

LGBTQ2 Cheat Sheet 101

Sometimes it's difficult to know which terms to use when you wish to talk about sexual orientation. This document gives you a list of introductory terms to help you converse with ease and comfort.

All the terms and definitions are pulled from the GLAAD Media Reference Guide – Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Glossary Of Terms with the exception of a few marked terms in italics which are from the terminology webpage of the Positive Space Campaign led by the University of British Columbia.

LIST OF INTRODUCTORY TERMS

Sexual Orientation | The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/ or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations.

LGBTQ | Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it can also mean questioning. LGBT [or LGBTQ2 or LGBTQ2IA] are also often used. The term "gay community" should be avoided, as it does not accurately reflect the diversity of the community. Rather, LGBTQ community is preferred.

Lesbian | A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals," a derogatory term.

Gay | The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., *gay man*, *gay people*). Sometimes *lesbian* (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.

Bisexual, Bi | A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Do not use a hyphen in the word "bisexual," and only capitalize bisexual when used at the beginning of a sentence.

Transgender | An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Queer | An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g. queer person, queer woman). Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBT community. When Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it typically means queer and, less often, questioning

2 refers to Two Spirit: *A contemporary term that refers to the historical and current First Nations people whose individuals spirits were a blend of male and female spirits. This term has been reclaimed by some in Native American LGBT communities in order to honor their heritage and provide an alternative to the Western labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Traditionally within some Aboriginal communities, two-spirit peoples were considered to be visionaries and healers who fulfilled roles assigned to both sexes and/or other roles reserved only for those who attained the highly-respected status of two-spirit.*

Homophobia | Fear of people attracted to the same sex. *Intolerance, bias, or prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBTQ people.

Biphobia | Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. *Intolerance, bias, or prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

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Coming Out| A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a LGBTQ identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out.

Out| A person who self-identifies as LGBTQ in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. For example: *Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico.* Preferred to *openly gay*.

Openly Gay| Describes people who self-identify as gay in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. Also *openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender, openly queer*. While accurate and commonly used, the phrase still implies a confessional aspect to publicly acknowledging one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Closeted| Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Better to simply refer to someone as "not out" about being LGBTQ. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one's job, or other concerns.

Outing| The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBTQ community.

Straight| meaning heterosexual and is classed as slang by some dictionaries and standard by others... But use the term freely (adj. only) in phrases drawing a contrast with gay: The film attracted gay and straight audiences alike.

Ally| *A person who is not a member of a particular community, but who works in solidarity with that community (or communities) to name and to fight discrimination and oppression against the community; in this case, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and cissexism. Being an ally is to play an active role and to speak with, not for. An ally interrupts and challenges queer-phobic and sexist remarks and actions of others, but also willingly explores these biases within themselves.*

Privilege| *Refers to the social, economic, and political advantages or rights held by people from dominant groups on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, etc. For example, cisgender men often experience privilege that people of other genders/sexes do not have (are not oppressed in as many ways or in the same ways in such a way as to give them more opportunities).*

PREFERRED WORD CHOICE

- Use **same sex marriage/relationship** instead of gay marriage, homosexual relations.
- Use **sexual orientation or orientation** and avoid using sexual preference as it alludes to being attracted to the same sex is a choice.
- Use **LGBTQ people and their lives** instead of gay lifestyle or homosexual lifestyle.

REFERENCES

GLAAD (n.d.) GLAAD Media Reference Guide – Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Glossary Of Terms. Retrieved from <https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq>

The University of British Columbia (n.d.) Terminology. Retrieved from <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>

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