

Spectrum ashurst

LGBTI+ Inclusive Language Glossary







INTRODUCTION

As Pride is celebrated around the world, it is important to reiterate the global need for respect for, and solidarity with, members of the LGBTI+ community both in the workplace and in society. There is an increasing multitude of terms used to describe sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression these days.

Spectrum, Ashurst's network for LGBTI+ individuals and allies, has put together this short guide to LGBTI+ terminology to help demystify some key terms as well as to encourage everyone to use the correct terminology with pride and confidence. While this guide aims to be informative and an everyday point of reference, it is by no means exhaustive, and fully acknowledges that there will be regional variations across the Ashurst community. We also acknowledge, at the end of this document, the many sources we have referred to in compiling this glossary.

This means that it is impossible for anyone to be an expert on all LGBTI+ terminology. As mentioned above, there are often terms which may have different connotations depending on regional and cultural differences. If you feel confused about the use of a term, the best approach is simply to acknowledge this and ask about it in a respectful way.

WHY CELEBRATE PRIDE?

Pride celebrations constitute an important marker of affirmation and validation of efforts to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for the LGBTI+ community. In some countries and societies, the celebrations serve a more commemorative purpose whereas in others, they symbolise the need to continue to push for equality in the presence of discriminatory attitudes and practices. The overarching aim of celebrating Pride is to create an inclusive and supportive environment for the LGBTI+ community. By being part of your local Pride celebrations you are helping to bring visibility to LGBTI+ issues and act as an advocate for LGBTI+ equality. Being an active supporter of Pride shouldn't be confined to Pride month - as an ally, your efforts to support LGBTI+ communities and raise awareness of inequalities affecting members of those communities should be carried on with pride throughout the year.

Thank you for engaging with this guide and showing your commitment to the LGBTI+ community here at Ashurst and within our local communities.





ACE OR ASEXUAL

Ace is an umbrella term used to describe a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction – for which the term asexual may be used.

Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex.

AGENDER

A term used by people who don't see themselves as fitting anywhere on the gender spectrum. Agender people often also use 'without gender', or 'genderless' to describe what being agender means to them.



BI OR BISEXUAL

Bisexual or bi is a term used to describe a romantic/emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities. The term Bi+ may be understood as an umbrella term for the community of individuals who experience multi-gender sexual and/or romantic attractions.



CISGENDER OR CIS

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

CISNORMATIVITY

Assumes that everyone is cisgendered and that all people will continue to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity can therefore be seen as a challenge to the existence of transgender/trans and gender diverse people.



DEADNAMING

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition. It can be viewed as hurtful and disrespectful.

ALLY

An ally is a person who considers themselves a friend and active supporter of the LGBTI+ community. This term can be used for non-LGBTI+ allies as well as those within the LGBTI+ community who support each other, e.g. a gay man who is an ally to the trans and gender diverse community.

ANDROGYNOUS/ANDROGYNE

An individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly "female" nor "male," usually based on appearance.

AROMANTIC/ARO

Refers to individuals who do not experience romantic attraction. Aromantic individuals may or may not identify as asexual.

BIPHOBIA

The fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bi, usually based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about people who are, or are perceived to be, bi.

COMING OUT/INVITING IN

Coming out describes the moment when a person first tells others about their orientation and/or gender identity. "Inviting in" is preferred by some, to indicate those whom an individual invites in to share an important aspect of their life.

DRAG

The act of performing a gender or presenting as a different gender, usually for the purpose of entertainment (i.e. drag kings and queens). Many people who perform drag may not (wish to) present as a different gender all of the time.



FTM (F2M)

Female to male. Sometimes written as FtoM.



GAY

A man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

GENDER AFFIRMATION

Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender affirmation or gender confirmation usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in a self-identified gender.

GENDER BINARY

The spectrum-based classification of gender into the two categories of either man or woman based on biological sex.

GENDER EXPRESSION

External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behaviour, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviours and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

GENDER EXPANSIVE

A wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

GENDER FLUID

A term used to describe a person who feels that their gender identity is not fixed and/or fluctuates or changes over time.

GENDER IDENTITY

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another gender (also see gender expansive/gender fluid/gender non-conforming/gender queer/gender variant/non-binary elsewhere in this document), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

GENDER INCONGRUENCE

The situation (and also the clinical diagnosis) where a person experiences significant discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity (formerly also referred to as gender dysphoria).

GIC/GENDER IDENTITY CLINIC

A service which provides specialist medical care for trans people.

GENDER QUEER

A person who resists the binary stereotype and challenges established gender categories. A genderqueer identity is often very individual to the person using it so can have a variety of meanings.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in a self-identified gender.

GENDER RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE (GRC)

Where available, a GRC enables trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will apply for a GRC. In some jurisdictions, you do not need a GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.

GENDER STEREOTYPES

The ways that we expect people to behave in society according to their gender, or what is commonly accepted as "normal" for someone of that gender.

GENDER VARIANT/NON-CONFORMING

People (and often referring to children) 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.

