

Opening Closets Mental Health Training: Glossary of Terms

If you're new to all this, some of the words are probably new too. Stress less though, here are some of the descriptions we have for you.

If you need any further support in exploring some of these or other definitions please contact QLife. QLife provides a nation-wide, early intervention, LGBTI peer supported telephone and web-based information, referral and counselling service. Our service is also increasingly being used by the friends and family of LGBTIQ people and mainstream service providers who are seeking accurate information and referral options for their relatives, friends or clients.

The QLife service operates daily, 365 days a year from 3pm to midnight.

Free Call 1800 184 527

For online chat and support log onto [www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)



Androgynous

Can mean having both masculine and feminine characteristics, or having neither specifically masculine nor feminine characteristics. Some people who are androgynous may identify as genderqueer, trans* or androgynous.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Asexual

Someone whose sexual identity is asexual may lack interest or desire for sex. They may or may not engage in sexual activity and they may not experience sexual arousal at all.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Biphobia

An individual's or society's misunderstanding, fear, ignorance of, or prejudice against bisexual and/or pansexual people.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Bisexual or Bi

Refers to people whose sexual and romantic feelings are for more than one gender and who identify with these feelings. Some bisexual people like different genders equally, and some have a preference. Many people may engage in bisexual behaviours but not identify as bisexual. See also pansexual or omnisexual. *Source:*
www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au/resources &
www.freedom.org.au/

Cisgender

Refers to people whose sense of their gender and/or sex matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Crossdresser

Someone who cross-dresses (previously known as a transvestite) is a person who wears the clothing of the opposite sex, occasionally. This usually refers to men dressing in women's clothing. Crossdressing is not directly related to sexual orientation -

most crossdressers are heterosexual men.

Drag Queen

A drag queen is a person, usually male, who dresses in drag and often acts with exaggerated femininity and in feminine gender roles. Often they will exaggerate certain characteristics such as make-up and eyelashes for comic, dramatic or satirical effect. While drag is very much associated with gay men and gay culture, there are drag artists of all sexualities. Famous Australia Drag Queens include Dame Edna Everage, Vanessa Wagner and the characters in the movie 'Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.'

Drag King

Drag kings are usually female performance artists who dress in masculine drag and personify male gender stereotypes as part of an individual or group

routine. They may be heterosexual, lesbian, transgender, genderqueer, or otherwise part of the LGBT community. A typical drag show may incorporate dancing, acting, stand-up comedy and singing, either live or lip-synching to pre-recorded tracks. Drag kings often perform as exaggeratedly macho male characters, portray marginalized masculinities such as construction workers or rappers, or they will impersonate male celebrities like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, and Tim McGraw.

DSSG

Diverse Sex, Sexuality and/or Gender.

This term is generally used in policy and literature as a way of referring to all people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans*, intersex, queer, genderqueer, pansexual, asexual or who are otherwise sexuality and/or gender diverse. The acronym

LGBTI is generally perceived as more inclusive.

Gay

People whose sexual and romantic feelings are primarily for the same sex and who identify primarily with those feelings. In Australia, both men and women identify as gay, however it often refers mainly to men who are sexually and romantically attracted to other men.

Gender

Gender is part of a person's social and personal identity. It refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity and the way a person presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender refers to outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress. A person's sex and gender may not necessarily be the same. An individual's preferred gender may or may not

correspond with the sex or gender assigned at birth and some people may identify as neither male nor female.

Source: Australian Govt. Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex & Gender, 2013.

“Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female.” *Source: Transforming health systems: gender and rights in reproductive health. WHO, 2001.*

Gender Diverse

Describes a person who feels that their gender identity does not align with the specific category of gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Identity

Refers to a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011

Gender Identity is the label or name one uses to define and identify their gender. It refers

to one's sense of being male, female, neither, both or other, as well as our sense of ourselves in regards to our gender, gender role, masculinity, femininity or androgyny. The most common gender identities are male and female, however there are many others in the gender diverse community such as genderqueer, trans man, trans woman, transgender, trans*, sistergirl, brotherboy, etc.

“The sense of self associated with cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Gender identity is not so much acted out as subjectively experienced. It is the psychological internalization of masculine or feminine traits. Gender identity arises out of a complex process of interaction between self and others. The existence of transvestite and transsexual identities indicates that gender is not dependent upon

sex alone, and arises from the construction of gender identities.” *Source: Jary & Jary (2000) Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 3rd Ed.*

Gender Expression

Gender expression refers to the way that a person uses appearance, mannerisms and other personal traits to express their gender. Gender expression can be any combination of masculine, feminine and androgynous traits. Traits which contribute to gender expression can include clothing and accessories, hairstyle, make-up, removal or growth of body hair, development of musculature through exercise, stance and manner of walking and manner of talking. The name, pronouns and titles a person asks others to refer to them by may also be considered a part of the person's gender expression.

