LGBTTQ+ terms and definitions

*Note:* There is a lot of slippage between these terms and this is by no means an exhaustive list. What means one thing to one LGBTTQ+ person, may mean something different to another. It is important to listen to the terms used by the LGBTTQ+ 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.

**Cis-gender (or “cis”):**

A term used to describe someone who has a gender identity that is consistent with their sex assigned at birth.

**Gay:**

A person/identity of a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

**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 are attracted to the same gender.

**Lesbian:**

A sexual orientation of a female-identified person who is attracted to other female-identified people.

**LGBTTQ+:**

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 attracted to other people of any gender.

**Queer:**

Has multiple meanings. For example, 1) an umbrella term to refer to the LGBTTQ+ community; 2) refers to a person's sexual orientation and/or identity in such a way that does not overtly label or categorize them.

**Trans/transgender:**

Refers to those whose gender identity does not correspond with the gender they were assigned with at birth.

**Transphobia:**

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