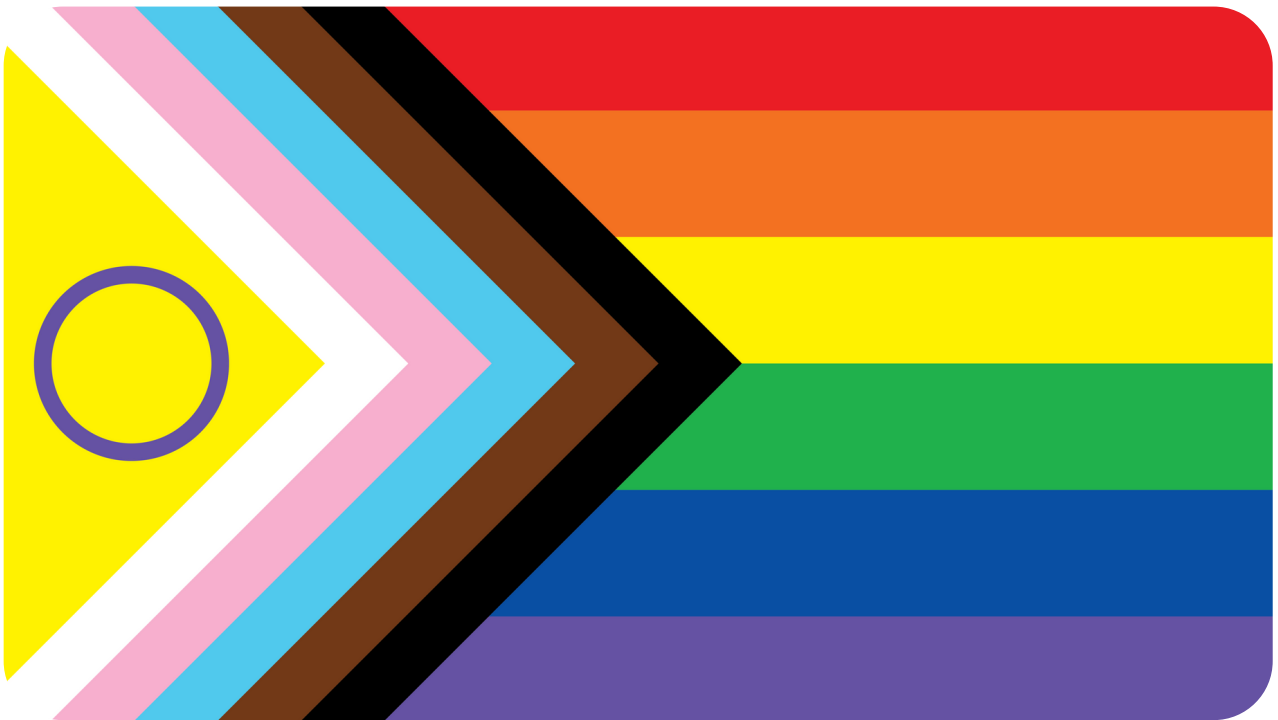


2023

# LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide



LGBTI LEGAL  
SERVICE INC

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## Acknowledgement of Country

LGBTI Legal Service Inc. pays its deepest respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We recognise the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to land, water and culture.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirls & Brotherboys community and recognise the ongoing battle for visibility and inclusion.

We pay respect to Elders past present and emerging. We acknowledge the wisdom, strength and truth telling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the spirit of reconciliation, we are committed to fostering a culture of shared knowledge and learnings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing justice.



# Introduction

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At the LGBTI Legal Service Inc., we pride ourselves in delivering exceptional service to all of our clients. Our service aims to empower and assist the LGBTIQ+ community with our legal work. A significant aspect of our service involves communicating and engaging with our community. To be best equipped to effectively engage with our community, we must be well versed in LGBTIQ+ specific terminology. We have created this language guide to be used as a point of reference for individuals and organisations when engaging with the LGBTIQ+ community.

The terms in this guide are not exhaustive. We acknowledge that new terminology arises frequently and that the terms in this guide may have different connotations depending on regional and cultural differences. We also acknowledge that while this guide aims to reflect the language accepted and adopted by the LGBTIQ+ community, each individual may have their own language preferences. As such, in personal interactions, it is important to listen to the individual, respect their perspective and adopt the language that affirms that person when around them.

This document was published in March 2023.