Genderqueer

Can be used as an umbrella

term similar to Transgender, but commonly particularly refers to people who are not transsexual but also do not conform to traditional gender expectations through their dress, hair, mannerisms, appearance and values. Most people who identify as genderqueer don't feel the gender binary fits for them and use 'genderqueer' to label that.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au>
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Gender Variant

Used to describe a range of people that don't conform to gender expectations, including genderqueer, transgender, cross-dressing, drag performing and other gender diverse people.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Heterosexual or Straight

People whose sexual and romantic feelings are primarily for the opposite sex and who identify primarily

with those feelings.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au>
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Homophobia

An individual's or society's misunderstanding, fear, ignorance of, or prejudice against gay, lesbian and/or bisexual people.

'Homophobia' is often also used as an umbrella term to include transphobia, biphobia and any form of discrimination or prejudice against LGBTIQ people.

Homophobia is experienced on multiple levels:

- Institutional (e.g. law, marriage)
- Cultural (e.g. media, visibility, family)
- Interpersonal (e.g. bullying, abuse)
- Internal (e.g. shame, guilt, anger)

Intersex

Intersex is a term that relates to a range of congenital physical traits or variations

that lie between ideals of male and female. Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male.

Many intersex variations exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category. Intersex differences may be apparent at birth, and some common intersex variations are diagnosed prenatally. Some intersex traits become apparent at puberty, when trying to conceive, or through random chance.

Source:

<http://www.freedom.org.au>

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Lesbian

Women whose sexual and romantic feelings are primarily for other women and who identify with those feelings.

Source:

<http://www.freedom.org.au>

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LGBTIQ

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Intersex, Queer or Questioning

An acronym that refers to a group of people with diverse sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity. It includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people, and other sexuality, sex and gender diverse people, regardless of their self-identification. (*Pride in Diversity, 2015*)

Also, LGBT, GLBT, GLB, LGB, GLBTI, LGBTIQQ, LGBTQIA (A is for Asexual) or LGBTI are used.

MSM

Men who have Sex with Men. This is an inclusive term that includes gay and bisexual men, but most importantly, includes men who do not identify as gay, bi or homosexual, but are engaging in same sex sexual



behaviour (these men may be straight and in opposite sex relationships too). This term has been developed as this group of men are particularly difficult to reach for health promotion aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS as their same sex sexual relations are so hidden and do not correlate with their sexual identity.

Source:

<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Non-Binary

Some people do not identify with traditional genders of male and female, and will occasionally refer to this as being non-binary. Binary literally means something with two types or options, like male and female, so non-binary people can be a mix of the two or something else entirely.

Source:

www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au/resources

Pansexual or Omnisexual

Refers to people whose

sexual and romantic feelings are for all genders; this rejects the gender binary of male/female and asserts that there are more than two genders or gender identities. 'Pan' and 'Omni' mean 'all'. These are inclusive terms that consider the gender diverse community.

Source:

<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Pronouns

Pronouns are words used to refer to a person other than their name, like they, she and he. When a trans* or gender diverse person comes out they may have new pronouns they wish to use. Here's a link to Minus18's guide on what pronouns are, why they matter, and how to use new ones.

<https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns>

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term used to refer to all the LGBTI community.

For some, queer means same sex attracted, for others, it means gender diverse. For some, it simply means different.

Some people in the LGBT community prefer not to use this term as the history of the word had negative connotations. These days, the term has been embraced and is more about pride and inclusivity.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/> &
<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au/resources>

Questioning/Unsure

Most people will question their sexual or gender identity at some point. Even if you're straight, it can be confusing stuff, and it's pretty normal to be unsure.

Source:
www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au/resources

Safe Space

A safe and inclusive

environment where a LGBTI person can express themselves without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwanted, or unsafe based on sex, sexual orientation, gender history, gender identity or gender expression. *Source:*
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/safespace/

Same Gender Attracted

This term describes someone who is physically or emotionally attracted to someone of the same gender. This term recognises the difference between sex and gender.

Same Sex Attracted

This term describes someone who is physically or emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. This term tends to be used more widely in research and publications.

