used in the field of HIV/Aids education, prevention, and treatment.

Mx. / “mix” or “schwa” / - *noun* : an honorific (e.g. Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.) that is gender neutral. It is often the option of choice for folks who do not identify within the gender binary: *Mx. Smith is a great teacher.*

outing – *verb* : involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

pansexual – *adj.* : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”

passing – **1** *adj. & verb* : 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*. **2** *adj.* : an LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.

PGPs – *abbr.* : preferred gender pronouns. Often used during introductions, becoming more common as a standard practice. Many suggest removing the “preferred,” because it indicates flexibility and/or the power for the speaker to decide which pronouns to use for someone else.

polyamory (polyamorous) – *noun* : refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to “poly.”

queer – **1** *adj.* : an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight and/or cisgender. **2** *noun* : a slur used to refer to someone who isn’t straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term “queer” can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer people” instead of “LGBTQ people”).

questioning – *verb, adj.* : an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

QPOC / QTPOC – *abbr.* : initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color.

romantic attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

same gender loving (SGL) – *adj.* : sometimes used by some members of the African-American or Black community to express an non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

sex assigned at birth (SAAB) – *abbr.* : a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person’s assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called “designated sex at birth” (DSAB) or “sex coercively assigned at birth” (SCAB), or specifically used as “assigned male at birth” (AMAB) or “assigned female at birth” (AFAB): *Jenny was assigned male at birth, but identifies as a woman.*

sexual attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – *noun* : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sexual preference – *noun* : the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with “sexual orientation,” creating an illusion that one has a choice (or “preference”) in who they are attracted to.

sex reassignment surgery (SRS) – *noun* : 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.

skoliosexual – *adj.* : being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or non-binary people.

spiritual attraction – *noun* : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in intimate behavior based on one’s experience with, interpretation of, or belief in the supernatural (e.g., religious teachings, messages from a deity), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or emotional attraction.

stealth – *adj.* : a trans person who is not “out” as trans, and is perceived/known by others as cisgender.

straight – *adj.* : 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.

stud – *noun* : most commonly used to indicate a Black/African-American and/or Latina masculine lesbian/queer woman. Also known as ‘butch’ or ‘aggressive’.

third gender – *noun* : for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognise three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

top surgery – *noun* : this term refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

trans* – *adj.* : an umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

transgender – **1** *adj.* : a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. **2** *adj.* : an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

transition / transitioning – *noun, verb* : 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 – *noun* : An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transgender people or transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as assigned female sex at birth. (sometimes referred to as transguy) 2 Identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals or transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as assigned male sex at birth.

transphobia – *noun* : 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. Transphobic – *adj.* : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

transsexual – *noun and adj.* a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

transvestite – *noun* : a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression (“cross-dresses”) for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification (often called a “cross-dresser,” and should not be confused with transsexual).

two-spirit – *noun* : is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.

ze / zir / “zee”, “zerr” or “zeer”/ – alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace “he” and “she” and “his” and “hers” respectively. Alternatively some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun “they/their” as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE DOs and DON'Ts

AVOID SAYING... **SAY INSTEAD...**

WHY?

EXAMPLE

AVOID SAYING...	SAY INSTEAD...	WHY?	EXAMPLE
"Hermaphrodite"	"Intersex"	Hermaphrodite is a stigmatizing, inaccurate word with a negative medical history.	"What are the best practices for the medical care of intersex infants?"
"Homosexual"	"Gay"	"Homosexual" often connotes a medical diagnosis, or a discomfort with gay/lesbian people.	"We want to do a better job of being inclusive of our gay employees."
"Born female" or "Born male"	"Assigned female/male at birth"	"Assigned" language accurately depicts the situation of what happens at birth "-bodied" language is often interpreted as as pressure to medically transition, or invalidation of one's gender identity	"Max was assigned female at birth, then he transitioned in high school."
"Female-bodied" or "Male-bodied"			
"A gay" or "a transgender"	"A gay/transgender person"	Gay and transgender are adjectives that describe a person/group	"We had a transgender athlete in our league this year. "
"Transgender people and normal people"	"Transgender people and cisgender people"	Saying "normal" implies "abnormal," which is a stigmatizing way to refer to a person.	"This group is open to both transgender and cisgender people."
"Both genders" or "Opposite sexes"	"All genders"	"Both" implies there are only two; "Opposite" reinforces antagonism amongst genders	"Video games aren't just a boy thing -- kids of all genders play them."
"Ladies and gentlemen"	"Everyone," "Folks," "Honored guests," etc	Moving away from binary language is more inclusive of people of all genders	"Good morning everyone, next stop Picadilly Station."
"Mailman," "fireman," "policeman," etc.	"Mail clerk," "Firefighter," "Police officer," etc.	People of all genders do these jobs	"I actually saw a firefighter rescue a cat from a tree."
"It" when referring to someone (e.g., when pronouns are unknown)	"They"	"It" is for referring to things, not people.	"You know, I am not sure how they identify."

