

# Queer Terminology

CSUN Positive Space Program's

## ALLY PROJECT

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**Ally** – Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others out of a concern for the well-being of lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgendered, intersexual and queer people and a belief that heterosexism is a social injustice issue.

**Androgyne**: Person appearing and identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.

**Bisexual** - Term describing a person whose sexual and emotional attraction can be to both males and females.

**Butch** – Masculine-appearing person. A culturally specific term fitting U.S. hegemonic masculinity.

**Coming Out** – Referring to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality/gender identity (to "come out" to one's self). Also referring to the process by which one shares one's sexuality/gender identity with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). This process is a continual, life long process for homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexual individuals.

**Crossdresser** - One who wears the clothing and cultivates the appearance of the other sex. Males who crossdress for erotic reasons, and who are sometimes referred to as Transvestites. [This is different from a "drag queen," who is a performer who crossdresses (female/male impersonator). In 1994, crossdressing under the label "Gender Identity Disorder" was taken off the DSM-IV, The American Psychological Association's (APA's) Diagnostic Statistical Manual-IV (DSM-IV).] This term is now distinguished from *transgender*, because crossdressers do not "crossdress" for gender identity reason.

**Drag** – Crossdressing that does not include any sexual charge. Usually campy, often (not always) gay. Drag king/queen.

**Femme** – Feminine-appearing person. A culturally specific term fitting U.S. hegemonic femininity.

**FTM / F2M** - Common abbreviation denoting a female-to-male transsexual.

**Gay** - Term referring to male homosexual although some people also use it as a non-gender specific term to describe anyone homosexual.

**Gender** - A social-psychological construct which changes over time and is distinct from sex, which is an individual's biological or genetic state of maleness or femaleness.

**Gender Identity** - One's own personal sense of being a man or woman, boy or girl, or "other" gender.

**Gender Identity Disorder** - A medical term used in the D.S.M.-IV: "There must be evidence of a strong and persistent cross-gender identification, which is the desire to be, or the insistence that one is of the other sex." Previously described under the term gender dysphoria.

**Heterosexism** - The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism, and intersexuality. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by an institutional power – which subordinates people because of their alternative sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Heterosexual / Straight** - A term used to describe a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to the opposite-sex.

**Heterosexual Privilege** – Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to queer people. Also, the benefits queers receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual/bisexual/transgendered/intersexual/queer identity.

**Homophobia** - The irrational fear of homosexuals or homosexuality, or any behavior, belief, or attitude that can lead to discrimination, rejection, verbal assaults and/or physical violence. (Biphobia, lesbophobia, transphobia, biphobia)

**Homosexual** - A term used to describe a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to the same-sex, i.e., gay men and lesbian women.

**In the Closet** – May refer to a queer person who has not yet accepted their own sexuality/gender identity (to be "in the closet" to one's self). Also may refer to one who chooses not to share their sexuality/gender identity with family, friends, coworkers, or society (to be "in the closet" to everyone).

**Internalized Oppression** – The process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate stereotypes and attitudes applied to the oppressed group.

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**Institutional Oppression** – Arrangements of a society used to benefit one group at the expense of another through the use of language, media, education, religion, economics, etc.

**Intersexual / Intersexed** - A term referred to people born with ambiguous sexual organs. Hermaphrodites.

**Lesbian** - Term referring to female homosexual. Popular during the 70s and used widely by radical feminists who are "political lesbians".

**LGBTIQQ** – An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual transgendered, intersexed, queer and questioning (e.g., “LGBTIQQ community”).

**MSM** – Men who have sex with men. A descriptive term about behavior that doesn't impose an identity on a person.

**MTF / M2F** - Common abbreviation denoting a male-to-female transsexual.

**Outing** – The act of telling others that a person is queer without that person's permission.

**Queer** - A generic term used by Queer theorists to describe all that do not conform to the patriarchal gender-sex binary system. This includes an FTM who identifies as a straight man. Also used as a shortcut for "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersexual". Others used “queer” as an inclusive term for all other non-conformist gender/sexual behavior and identities.

**Sex** - The biological or genetic state of maleness or femaleness determined at birth, as opposed to gender, and which is assigned primarily on the visual presence or absence of genitalia.

**Sex Reassignment** - Modifying the body to make it as much as possible like that of the other sex.

**Sex Reassignment, Hormonal** - Exogenous administration of estrogens (for male-to-female) or androgens (for female-to-male) to effect the development of secondary sex characteristics of the other sex.

**Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)** - Permanent procedures to alter the body to resemble the other sex.

**Sexual Orientation** - Sexual preference for emotive/erotic partners of the same, opposite, or either sex. Orientations are typically described as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual. [In 1973, the term "homosexual" was taken out of the DSM-IV after much protests and in-workings of activists.]

**Standards of Care (HBIQDA)** - A set of minimum guidelines formulated by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., designed to safeguard both transsexual persons and those who provide professional (medical, psychotherapeutic) services to transsexuals.

**Transgender (TG)** - Crossing over or transcending the common social assignment of gender at birth to incorporate one or more aspects, traits, or characteristics of the other sex. [Virginia Prince originally used this term as a political concept to frame the diversity of gender expression.] An umbrella term to include TS and TG not going through the transition (altering bodies via hormones or surgeries). This term is developing a more specific meaning to people with opposite gender identification and is beginning to exclude crossdressers in this once umbrella term.

**Transgenderist** - One who incorporates aspects, traits, or characteristics of both sexes.

**Transsexual (TS)** - An individual who experiences intense, persistent discomfort and feelings of inappropriateness with the sex assignment made at birth, and who actively seeks to change or has changed his/her body through hormonal reassignment and/or various surgical procedures.

**Transvestite** – Someone who derives sexual pleasure from dressing in clothing generally identified with the opposite sex. While the terms homosexual and transvestite have been used synonymously, they are in fact two different terms. The majority of transvestites are heterosexuals.

**WSW** - Women who have sex with women. A descriptive term about behavior that doesn't impose an identity on a person.

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*Terms are from the transgender advocates' flyer given at UC LGBT Conference, Winter 1997, UC Irvine and the terminology handout given by UCR LGBT Resource Center, with modifications and additions by Gina Masequesmay, 05/02/04.*

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