**LGBTQ2SA+/gender diverse terms and definitions**

There is a lot of slippage between these terms and this is by no means an exhaustive list. What means one thing to one person in the LGBTQ2SA+/gender diverse community may mean something different to another. It is important to listen to the terms used by the individual, and use/reflect those terms respectfully back to them.

**Asexual/ity (or “ace”):**

A sexual orientation of someone who does not experience sexual attraction, but may experience emotional and/or romantic attraction.

**Bisexual:**

A sexual orientation of someone who is emotionally/romantically/sexually attracted to more than one gender (note: this term has evolved beyond the two-gender binary system and no longer means “attracted to *both* genders,” as we now recognize there are many more gender identities).

**Cis-gender (or “cis”):**

A term used to describe someone whose gender identity aligns with their sex/gender assigned at birth.

**Gay:**

A person/identity of a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. Also (traditionally) used to refer to the sexual orientation of a male-identified person who is attracted to other male-identified people. “Gay” is also used by some as an umbrella term for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Gender binary/gender binarism/binarist**:

The privileged belief and assumption that there are two opposing genders that fall into two distinct categories (male/female masculine/feminine).

**Gender identity:**

An individual's own (internal) sense of maleness, femaleness, being multi-gendered, non-binary, or trans.

**Gender expression:**

How one expresses their gender outwardly (i.e. through appearance, clothing, accessories, behaviour, interests, etc.

**Gender fluid(ity):**

A broader, more flexible understanding of gender identity and expression, often extending beyond fixed and restrictive categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’.

**Genderqueer:**

A person/identity of a person who identifies outside of the gender binary.

**Gender variance/non-conformity:**

When a person's gender expression does not match society's expectation of traditional gender roles and behaviours.

**Heterosexism:**

The belief that heterosexuality is dominant, inevitable, and more correct than other sexual orientations; associated with the phenomenon of heteronormativity.

**Heteronormativity:**

The privileged belief and assumption that heterosexuality is the ‘default’ sexual orientation, conceived as natural, inevitable, and ‘normal’.

**Homophobia:**

The irrational fear/hatred of and/or discomfort with people who do not identify as heterosexual.

**Homosexuality**:

This term has a clinical history and was used to ‘diagnose’ queer people or imply that they were ‘diseased’ or ‘disordered.’ While ‘homosexual/homosexuality’ is still used in some spaces, it is best to avoid using this term.

**Lesbian:**

A sexual orientation of a female-identified person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other female-identified people.

**LGBTQ2SA+**

An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirited, and Queer (the + sign denotes all other identities within the gender/sexuality spectrum). It is used to represent members within that community who may hold common political or social concerns. There are many other variations of this acronym to include other identities within the LGBTQ community, such as “LGBTQQIP2SAA”, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit (2S), androgynous, and asexual. It is important to note that due to the ever-shifting nature of sexuality and gender identity, we will never have an acronym that is all-encompassing.

**Non-binary:**

A gender identity and/or expression that is not exclusively male or female.

**Pansexual:**

A sexual orientation of a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other people of any gender.

**Queer:**

Formerly a derogatory term to refer to the LGBTQ community but has since been reclaimed as an empowering political and personal identity. ‘Queer’ has multiple meanings and can be difficult to define. For example, ‘queer’ can refer to: 1) an umbrella term for the LGBTQ2SA+/gender diverse community; 2) a person's sexual orientation and/or identity [other than heterosexual and cis-gender] in such a way that does not overtly label or categorize them; 3) a political, personal, and cultural identity that seeks to deconstruct binary and rigid understandings of gender and sexuality. Queer may also be used as a verb (i.e. “to queer” something).

**Sex (biological):**

The anatomy of an individual's reproductive system, and secondary sex characteristics. Many people are taught that “gender is between the ears [girl, boy, feminine, masculine, genderqueer, trans, agender, etc.] and sex is between the legs [male/female chromosomes or body parts]” to try to differentiate between biological sex and gender identity. However, it is important to recognize that the concept of “biological sex” is also inherently gendered and socially constructed. For example, the terms “penis” and “vagina” or “male” and “female” have such strong gendered connotations that it is nearly impossible to separate biology versus assigned gender and gender constructs. Therefore, rather than saying “biological sex,” many folks [including myself] now say, “sex/gender assigned at birth” or SAB (see below).

**Sex/gender assigned at birth:**

At birth (or in utero), infants are typically assigned a sex/gender based upon their external genitalia. You may see “AFAB” (assigned female at birth) and “AMAB” (assigned male at birth).

**Trans/transgender:**

Refers to people with a gender identity that does not correspond with the sex/gender they were assigned with at birth.

**Transsexual**:

A term that originated in the medical community to describe trans people, usually when talking about people who have undergone a medical transition (i.e. taking hormones and/or undergoing surgeries). While still used by some, it is best to avoid this term (unless the person you are speaking with/referring to has explicitly stated that they identify as transsexual and would like that identity reflected back to them in the language you use).

**Transphobia:**

The irrational fear/hatred of and/or discomfort with transgender people.