



LGBTQ2S Glossary of Terms

Updated: February, 2020



About The 519 LGBTQ2S Glossary of Terms

The 519 LGBTQ2S Glossary of Terms is by no means an exhaustive list of definitions related to our LGBTQ2S communities, but it has been carefully crafted in the hopes that it will aid in the facilitation of shared understandings around equity, diversity, inclusion, and awareness.

Further, we recognize that language is constantly evolving. We will endeavour to update this resource periodically to reflect ongoing changes to the words and expressions that communities use to describe their identities and experiences.

For any questions or suggestions regarding this glossary, please get in touch with:

Education and Training, The 519

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You can also review The 519 LGBTQ2S Glossary of Terms on our website at:

The519.org/education-training/glossary

About The 519

The 519 is a City of Toronto agency, a community centre and a registered charity committed to the health, happiness and full participation of the LGBTQ2S communities in Toronto and beyond. The 519 has an innovative model of Service, Space and Leadership, with programs, direct service, capacity building, and advocacy initiatives that aim to make a real difference in people's lives and promote inclusion, understanding and respect.

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<u>A</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>S</u>
<u>Accommodation</u>	<u>Gay</u>	<u>Lesbian</u>	<u>Sex</u>
<u>Ally</u>	<u>Gender</u>		<u>Sexual</u>
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<u>Asexual</u>	<u>Gender Binary</u>	<u>Misogyny</u>	<u>Social Determinants of Health</u>
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<u>Bisexual</u>	<u>Gender Norms</u>	<u>Neo-Pronouns</u>	<u>Stealth</u>
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<u>Cis/Cisgender</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>Oppression</u>	<u>Tokenism</u>
<u>Cisnormativity</u>	<u>Harassment</u>		<u>Trans</u>
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<u>Colonization</u>	<u>Heteronormativity</u>	<u>Pansexual</u>	<u>Trans Man</u>
<u>Cultural Humility</u>	<u>Heterosexism</u>	<u>Passing</u>	<u>Transmisogyny</u>
	<u>Homophobia</u>	<u>Polyamory</u>	<u>Transphobia</u>
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<u>Discrimination</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>Privilege</u>	<u>Two-Spirit</u>
<u>Dominant Group</u>	<u>Inclusion</u>	<u>Q</u>	
<u>Drag Queen/Drag Queen</u>	<u>Indigenous Peoples</u>	<u>Queer</u>	<u>W</u>
<u>Duty to Accommodate</u>	<u>Internalized Oppression</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>WSW</u>
	<u>Intersectionality</u>		
<u>E</u>	<u>Intersex</u>	<u>R</u>	
<u>Equality</u>		<u>Race</u>	
<u>Equity</u>			
<u>Ethnicity</u>			



LGBTQ2S Glossary of Terms

A

Accommodation

An adjustment made to policies, programs, and/or practises to enable individuals to benefit from and participate in the provision of services equally and perform to the best of their ability. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code or other similar codes. Accommodation with dignity is pursuing the principle that our society should be structured and designed for inclusiveness.

Ally

A person who works to end a form of oppression that gives them privilege(s). Allies listen to, and are guided by, communities and individuals affected by oppression. Forms of oppression include: ableism, ageism, audism, classism, biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, and others.

Anti-Racism

Beliefs, actions, policies and movements developed to actively identify and eliminate prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination on the basis of race.

Asexual

A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to people of any gender.

B

Bisexual

A person who is attracted to people of more than one gender.

Biphobia

Negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of bisexual people and their communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as bisexual, leading to discrimination, harassment or violence against bisexual people.

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C

Cis/Cisgender

A person whose gender identity is in alignment with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisnormativity

Cisnormativity refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are cisgender and that everyone accepts this as “the norm.” The term cisnormativity is used to describe systemic prejudice against trans people. This form of systemic prejudice may go unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

Cissexism

A system of oppression that considers cis people to be superior to trans people. It includes harmful beliefs that it is “normal” to be cis and “abnormal” to be trans. Examples include scrutinizing the genders of trans people more than those of cis people or defining beauty based on how cis people look.

Colonization

The process of focusing on and devaluing people’s differences in order to dominate and control them, including various economic, political and social policies by which a powerful group maintains or extends control over other people or areas.

Cultural Humility

The ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is oriented towards the perspective of another person. Involves conscious reflection on one’s own perspective and biases as well as openness to another person’s perspective in order to effectively communicate across difference.

D

Disability

Under the medical model, this term refers to a limitation or loss of physiological abilities, whether apparent or not. These can be physical, cognitive, learning, and visual disabilities. Under the social model, disability is identified as a disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by systemic barriers, negative attitudes, and exclusion by society.

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Discrimination

Any form of unequal treatment based on a ground protected by human rights legislation, that results in disadvantage, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional; and it may occur at an individual or systemic level. It may include direct actions or more subtle aspects of rules, practices and procedures that limit or prevent access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to others.

Dominant Group

A group that is considered more powerful and privileged in a particular society or context and that has power and influence over others.

