

SafeZones@SDSU Training - Terminology Handout

LGBTQIA+: This is often the acronym used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and aromantic individuals. The plus is used to be inclusive of many other gender and sexual identities such as pansexual, two-spirit, bigender, etc.

Lesbian: women (as well as non-binary and GNC people who feel a connection to womanhood) who are attracted to other women.

Gay: this label can refer specifically to men who are attracted to men; people who are primarily attracted to the same or similar gender as their own or as an umbrella term for anyone who is not straight.

Bisexual: someone who is attracted to two or more genders; someone who is attracted to people of their own gender and other genders. This does not mean they are attracted to each gender the same amount, to the same degree, or at the same time.

Pansexual: someone who is capable of being attracted to any or all genders; or someone who does not see gender as an important factor in determining their attraction.

Queer: an umbrella term or identity taken on by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe a sexual and/or gender identity that falls outside societal norms. This term has a history of being used as a slur, and has been reclaimed by some members of the community. It is often chosen because of its ambiguity and multiple meanings. It is also often used as an umbrella term for LGBTQIA+ people.

Questioning: being unsure of one's sexual/romantic orientation or gender identity

Asexual: an umbrella term, or stand-alone identifier, for someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction. Sometimes shortened to “ace”.

Aromantic: an umbrella term, or stand-alone identifier, for someone who experiences little or no romantic attraction. Sometimes shortened to “aro”

Agender: Someone who is without gender, gender neutral, and/or rejects the concept of gender for themselves.

Trans or Transgender: an umbrella term and identity for someone whose gender identity doesn't match their sex assigned at birth

Cis or Cisgender: A person whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth

Nonbinary: umbrella term for people with gender identities that fall outside of the traditional conceptions of strictly either female or male

Genderqueer: umbrella term with a similar meaning to non-binary; it can be used to describe any gender identities other than man and woman, thus outside of the gender binary

Gender Non-Conforming: a personal identity, behavior, or gender expression that does not conform to masculine or feminine gender norms

Gender Fluid: Denoting or relating to a person who does not identify themselves as having a fixed gender and can vary over time

Two Spirit: A modern, pan-Indian umbrella term used by some Indigenous North Americans to describe Native people in their communities who fulfill a traditional third-gender (or other gender-variant) ceremonial role in their cultures

AFAB/AMAB: Assigned Female at Birth and Assigned Male at Birth.

Intersex: a sex category that includes people whose anatomy, chromosomes, or hormones do not completely fit into either of society's typical definitions of male or female. About **1 in 2000** people are born intersex, and many individuals are operated on without consent to make them fit into societal sex and gender binaries.

Intersectionality: A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

Intersex: Adjective used to describe the experience of naturally (that is, without any medical intervention) developing primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Intersex is an umbrella term and there are around 20 variations of intersex that are included in this umbrella term. Many visibly Intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make the individual's sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Hermaphrodite is an outdated and inaccurate term that has been used to describe intersex people in the past.

Transitioning: An individualized process by which transsexual and transgender people "switch" from one gender presentation to another. There are three general aspects to transitioning: social (i.e. name, pronouns, interactions, etc.), medical (i.e. hormones, surgery, etc.), and legal (i.e. gender marker and name change, etc.). A trans individual may transition in any combination, or none, of these aspects.

Coming Out: "Coming out" describes voluntarily making public one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It has also been broadened to include other pieces of potentially stigmatized personal information. Terms also used that correlate with this action are: "Being out" which means not concealing one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and "Outing," a term used for making public the sexual orientation or gender identity of another who would prefer to keep this information secret.

Gender Identity: A sense of one's self as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress, hairstyle, body modifications, accessories, makeup, and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous." Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).

Sex versus gender: Sex is the category a person is assigned at birth; in the United States this would be under male and female. This is generally determined based on genitals either in utero or after birth. The reality though, is that people's biology is more diverse than society's categories and requirements. Gender is what society determines you are, based on outward appearance and expression, such as man or woman. Gender is a socially constructed classification system that relies on "normative" assumptions of femininity and masculinity. Sex and gender are often conflated due to the cisnormative (the belief that all people identify with the sex they were assigned at birth) assumption that female = woman and male = man for everyone.

Heterosexism: The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and erasure.

Heteronormativity: A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.

Cissexism/Genderism: The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of cis-normative constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders & that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. Within cissexism cisgender people are the dominant/agent group and trans/gender non-conforming people are the oppressed/target group.

Cisnormative/Cisnormativity: The assumption that all individuals identify and maintain their sex that was assigned to them at birth. The act of viewing, expecting, and assuming that all individuals identify as cisgender unless otherwise specified or proven.

Transmisogyny: the intersection of transphobia and misogyny. Transmisogyny includes negative attitudes, hate, and discrimination toward transgender individuals who fall on the feminine side of the gender spectrum, particularly trans women.