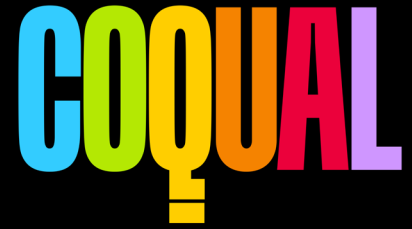


# Glossary of Terms



## LGBTQ+

This acronym, **LGBTQ+**, short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, plus (“+”) others, describes individuals and communities across a spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. While the acronym has been a powerful force for inclusion and solidarity, it is important to understand the distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity contained within LGBTQ+.

## Sexual Orientation

Refers to emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people or no people. Terms that people might use to describe their sexual orientation include:

### Heterosexual

(or straight) can describe a person who is attracted to people of the opposite gender.

### Lesbian

can describe a woman or nonbinary person who is primarily attracted to women.

### Gay

can describe a person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender and is sometimes used as an umbrella term for “not straight.”  
Bisexual/pansexual can describe someone who is attracted to people of multiple gender identities or expressions, including those outside of the male/female binary. Read more in our sources to further understand the distinctions between bi- and pansexuality.

### Queer

once seen as a slur in the English language, has been reclaimed by some, particularly younger LGBTQ+ folks, to describe anyone who breaks the boundaries of societal norms about sexuality and gender identity.

# Gender

refers to a socially constructed set of norms (including physical attributes, behaviors, and emotions) associated with being a girl, boy, woman, man, or other designation. Gender is related to, but distinct from, biological sex. Gender identity categories can be binary (e.g., man or woman), nonbinary (e.g., genderqueer, genderfluid), and ungendered (e.g., agender, genderless). A person's gender identity—and the way they express their gender—can change over time.

## Cisgender

describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the biological sex (typically male or female) they were assigned at birth. For example, an adult who was assigned female by a doctor according to sex characteristics at birth and identifies as a woman is cisgender.

## Transgender

describes a person whose gender identity differs from the biological sex they were assigned at birth. For example, an adult who was assigned female by a doctor according to sex characteristics at birth and identifies as a man is a transgender man.

## Transgender and Gender Diverse (TGD)

refers to trans identity (whether it is binary or not), nonbinary identity, and ungendered identity. When writing about gender identity, we use TGD in contrast to cisgender. To the extent possible, our quote attributions reflect the terms professionals used to describe their gender identity.

## Other TGD Terms to Know

### Gender Expression

describes the way a person presents their gender identity to the world through behavior, style of dress, name, personal pronouns, and beyond. Masculinity is a set of gender expression norms associated with boys and men. Femininity is a set of gender expression norms associated with girls and women. A person's gender expression can encompass different norms and change over time as well.

### Transitioning

Just as cisgender people use countless medical and non-medical methods to express and affirm their gender (from plastic surgery to makeup to gym memberships), TGD people "transition" to more authentically express their gender identity in unique, deeply personal, and often private ways. Some TGD people seek medical interventions, such as hormone therapy or surgery, while others do not. Unless you are a manager or human resources (HR) professional connecting an employee with resources, conversations about transitioning are rarely relevant or appropriate at work.

### Deadname

TGD people may socially and/or legally change their name as they transition. A deadname refers to a pre-transition name that may no longer align with their gender identity. Referring to someone by their deadname can trigger gender dysphoria, discomfort, depression, and anxiety.

For more in-depth vocabulary and guidance from Coqual on these terms, refer to our 2023 report:

**Challenging Norms: A Global Analysis of Gender at Work.**