Drag Queen/Drag Queen

Someone who uses extreme gender presentation and plays on stereotypes as a basis for performance pieces. Drag performers can be of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

Duty to Accommodate

The legal obligation that employers, organizations, service providers and public institutions have under human rights legislation to ensure fair and equal access to services in a way that respects the dignity of every person, if to do so does not create undue hardship. The principle of dignity strives to maximize integration and promote full participation in society, in consideration of the importance of privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy, individuality and self-esteem.

E

Equality

The practice of ensuring equal treatment to all people, without consideration of individual and group diversities.

Equity

The practice of ensuring fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities. Access to services, supports and opportunities and attaining economic, political and social fairness cannot be achieved by treating individuals in exactly the same way. Equity honours and accommodates the specific needs of individuals/ groups.

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Ethnicity

A socially defined category or membership of people who may share a nationality, heritage, language, culture, and/or religion.

G

Gay

A person who is attracted to people of the same gender.

Gender

Gender can refer to the individual and/or social experience of being a man, a woman, or neither. Social norms, expectations and roles related to gender vary across time, space, culture, and individuals.

Genderqueer (or Non-Binary)

Individuals who do not follow gender stereotypes based on the sex they were assigned at birth. They may identify and express themselves as “feminine men” or “masculine women” or as androgynous, outside of the categories “boy/man” and “girl/woman.” People who are non-binary may or may not identify as trans.

Gender Binary

A social system whereby people are thought to have either one of two genders: “man” or “woman.” These genders are expected to correspond to birth sex: male or female. In the gender binary system, there is no room for living between genders or for transcending the gender binary. The gender binary system is rigid and restrictive for many people whose sex assigned at birth does not match up with their gender, or whose gender is fluid and not fixed.

Gender Expression

How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language, and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. All people, regardless of their gender identity, have a gender expression and they may express it in any number of ways.

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Gender Identity

A person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person's sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their sex assignment at birth.

Gender Norms

The gender binary influences what society considers "normal" or acceptable behaviour, dress, appearance, and roles for women and men. Gender norms are a prevailing force in our everyday lives. Strength, action, and dominance are stereotypically seen as "masculine" traits, while vulnerability, passivity, and receptiveness are stereotypically seen as "feminine" traits. A woman expressing masculine traits may be chastised as "overly aggressive," while a man expressing "feminine" traits may be labelled as "weak." Gender norms can contribute to power imbalances and gender inequality in the home, at work, and in communities.

Gender Role

The culturally and historically specific expectations and restrictions that are placed on a person based on whether they are assigned female or male at birth. Can be empowering, oppressive, or neutral.

Gender Spectrum

The representation of gender as a continuum, as opposed to a binary concept.

H

Harassment

A course of comments or actions, such as unwelcome attention, jokes, threats, remarks, name-calling, touching or other behaviours that are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome, offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning. Harassment under human rights legislation is based on the prohibited/protected grounds.

Hate Crime

Criminal acts which promote hatred against identifiable groups of people, motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Although individuals and groups that promote this destructive form of human rights-based discrimination often defend their right to "free speech," it is a criminal offense to disseminate hate propaganda and/or to commit hate crimes.

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Heteronormativity

Refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are heterosexual and that everyone accepts this as “the norm.” The term heteronormativity is used to describe prejudice against people that are not heterosexual, and is less overt or direct and more widespread or systemic in society, organizations, and institutions. This form of systemic prejudice may even be unintentional and unrecognized by the people or organizations responsible.

Heterosexism

The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior and preferable. The result is discrimination against bisexual, lesbian and gay people that is less overt, and which may be unintentional and unrecognized by the person or organization responsible.

Homophobia

Negative attitudes, feelings, or irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people and communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as “homosexual.” It is used to signify a hostile psychological state leading to discrimination, harassment or violence against gay, lesbian, or people.

Human Rights

The universal entitlement that all people should have access to freedom, justice and protection from discrimination and harassment, and that people should have equal access to a climate that preserves that dignity and worth of individuals and groups.



Inclusion

An approach that aims to reach out to and include all people, honouring the diversity and uniqueness, talent, beliefs, backgrounds, capabilities and ways of living of individuals and groups.

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Indigenous Peoples

An umbrella term for self-identified descendants of pre-colonial/pre-settler societies. In Canada these include the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples as separate peoples with unique heritages, economic and political systems, languages, cultural practises, and spiritual beliefs. While the collective term has offered a sense of solidarity among some indigenous communities, the term should not serve to erase the distinct histories, languages, cultural practices, and sovereignty of the more than fifty nations that lived in Canada prior to European colonization.

Internalized Oppression

When members of a marginalized group accept negative aspects of stereotypes assigned to them by the dominant group, and begin to believe that they are inferior. The incorporation by individuals within an oppressed group of the prejudices against them within the dominant society can result in self-hatred, self-concealment, fear of violence, feelings of inferiority, resignation, isolation, and powerlessness. It is a mechanism within an oppressive system for perpetuating power imbalance.