# Why its important

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Language influences us internally and externally. It impacts the way we personally understand and view the world, and the way people around us act and feel. Adopting inclusive language can therefore both broaden our perspectives on society and improve our interpersonal relationships.

Inclusive language is language that avoids words and expressions that may:

- directly or implicitly discriminate against certain groups of people; or
- offend certain groups of people; or
- normalise some identities, behaviours and groups to the exclusion of others, based on attributes related to the LGBTIQ+ community.



***Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, appreciates intersecting identities and conveys respect.***



It is important because it lets people know they are empowered, included, seen and can feel safe with you. Exclusive language can not only make people feel unsafe and on the outside, but it can also lead to less trust, less engagement and lack of disclosure.

It is relevant for the LGBTI Legal Service Inc. to be aware of emerging LGBTIQ+ terminology in order to assist and advocate for our clients respectfully and appropriately. As part of our toolkit to tackle discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community, this guide can be used to help you with definitions of many words and phrases used within the community. We encourage individuals and organisations to adopt and use the terms defined in this guide to enhance effective communication with or about the LGBTIQ+ community.

This guide non-exhaustively lists LGBTIQ+ terminology, accompanied by definitions and examples. Remember, it is OK not to remember or understand each term. If you feel confused about the use of a term, the best approach is simply to acknowledge this and ask about it in a respectful way.

**We appreciate your engagement with this guide and hope it becomes a handy resource for future reference.**

# Terms

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## A

### **AFAB / AMAB**

Assigned Female at Birth/Assigned Male at Birth. These terms are almost exclusively used by people to describe themselves, their experiences, or medically or socially relevant groupings. Do not ask trans and gender diverse people if they are AFAB or AMAB.

### **Agender**

A gender identity that describes a person with no gender or little connection to gender. Many agender people believe that not everyone has a gender. Agender is a specific identity under the trans and non-binary umbrellas.

### **Allo**

An identity that describes someone who is not asexual or aromantic. Someone who experiences sexual and romantic attraction towards other people.

### **Ally**

A person not in the LGBTQIA+ community who considers themselves a friend and active supporter of the LGBTQIA+ community.

### **Androgynous**

Someone whose appearance is both masculine and feminine, or genderless.

### **Aromantic / Aro**

A romantic identity and orientation, most commonly categorized as experiencing little to no romantic attraction.



### **Asexual / Ace**

A spectrum of sexual orientations that describe people with highly conditional, little to no sexual attraction. Asexuality refers to sexual attraction, which is distinct from romantic attraction, sexual desire and sex drive.



### **Asexual / Ace (cont.)**

For example, asexual people may desire a relationship and have sex despite their lack of sexual attraction.

### **Assigned Sex**

The sex that is assigned to a person at birth based on their visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.

## B

### **Bigender**

A gender identity that describes a person who identifies with one or more genders. People may feel multiple genders simultaneously or their gender may fluctuate over time. Bigender is a specific identity under the trans and nonbinary umbrellas.

### **Bisexual**

Bisexual or bi is a term used to describe a romantic/emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bisexual is used as both an identity in itself and an umbrella term that encompasses other terms referring to people attracted to multiple genders such as pansexual and queer.



### **Brotherboy**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were assigned female at birth, but live their lives through their boy spirit. Brotherboys take on male roles in community and society. Thus, Brotherboys encompass both gender and cultural identities.

## C

### **Cisgender / Cis**

Someone whose gender identity correlates with the sex they were assigned at birth.

## C cont.

### Cisnormativity

The assumption that everyone is or ought to be cisgender; that cisgender is normal. These beliefs privilege cisgender experiences and exclude or discriminate against trans people.

### Closeted / in the closet

This describes people who have not openly disclosed their sexual or gender identity in a particular environment.

### Coming out (of the closet)

The moment where a person first tells others about their orientation and/or gender identity. Some people prefer to refer to it as letting people in.

## D

### Deadname / Birth Name / Former Name

A person's former name after they have changed their name, often as part of their transition. Deadname can also be used as a verb to describe the act of calling someone by their former name. This is harmful and distressing, as people's former names are often associated with trauma and trigger dysphoria.

### Demisexual

A sexual identity that describes a person who does not experience sexual attraction to someone until an emotional bond is formed. Demisexual falls under the asexual umbrella.



### Drag

Drag is the performance of masculinity, femininity or other forms of gender expression. People who do drag may be referred to as drag kings, drag queens or drag artists. Any person can do any type of drag, regardless of their sex assigned at birth, gender identity or sexuality.