Sex

Refers to a person's biological characteristics. A



person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female. Some people identify as neither male nor female.

Source: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011

Sex (1) is the physiological make-up of a person. It is commonly expressed as a binary and used to divide people into males and females.

However, in reality, sex is a “complex relationship of genetic, hormonal, morphological, biochemical, and anatomical differences that impact the physiology of the body and the sexual differentiation of the brain.

Although everyone is assigned a sex at birth, approximately 2 percent of the population are intersex and do not fit easily into a dimorphic division of two sexes that are ‘opposite’ [*].

[*] Lev, AI 2004, *Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families*, Haworth Press, Binghamton, New York.

Source: www.wagenderproject.org

Sex (2) is sexual activity or sexual intercourse but can mean something different to everyone. For people with diverse sexuality and gender the meaning of what 'Sex' is can be particularly varied. Generally, oral sex, vaginal sex, mutual masturbation and anal sex are the main activities included in 'Sex'.

Source: <http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Sexuality

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed

in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.

Source: World Health Organization (WHO) Draft working definition, October 2002

Sexual Identity

The label or name one uses to define and identify their sexuality. One's sexual identity does not have to match their sexual behaviours; one may engage in homosexual behaviours, but still identify as heterosexual; one may engage in only lesbian behaviours but identify as bisexual.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Sexual Orientation

The direction of one's sexual and romantic attractions and interests towards members of the same, opposite or both sexes, or all genders. Similar to 'Sexual Preference'.

Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>

Sistergirls and Brotherboys

Brotherboys and Sistergirls are unique to Indigenous culture in Australia.

Brotherboys and Sistergirls are Trans* people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; the term reflects a strong sense of their cultural identity.

These words were originally affectionate terms used between Aboriginal women and men to reflect kinship; the usage of sistergirl and brotherboy terminology is clearly influenced by the diversity of communities, and will often be defined within a community depending on geographical location. Within the sistergirl and brotherboy

communities, a sistergirl is an individual assigned male at birth who has a female spirit and a brotherboy is an individual assigned female at birth who has a male spirit.

Source:

<http://sistersandbrothersnt.com>

Trans*/Transgender

Transgender (sometimes shortened to “trans*”) is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of gender identities that differ from the perceived norms associated with biological sex.

Transgender is a term that may be used to describe someone whose gender identity does not match their gender they were assigned at birth, someone who identifies as both genders, neither gender or a third gender.

Common terminology includes Transwomen (M to F) – referring to those who were born male but identify as female; although many will identify only as female (not

transwomen). Transmen referring to those who were born female but whose gender identity is male (F to M); although many will only identify as male and not transmen. Some transgender people seek surgery or take hormones to bring their body into alignment with their gender identity; many do not. Some transgender people change their gender expression to match their affirmed gender; many do not.

Source: Pride in Diversity, 2015

Transition(ing)

Transitioning describes both a public act and a process. For individuals in the trans* community, transitioning is the process of changing their body and presentation, from the sex they were assigned at birth, to match their own sense of gender and sex. It involves the permanent and public adoption of the style and presentation of the gender different to that of a

person's birth-assigned sex. It usually includes a change of name, chosen style of address and pronouns, as well as adopting the dress and style of presentation of a person's innate gender. It may also involve gender reassignment surgery and/or hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Not all who transition undergo medically assisted gender reassignment. Transitioning can take many years and is a different process for everyone - there is no right or wrong way to transition.

*Source Pride in Diversity, 2015
& <http://www.freedom.org.au/>*

Transphobia

An individual's or society's misunderstanding, fear, ignorance of, or prejudice against people who experience transsexualism or identify as trans*.

*Source:
<http://www.freedom.org.au/>*



Note on language:

These definitions are only definitive in this context.

In a daily living context these terms may be used interchangeably.

Sometimes a person's identity may differ from their gender expression and/or sexual behaviours. This may be for a variety of reasons; they may feel negatively towards a particular word, they may not know another word, they may feel more comfortable with a particular word, or they may have a different understanding of a word than what is defined above. A person's identity is self-identified.

What is important is to reflect back to the person the term that they identify with and what they feel comfortable with. Ask them what they mean by their definition; so that you may gain better understanding about their identity.

Note on language within the LGBTI community:

Some, if not many of these terms may be new and confusing to you: this is understandable as they are often not widely used on our society. It is important to remember that LGBTI people are reared in the same society, so for many people within the LGBTI community these terms will be new for them too.