Intersectionality

A term coined by black feminist legal scholar Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the ways in which our identities (such as race, gender, class, ability, etc.) intersect to create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Intersex

A person born with sex characteristics (chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals) that do not fit the typical medical definitions of male or female bodies.

L

Lesbian

A woman who is attracted to women.

M

Misogyny

The hatred and denigration of women and characteristics deemed feminine.

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MSM

Men who have sex with men.

N

Neo-Pronouns

Alternative pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some non-binary and gender diverse persons. Some examples are “ze/hir” and “ey/em”, etc.

Non-Binary

An umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside of the man-woman binary.

O

Oppression

The obvious and subtle ways dominant groups unjustly maintain status, privilege and power over others, using physical, psychological, social, or economic threats or force. Frequently, an explicit ideology is used to sanction the unfair subjugation of an individual or group by a more powerful individual or group, which causes injustices in everyday interactions between marginalized groups and the dominant group.

P

Pansexual

A person who is attracted to other people regardless of gender.

Passing

The experience of being viewed as something by other people in a given context. Meaning varies depending on the context in which it is used. Trans people use the word ‘passing’ to mean being perceived by others as the gender they identify and/or present as. A person with a disability who is not currently using a mobility device may experience ‘passing’ as able-bodied. A gay man who comes across as stereotypically masculine may experience ‘passing’ as straight despite not identifying that way.

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Polyamory

The practice, state or ability of having more than one intimate, sexual and/or romantic relationship at the same time.

Power

Access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision making that enhance a person's chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive, and profitable life. Each person has different levels of power in different contexts depending on a personal combination of privileges and oppression.

Poz

An abbreviation referring to an HIV positive person.

Privilege

Unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that provide unfair advantage for members of the dominant group(s) in society. People are not always aware of the privileges they have. Examples include: cissexual privilege, straight privilege, male privilege, white privilege.

Q

Queer

An umbrella term used and reclaimed by some whose sexual orientations and/or gender identities fall outside of cisgender/straight norms.

Questioning

A period where a person explores their own sexual identity, orientation, and/or gender.

R

Race

Culturally or socially constructed divisions of humankind, based on distinct characteristics that can be based on: physicality, culture, history, beliefs and practises, language, origin, etc. Racial discrimination is prohibited within Canada as part of the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the United Nations has a committee devoted to the elimination of racial discrimination.

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S

Sex

The classification of people as either male, female, or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person's reproductive systems, hormones, chromosomes, and other physical characteristics.

Sexual Orientation

The direction of one's attraction. Some people use the terms gay, straight, bi, pan, or lesbian to describe their experience.

Sex-Positive

An attitude that promotes and embraces the diversity of human sexuality, focusing on; advocating for a consent-oriented culture, safe sex awareness, and comprehensive sex education that incorporates unbiased methods in its approach.

Social Determinants of Health

Things that are needed for people to avoid illness and to be physically, mentally and socially healthy (e.g. income, employment, housing, access to services).

Social Justice

A concept based on a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and individuals and groups are given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties, and participation in the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities valued by society.

Stealth

When a trans person is not "out" about being trans in their social circles (with friends, employers, colleagues). There are many different levels of being stealth, but in some cases a trans person may need to end contact with those who once knew them as their assigned at birth sex, move to new locations, or get a new job. These changes are significant, and may be due to personal reasons or based on physical, cognitive and/or emotional safety.

Straight

A person who is attracted to people of the opposite gender.

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T

Tokenism

The practice of making a symbolic effort towards involving an underrepresented group of individuals under the guise of inclusivity or equality, and is often seen within a group, committee, organization, or workplace. The action itself or the type of involvement of the underrepresented is limited, and the false appearance of inclusivity or equality can then be used to promote a false appearance that hides deeper systemic issues within the organization.

Trans

An umbrella term referring to people whose gender identities differ from the sex they were assigned at birth. “Trans” can mean transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over the gender spectrum. It includes but is not limited to people who identify as transgender, transsexual, non-binary or gender non-conforming (gender variant or genderqueer).

Transition

Refers to a range of social, legal, and medical changes that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity.

Trans Man

A person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a man.

Transmisogyny

Negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Transphobia

Negative attitudes and feelings and the aversion to, fear or hatred or intolerance of trans people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment and violence toward trans people, or those perceived to be trans.

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Transsexual

A person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. They may or may not undergo medically supportive treatments to align their bodies with their gender identity, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other procedures or changes. This term is dated and can be considered offensive if someone does not use it to refer to themselves.

Trans Woman

A person who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman.

Two-Spirit

An umbrella term encompassing gender and sexual diversity in Indigenous communities. Two Spirit people often serve integral and important roles in their communities, such as leaders and healers. There are many understandings the term Two Spirit – and this English term does not resonate for everyone. Two Spirit is a cultural term reserved for those who identify as Indigenous.

W

WSW

Women who have sex with women.

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Additional Resources

- [Reference Guide to Discussing Trans and Gender-diverse People](#)
 - [Discussing Trans and Gender-diverse People](#)
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