## E

### Estrogen

Estrogen or oestrogen is a hormone responsible for the development and regulation of the female reproductive system and secondary sex characteristics. Some people take this as part of their medical transition.

## F

### Femme

A person who expresses and/or identifies with femininity.

### Fluid

Can be used to describe someone's sexuality or gender identity if it shifts and changes over time.

## G

### Gay

An identity that describes a person who emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. People of any gender can describe themselves as gay, although it is often associated with men who love men. People who are not men may also use the term lesbian to describe same gender attraction.



Pride Flag



Men loving men flag

### Gender

Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender identity is not confined to a binary (i.e. woman/man) nor is it static; it exists along a continuum and can change over time. There is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience and express gender through the roles they take on, the expectations placed on them, relations with others and the complex ways that gender is institutionalized in society. Some people may identify as not having a gender.

### Gender Affirmation

Practices that reinforce a person's gender identity. For example, if a person was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, using she/her/hers pronouns affirms their gender as female. This is another way of describing someone's 'transition'. Gender affirmation can involve changing names, pronouns, clothes or medical intervention.

## **G** cont.

### **Gender Diverse**

Refers to people who identify as gender fluid, gender questioning, or genderqueer.

### **Gender Dysphoria**

The distress that a person experiences when their experiences do not correspond with their gender identity, for example, feeling upset at a high or low pitched voice. A person may experience various degrees of dysphoria with respect to different parts of their anatomy or with how people treat them. For example, some people may experience dysphoria when considering the shape of their chest but they are happy or comfortable with their genitals.

### **Gender Expression**

The way a person communicates their gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, appearance, voice and other forms of presentation.

### **Gender Fluid**

A gender identity that describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed and changes over time.



### **Gender Identity**

A person's internal and individual identification with gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth.

### **Gender Non-Conforming**

Having or being perceived to have gender characteristics and/or behaviours that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations. The person may or may not identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, or intersex. For example, in the case of Norrie, the High Court of Australia unanimously held that NSW law permits the Registrar to register that a person's sex is non-specific.

### **Genderqueer**

A gender identity that describes a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions, but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of genders. Genderqueer is a specific identity under the trans and nonbinary umbrellas.



## **Grey / Grey-Ace**

An identity that describes someone who only occasionally feels romantic or sexual attraction toward someone.

## **H**

### **Heteronormativity**

The assumption that all people are heterosexual and that this is normal. These assumptions often result in the denial of equality or even quality participation in society, for example when accessing the most appropriate sexual health tests or seeking recognition as someone's partner.

### **Heterosexual**

An identity that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to a person of the opposite gender. Also referred to as straight.

### **Homophobia**

On a personal level, homophobia is an irrational fear, aversion, or dislike of homosexualities and people who identify as homosexual; on a social level, homophobia is the ingrained structural discrimination against homosexuality and those who identify as homosexual that prevents access to certain resources or opportunities and inhibits individuals from feeling safe or able to be socially recognised as homosexual.

### **Homosexual**

An identity that describes a person who emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. This is not a preferred term, most people refer the use of the word 'gay'.

## **I**

### **Intersex**

Intersex people have innate sex characteristics that don't fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies, and that create risks or experiences of stigma, discrimination and harm. This can involve variations in hormones, chromosomes or any combination of any primary and secondary sex characteristics.



# L

## Lesbian

An identity that describes a person who is not a man who is emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to women, nonbinary people and/or other people who aren't men. Lesbian is often understood to refer to women who love women, however it is also inclusive of trans and gender diverse people who choose to adopt the label.



Lesbian Flag



Pride Progress Flag

## LGBTI+ / LGBTIQ+ / LGBTIQA+

Acronyms referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, agender, asexual and aromantic. The plus encompasses all other terms that are not listed such as pansexual, nonbinary, brotherboys and sistergirls.

# M

## Masc

A person who expresses and/or identifies with masculinity.

## Misgender

Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect or does not align with their gender identity. This can occur when using pronouns, gendered language or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify.

# N

## Nonbinary

A gender identity that describes a person who does not exclusively identify within the gender binary. People may have multiple genders, their gender may fluctuate over time, they may identify outside of the gender binary or they may have no gender at all. Nonbinary is both an identity and an umbrella term encompassing other terms.



## Non-Monogamous

An umbrella term for the practice of having more than one sexual or romantic partner. Ethical Non-Monogamy (ENM) describes when this practice involves the consent of everyone involved, as distinct from cheating on a partner

# O

## Orientation

Orientation is an umbrella term describing a person's attraction to other people. This attraction may be sexual, romantic and/or romantic.

