

LGBTIQ+

101 FACTSHEET

Overview

This resource sheet provides some key information and terminology that relate to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities.

This information provides you with an introduction only. Language is constantly evolving and its use to describe the human experience of sex, sexuality and gender. Keep in mind:

- People have different opinions on correct terminology. What some people find acceptable, will not be for others.
- Sexual orientation, sex and gender identity are all separate concepts. Read on to see how they differ.

Sexual Orientation

Describes someone's romantic and/or sexual attraction.

Terms commonly used:

- **Lesbian** - a woman who is attracted to other women
- **Gay** - someone attracted to the same gender as themselves, usually used by men, but some women also use this term
- **Bisexual** - someone attracted to the same gender as themselves and other genders.
- **Pansexual** - someone who is attracted to all genders, including but not limited to male, female, non-binary, trans and gender diverse, gender fluid, gender queer
- **Asexual** - someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction.

Sex

Refers to a person's biological characteristics. Some people are born with both male and female characteristics, or neither male nor female characteristics.

Terms commonly used:

- **Intersex** people born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are not exclusively male or female. Intersex describes biological diversity, but may or may not describe someone's gender identity. People with intersex variations have a range of bodies, gender identities and sexual orientations.

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Gender

Gender refers to the way a person understands, identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. Some people may identify as a different gender to their sex assigned at birth, while some people identify as neither male nor female.

Terms commonly used:

- Androgynous – someone whose gender expression appears neither male nor female
- Brotherboys and sistergirls – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may use these words for trans people
- Cisgender – people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth
- Gender identity – internal and individual sense of gender
- Gender expression – how a person externally expresses their gender
- Gender diverse – refers to someone who does not identify as the binary male or female options.
- Gender fluid – someone who does not identify as having a fixed gender
- Non-binary – a term used for someone who does not identify as exclusively male or female
- Trans – Sometimes known as transgender. Refers to someone whose gender identity, expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth. A person who was assigned female at birth may use the label trans, transman, or man. A person assigned male at birth may use the label trans, transwoman or woman. People may also use other terminology not listed here.
- Transsexual – a term used by some people who is making, intends to make or has made the transition to the gender with which they identify, which is different to the one they were assigned at birth. This may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery.
- *This is not an exhaustive list, to learn more visit the websites at the end of the document.*

Other terminology related to the LGBTIQ+ communities

- Queer – umbrella term used to describe anyone who is gender diverse or non-heterosexual. Historically the term Queer has been used as a derogatory term but has recently been 'reclaimed' by some LGBTIQ+ people as a means of challenging homophobia. Some LGBTIQ+ people are not comfortable with the term Queer.
- Plus (+) symbol includes other identities who are not listed in the LGBTIQ acronym. It is an acknowledgement of the growing terminology.
- Pronouns – many people who identify as male or female (including intersex or trans people) use the binary pronouns he or she. Some people prefer to be described using their name, or a non-binary pronoun, such as they. Avoid assuming a person's pronoun based on your perceptions of how they look, their voice, what they are wearing, or their name. Listen to people and what gender labels they use. If you are not sure what pronoun to use, ask respectfully!

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth) includes protections against unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

For more information, contact: Complaints Information Service on 1300 656 419, 02 9284 9888, 1800 620 241 (TTY toll free) or humanrights.gov.au

Where can I find more information?

- Inclusive Language Guide: vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide
- What non-binary means: minus18.org.au
- What is intersex? ihra.org.au
- What are my rights? humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au