

# Defining a Common Language

**Ally-** Any non-lesbian, non-gay man, or non-bisexual whose attitude and behavior are anti --

**Asexual-** An individual lacking sexual attraction and/or romantic feelings towards others

**Bicurious-** A heterosexual- identified person who wishes to “experiment” with their sexuality.

**Biphobia** - the fear, dislike, and/or hatred of bisexuality or those who love and are attracted to those of both sexes. Biphobia includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence brought on by fear and hatred. It occurs on personal, institutional, and societal levels.

**Bisexual erasure** - the minimizing or complete denial of bisexuality in general or of a specific person's bisexuality.

**Bisexuality-**

**Gay**- A man who is attracted to other men. The term is also used sometimes as an umbrella term, referring to individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or queer.

**Gender\***- Socially constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes considered by the general public to be “appropriate” for one’s sex as assigned at birth. Gender roles vary among cultures and along time continuums.

**Gender Binary** – The concept that everyone must be one of two genders: male or female.

**Gender Expression** - Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through clothing, haircut, chosen names, actions, etc. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

**Gender Identity\***- One’s personal sense of his or her correct gender, which may be reflected as g,Tj /TT1 1 Tf [ 1 Tf [ 1 T11-2.thoTw 0 Tf 0ons[ed sex.ke04 Tw [(Rof [ 1 Tf [ 1 T11-2.t

**Homosexuality-** A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender.

**In the closet-** To be “in the closet” means to hide one’s homosexual identity in order to keep a job, a housing situation, friends, or in some other way to survive. Many lgbt individuals are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others.

**Internalized homophobia-** The fear and self-hate of one’s own homosexuality or bisexuality that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about homosexuality throughout childhood. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group. Internalized oppression is commonly seen among most, if not all, minority groups.

**Intersex (IS)\*-** Those born with both female and male characteristics in their internal/external sex organs, hormones, chromosomes, and/or secondary sex characteristics.

**Invisibility-** The constant assumption of heterosexuality renders gay and lesbian people, youth in particular, invisible and seemingly nonexistent. Gay and lesbian people and youth are usually not seen or portrayed in society, and especially not in schools and classrooms.

**Lesbian-** A woman who is attracted to other women.

**M2F, MTF, or MtoF-** Acronym for “male to female.” A transgender person who has a biological identity of male but a gender identity of female.

**Queer-** Despite the negative historical use of this term, it has been embraced in the last decade, particularly by younger members of ” 0 TdT1 1 TSpan -0.004 Tc7 EMC /Pcsr-1()200 TdT1 1 T

**Sexual Identity\*\*** – How a person chooses to label their sexual orientation. Labels do not always “match” the sexual orientations.

**Sexual orientation-** A person’s emotional, physical, and sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction. Although a subject of debate, sexual orientation is probably one of the many characteristics that people are born with.

**Sexual minority-** A term used to refer to someone who identifies their sexuality as different from the dominant culture (i.e., heterosexual), for example, homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender (although the latter two typically refer to gender rather than sexuality).

**Sex Reassignment\*-** Establishing one’s affirmed sex via legal and medical steps.

**Trans\*\*** - An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a gender diverse person. This use allows a person to state a gender diverse identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender diverse community as a whole.

**Transgender (TG)-**The experience of having a gender identity that is different from one’s biological sex. A transgender person may identify with the opposite biological gender and want to be a person of that gender. A transgender person may or may not be pre-or post-operative; if they are, they are likely to refer to him/herself as transsexual. This has become an umbrella term for nonconforming gender identity and expression.\*

**Trans Woman or Trans Man\*-**Informal descriptors used relative to one’s affirmed gender. Variants include T\*, trans person, and trans folk.

**Transsexual**

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### **Best to Avoid**

- \*She-male, tranny, transie, se change, he-she, shim
- Sexual preference (suggests choice)
- Hermaphrodite (an outdated clinical term)

\*=taken from:

Wenzel, Ryan. (2007). "Gay Vs. Trans in America." The Advocate. 999 Dec 18, 2007: 48.

\*\*=taken from:

Eli R. Green (www.EliR.Green.com) and Eric N. Peterson at the LGBT Resource Center at UC Riverside  
® in 2003