## Outed/Outing

Revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission. Being outed can be extremely distressing, as it can impact their employment, personal safety or relationships.

## Out

Those who are open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in their personal, public and/or professional lives. Some people may be out in some aspects of their lives but not others.

## Omnisexual

An identity that describes a person who is emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to all genders, while still having a preference.



# P

## Pansexual

An identity that describes a person who is emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people regardless of gender.



## Passing

Being perceived by others as the gender you identify with, as cisgender or as straight. This term is often used by trans people to describe the way they are perceived. You should not use the word to describe other people, as passing is not always the goal for trans people.

## Polyamorous

This describes a person who is in multiple emotional, physical, romantic and/or sexual relationships at the same time. Each person involved consents to the other relationships.

## Pride

The celebration of LGBTIQA+ identities, and the community's resistance against discrimination and violence.



## **P** cont.

### **Pronouns**

Pronouns are words we use instead of using a person's name. You cannot assume people's pronouns based on how they look or identify. Pronouns often align with people's gender, but not always (she/her, he/him, they/them). People can also adopt multiple pronouns (she/they, they/he), or neo-pronouns (ze/zim, fae/faer). See below for more information on pronouns.

## **Q**

### **Queer**

An umbrella term used for diverse sexual orientations or gender identities that are not heterosexual and do not fit within a gender binary. For some people within the community, 'queer' has negative connotations because it was a derogatory term.

### **Questioning**

Those who are unsure of, or exploring and discovering their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **S**

### **Sapphic**

An identity that describes a person who is not a man who is emotionally, physically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to women, nonbinary people and/or other non-men. It is inclusive of trans and gender diverse people who choose to adopt the label.

### **Sex**

A person's biological and hormonal sex characteristics. Sex is different from gender. However, most legislation refers to sex, not gender, which sometimes requires them to be conflated when speaking about them in legal contexts.

### **Sexuality / Sexual Orientation**

A person's identity in relation to the people they are typically emotionally, physically, romantically or sexually attracted to.

### **Sistergirl**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were assigned male at birth, but live their lives through their girl spirit. Sistergirls take on female roles in community and society. Thus, Sistergirls encompass both gender and cultural identities.

### **Straight**

A heterosexual person.

## **T**

### **T / Testosterone**

A sex hormone and anabolic steroid that promotes secondary sexual characteristics such as increased muscle and bone mass, and the growth of body hair. Some people take this as part of their medical transition.

### **Trans / Transgender**

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including but not limited to transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, nonbinary, gendervariant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bigender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine and trans feminine. Some terms are controversial so refer to people in the way they refer to themselves.



### **Transfeminine / Transfemme**

An umbrella term that refers to a transgender person who identifies as more feminine. Transfemme can be used to describe a trans woman or a nonbinary person who feels more feminine.

### **Trans man**

A transgender person who identifies as a man, who was not assigned male at birth.

### **Transmasculine / Transmasc**

An umbrella term that refers to a transgender person who identifies as more masculine. Transmasc can be used to describe a trans man or a nonbinary person who feels more masculine.

**T** cont.

### **Transitioning**

The steps a trans person may take to live as their self identified gender. Each person's transition will involve different things. A social transition is the process of making others aware of your gender identity, for example, by changing name, pronouns and gender expression. A medical transition is the process by which a person changes their primary or secondary sex characteristics via hormonal intervention and/or surgery to more closely align with their gender identity. Not all people will undertake medical transition as they may not want to, expense or access may be a problem, or they not wish to be sterilised.

### **Transphobia**

An irrational fear or dislike of, or prejudice towards, someone based on the fact they are trans or perceived to be trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.

Actions can also be transphobic if they directly discriminate against someone on the basis of their transgender status.

### **Trans woman**

A transgender person who identifies as a woman, who was not assigned female at birth.

**U**

**U=U / Undetectable=Untransmittable**  
HIV medication (antiretroviral treatment, or ART) works by reducing the amount of the virus in the blood to undetectable levels. This means the levels of HIV are so low that the virus cannot be passed on. This is called having an undetectable viral load or being undetectable.

## Notes on Pronouns

### **Pronouns Explained**

Pronouns are used to replace a person's first name in a sentence. Using the right ones is a sign of respect and acceptance. You cannot assume a person's pronouns based on the way they look. People's pronouns often align with their gender, but not always.

