

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Glossary



While this list includes all the gender identity and sexual orientation terms now required as options for demographic data collection, it does not encompass all the terms used in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and related identities (LGBTQIA+) community. Language and terms are constantly changing, and this glossary represents only a fraction of the vocabulary used by the community. These terms are also mostly based on Western concepts of gender and sexuality. While used often in our current culture, these terms do not represent all peoples, identities and language. As healthcare professionals, we will use the language and terms people use to describe/define themselves.

Gender identity – A person’s innate sense of self as a man, a woman, non-binary, agender, etc.

Agender

(adjective) Used to describe a person who does not identify with any gender or has no gender identity

Bigender

(adjective) Used to describe a person who identifies as two genders either simultaneously or fluctuating

Demiboy

(noun) A person who identifies as a boy/man and/or with masculinity partially to varying degrees, but not wholly as a boy/man and/or masculine; Demiman is a related term

Demigirl

(noun) A person who identifies as a girl/woman and/or with femininity partially to varying degrees, but not wholly as a girl/woman and/or feminine; Demiwoman is a related term

Female

(adjective) A term used to define the sex that typically has the ability to produce eggs or bear offspring,* but has been used for gender, usually corresponding with woman, when sex and gender are erroneously treated as interchangeable

**A person’s sex assigned at birth and/or legal sex does not have to align with their gender in order for them to identify as female*

Gender fluid

(adjective) Used to describe a gender identity that is flexible, ranging from feeling like one gender, to multiple genders, to no gender, and any mix in-between; A gender identity that can change at any time based on the feelings of the person

Genderqueer

(adjective) An umbrella term for gender identities and expressions that exist outside of traditional gender roles/cultural norms; Genderqueer individuals may identify as both genderqueer and other gender identities or solely as genderqueer; Similar to non-binary but carries more social and political connotations

Male

(adjective) A term used to define the sex that typically produces sperm,* but has been used for gender, usually corresponding with man, when sex and gender are erroneously treated as interchangeable

**A person’s sex assigned at birth and/or legal sex does not have to align with their gender in order for them to identify as male*

Non-binary

(adjective) An umbrella term used to describe gender identities that fall outside the binary of man and woman; Examples: genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, bigender, demi gender, etc.; Sometimes written as enby



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Trans* or transgender (transgender female/male-to-female or transgender male/female-to-male)

(adjective) Used to describe a person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth; The asterisk stands for genders that fall outside of the traditional binary (nonbinary, genderfluid, agender, bigender, etc.) and is considered more inclusive but not universally used

**Should not be used as a noun or verb e.g. a transgender, transgendered*

Two spirit

(adjective) A term used by Indigenous peoples of North America (Native Americans, First Nations, etc.) to describe a person who may be considered to embody both the masculine and the feminine or possessing a third gender; Specifics of the term can vary from tribe to tribe

Sex assigned at birth – The sex designated to infants when they are born, typically determined by genitalia

Sexual orientation – An aspect of identity that describes who a person is attracted to in relation to gender

Asexual

(adjective) Describes a person who experiences little to no sexual attraction to others; Not to be equated with celibacy; Ace is an abbreviation for asexual

Bisexual

(adjective) Describes a person who is sexually attracted to two or more genders* or to genders similar to and different from their own

**This attraction is not limited to men and women only, bisexual individuals can be attracted to any gender*

Gay

(adjective) Describes a person who is sexually attracted to people of their own gender; Can be used regardless of gender identity, but is more commonly used to describe men who are attracted to men

Lesbian

(noun) A woman who is sexually attracted to other women

(adjective) Describes a woman who is sexually attracted to other women

Pansexual/Bi+

Pansexual – (adjective) Describes a person who is sexually attracted to people regardless of gender

Bi+ – (adjective) An umbrella term used to describe sexual orientations with attraction to more than one gender (bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, etc), considered by some to be more inclusive of attraction to genders outside of the man/woman binary than the term bisexual

Straight

(adjective) Describes a person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender; for example, a man who is attracted to women or a woman who is attracted to men

Queer

(adjective) An umbrella term used to describe LGBTQIA+ sexual orientations, gender identities, and/or gender expressions; The word queer has been and still is used as a derogatory term or slur, and while it has been proudly reclaimed by many in the community, others see the term as offensive; This term should be avoided unless you use it for yourself or have been given permission to use it for others

Sources

LGBTQIA+ Glossary of Terms for Health Care Teams LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center; 2020; lgbtqihealtheducation.org/publication/lgbtqi-glossary-of-terms-for-health-care-teams/

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