This term is more commonly used to refer to gender expression as opposed to gender identity.



HETERONORMATIVITY

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to any other sexual orientation or gender identity.

HETEROSEXISM

Describes a social system that privileges heteronormative beliefs, values and practice. Heterosexism can be viewed as the social backdrop for homophobic and transphobic prejudices, violence and discrimination against people with non-heteronormative sexualities/gender identities.

HETEROSEXUAL/STRAIGHT

Term which refers to people who have an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of the opposite sex. Use of the term “straight” is sometimes thought to carry a negative connotation within the LGBTI+ population, because it could suggest that non heterosexual individuals are “crooked” or “bent”.



INTERSECTIONALITY

The idea that each of the elements of someone’s identity (such as gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, and class) overlap. These elements affect a person’s experience in society simultaneously, either with privileges or discrimination. For example, a white working-class person may simultaneously not be discriminated against due to their ethnicity but may face disadvantages due to their sexual orientation.



LESBIAN/GAY WOMAN

A woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE

Those benefits afforded to heterosexuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

HOMOSEXUAL

A term used to describe someone who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term ‘gay’ is now more generally used and many sections of the gay and lesbian community find ‘homosexual’ derogatory and offensive.

HOMOPHOBIA

The fear or dislike of, or prejudice towards, lesbian, gay or bi people (or those perceived to be lesbian, gay or bi) based on negative attitudes, beliefs or views.

INTERSEX

Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of innate bodily variations of sex characteristics. Intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that do not fit typical definitions for male or female bodies.

LGBTI+

The acronym used at Ashurst for lesbian, gay, bi and trans individuals, the ‘l’ referring to intersex and the + attempting to stand for all other terms, since it is not possible to enumerate them all.



MISGENDERING

A person being described or addressed using language that does not match their gender identity; this can include the incorrect use of pronouns or familial titles and has also been taken to include, at times, words with traditionally gendered applications such as pretty or handsome. Similar to 'deadnaming'.



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.



ORIENTATION

Orientation is an umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual (sexual orientation) and/or romantic (romantic orientation). These terms refer to a person's sense of identity based on their attractions, or lack thereof.

Orientations include, but are not limited to, lesbian, gay, bi, ace and straight.



PAN/PANSEXUAL

Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by biological sex, gender or gender identity. 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.

PRIDE

The celebration of LGBTI+ identities, and of the global LGBTI+ community's resistance against discrimination and violence. Pride events are celebrated in many countries around the world, usually during the month of June to commemorate the Stonewall Riots that began in New York City in June 1969, a pivotal moment in the modern LGBTI+ movement.

MTF (M2F)

Male to female. Sometimes written as MtoF.

MX

Pronounced "mix", Mx is a gender neutral title option" (ie alongside Dr, Mr, Ms etc).

OUT

Those who are open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in their personal, public and/or professional lives.

OUTED/OUTING

Revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.

PRIDE FLAG

Representing the LGBTI+ community, the pride or rainbow flag was first flown in the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade on 25 June 1978.





QUEER

Queer is often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use queer to describe their own gender and/or sexuality if other terms do not fit. For some people, especially older LGBTIQ people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was a derogatory term.



ROMANTIC ORIENTATION

A person's romantic attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Along with sexual orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.



SEX

Sex refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics (see also Intersex).

SEXUAL FLUIDITY

The notion that desire and sexuality can be organic, i.e. growing and changing. Each individual's experience of sexual fluidity is different - some may change from day to day, year to year, relationship to relationship. These who are sexually fluid may also use other labels to describe themselves.



TRANS OR TRANSGENDER

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer, gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

TRANS (GENDER) MAN

A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male (although this is not acceptable to all parts of the trans community).

QUESTIONING

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Sometimes the 'Q' instead of or alongside Queer in acronyms for the LGBTI+ community.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.

SEXUAL PREJUDICE

A comprehensive term covering/including 'homophobia', 'transphobia' or 'heterosexism'.

TRANS (GENDER) WOMAN

A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female (although this is not acceptable to all parts of the trans community).

TRANSITIONING/GENDER AFFIRMATION

The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

TRANSPHOBIA

Fear or dislike of, or prejudice towards, someone based on the fact they are trans or perceived to be trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.



In compiling this glossary the following sources were consulted:

<https://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk/parents-carers/lgbt-glossary>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

https://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/toolkit_LGBTglossary.pdf

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/11/27/the-ultimate-lgbt-glossary-all-your-questions-answered/>

And we are grateful to Ellie Watts of Pride in Diversity Australia for reviewing the text.

ABOUT SPECTRUM

Spectrum, Ashurst's network for LGBTI+ individuals and allies, regularly hosts events and meetings across the Ashurst network. You can find more information about Spectrum, including outlines of benefits, policies and useful contacts, on the LGBTI+ intranet pages. If you are interested in joining Spectrum or establishing the programme in your office, please contact Emmi Makiharju (EMEA/US) or Tahlia Hedges (APAC).

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