Pronouns people may use include:

- she/her/hers
- he/him/his
- they/them/theirs
- ze/hir/hirs
- xe/xim/xirs
- fae/faer/faers
- any pronouns

People can also use any combination of pronouns, with different preferences about how they are used. Some people also ask not to be referred to by any pronouns, preferring only their first name to be used.

**For example, someone with she/they pronouns might like them used interchangeably, while someone with they/he pronouns might have a preference for they/them pronouns but not mind he/him pronouns being used occasionally.**

### **Pronouns in Practice**

- Introduce your pronouns when you meet people. This can invite them to do the same.
- Use they/them pronouns if you don't know someone's pronouns.
- Correct people when they use incorrect pronouns for others.
- If you slip up, apologise briefly, correct yourself and continue the conversation.
- If in doubt - ask politely!

# Tips

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- **LGBTIQA+ terminology is diverse and constantly evolving.**
  - Even within the LGBTIQA+ community, there are diverging opinions on best practice language. You should always be willing to listen and learn from the people you are interacting with. If you approach conversations with good intentions, you will likely receive a positive response. We are all constantly learning so keep an open mind!
- **Do not assume a person's gender, sexuality or pronouns.**
  - Adopting heteronormative language can make LGBTIQA+ people feel excluded, as the language makes it clear that the space was not built for them. A politely asked question will usually be accepted, appreciated and answered. However, be mindful not to ask unnecessary and invasive questions. In general, you can adopt language such as 'person', 'parent' or 'partner' to describe people you do not know.
- **Practice Makes Perfect**
  - Related to the above - no one will get it right 100% of the time. The important thing is to keep trying. If you make a mistake, quickly apologise and continue the conversation. Often, if you try to explain yourself, you can place the burden back on the LGBTIQA+ person to comfort you, which is not comfortable for anyone.
- **Not a preference or a lifestyle choice**
  - Being LGBTIQA+ is not a preference or a lifestyle choice, it is how people are. Be mindful not to talk about people's 'preferred pronouns' or say 'they identify as a woman now'. They are their pronouns and they are a woman.
- **Discrimination and LGBTIQA+ history**
  - LGBTIQA+ people have been discriminated against throughout history, and to this day face discrimination around the world. Being cognisant of how this can impact people's experiences in the world and perceptions of themselves can help us support each other better.
- **How can I create a safe space?**
  - Offer how you identify first - your preferred name and pronouns. This can offer an opportunity for the other person to provide theirs.
  - Anything you create, create it to include as many people as possible. For example, use 'Dear Colleagues', or 'hello everyone', and ensure places are accessible by having gender neutral toilets.
  - Provide visual cues of your identification with the LGBTIQA+ community or your allyship. For example, wear your ally pride pin or put a pride flag on your premises/website.



# About Us

The LGBTI Legal Service Inc. offers free and confidential legal services to Queensland residents who are part of the LGBTIQA+ community. Consultations are held in person and remotely. We can assist with many legal areas, including relating to discrimination, human rights issues, family law, domestic violence or intimate partner violence, elder abuse, employment law, gender identity affirmation/recognition, criminal law (including victim support), civil law, administrative law and challenging government decisions from, for example, Centrelink.

## Support us

### **Become a Member**

Our annual memberships entitle individuals and corporations to vote in our General Meetings and share their thoughts on our future direction. Find out more on our website!

### **Donate**

We are grateful for all donations and grants that help to keep the Service running to provide assistance and information to the community.

### **Volunteer with Us**

Lawyers can volunteer to assist at our clinic by providing advice to clients. Email us today to express your interest as an individual lawyer or as an organisation.

Law firms can assist by providing volunteer lawyers for our clinic, assisting with our case work or helping us with our law reform activities. This is an invaluable service!

If you are not a lawyer, you can volunteer at our West End Office, assisting with our clinics, case work and law reform activities, as well as providing administrative support. This is a great way for young LGBTIQA+ people to gain volunteer employment experience.

## Contact

**LGBTI Legal Service Inc.**  
Level 1, Oxley House  
20 Hockings Street  
WEST END QLD 4101  
(07) 3124 7160

[www.lgbtilegalservice.org.au](http://www.lgbtilegalservice.org.au)  
[mail@lgbtilegalservice.org](mailto:mail@lgbtilegalservice.org)  
[@lgbtilegalservice](https://www.instagram.com/lgbtilegalservice)