

# Language and Symbols

## LGBTI QA+ what does it all mean?

The language of the LGBTI community is constantly evolving. Communities and sub-cultures are still being defined, and thus the language and labels associated with the LGBTI community also changes. Some have even adopted previous slurs to now proudly describe themselves. With this in mind the information below is the currently accepted language of the LGBTI communities.

### LGB

**LGB** is about sexual orientation and who you are attracted to; Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

### TI

**T** is about understanding a different gender identity from the body you were born into; transgender

**I** is about understanding bodily difference; Intersex

### QA+

These are not always added to the acronym.  
**Q** is about not fitting into a specific definition; Queer or Questioning,  
**A** is not having sexual attraction; Asexual  
 + is "Plus everything else"

## Sexual Orientation -Who you are attracted to romantically and/or physically

### Lesbian

A woman whose primary emotional and physical attraction is towards other women. Another phrase is "women who have sex with women"

### Gay

A term generally used to describe men whose primary emotional and physical attraction is towards other men. This term is also used by women as a generic term for homosexual. It can also be an umbrella term for the community as a whole, but it does then leave out a number of community groups.

### Homosexual

A generic term to describe people whose primary emotional and physical attraction is towards people of the same sex as themselves. Another term that is used is "same sex attracted"

### Bisexual

A term to describe someone whose primary emotional and physical attraction is for people, regardless of gender.

### Asexual

A term to describe someone who is generally not emotionally or physically attracted to any people. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy



## Pansexual

A term used to describe someone who is attracted to all people regardless of their sexual identity, gender identity or intersex status. Similar to bisexual but includes all the other gender options.

## Sexuality

The expression of a person's desires attractions, sexual activity and personal expression through dress and personal interactions. This is not a conscious choice or decision. To assert that sexuality is a choice will cause offence and is regarded as a lack of understanding of the basic definition of the term.

## Heterosexual/Straight

A generic term to describe people whose primary emotional and physical attraction is towards people of the opposite sex as themselves.

# Gender – Body and Behaviour

## Biological sex

Sex (sometimes called biological sex, anatomical sex, or physical sex) is comprised of things like genitals, chromosomes, hormones, body hair, and more. But one thing it's not: gender.

## Gender identity

A person's sense of identity in relation to the categories of male and female. This is different from sexuality and should not be confused. Sexual diversity exists within the gender diverse community. Trans\*people can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual. For some people, this internal identity may not match their external physical body.

## Gender expression

Refers to how we express ourselves in terms of our gender. It includes things like our hair styles, the clothes we wear, the 'look' we have and the activities and hobbies we do. Terms like 'masculine' and 'feminine' are often used to define these expressions. Sometimes people do not match what Australian society has defined as what men and women should look like or do.

## Cisgender

Is a term used in the context of gender issues to refer to people whose gender identity and behaviour or role is considered appropriate for

## Queer

An umbrella term sometimes used by LGBTIQ people to refer to the entire LGBT community. It is also used as an alternative word that some people use to "queer" the idea of the labels and categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. It is important to note that the word queer is an in-group term, and a word that can be considered offensive to some people, depending on their generation, geographic location, and relationship with the word.

## Questioning

For some, the process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation.

one's sex. For example, someone who is female, and who dresses and behaves in a way that is traditionally associated with being female. This is your traditional "male" and "female".

## Intersex

Intersex variation – a person who is born with **bodily differences** that can include a variance in reproductive organs (anatomy), hormones and/or sex chromosomes (DNA) that are not exclusively male or female. Many forms of intersex exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category. At least 30 or 40 different variations are known to science.

## Transgender

This is an umbrella term for people whose sense of gender is outside of the traditional idea of male or female. It can also be used to define someone who has gender dysphoria, a condition where their biological body does not match with their internal own sense of gender. Some people transition so that they can live as their innate gender identity. Gender dysphoria is not a choice and to imply otherwise is highly offensive and shows a lack of understanding of gender identity issues. Trans\* people are subject to high levels of discrimination, verbal and physical abuse from others and a lack of understanding from the general community. Not all Transgender people have had reaffirmation surgery.



## Queer

An umbrella term sometimes used by LGBTIQ people to refer to the entire LGBT community. It is also used as an alternative word that some people use to "queer" the idea of the labels and categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. Similar to the concept of genderqueer. It is important to note that the word queer is an in-group term, and a word that can be considered offensive to some people, depending on their generation, geographic location, and relationship with the word.

## Questioning

For some, the process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression

## Genderqueer

A term used by people who possess identities which fall outside of the widely accepted sexual binary (i.e. "men" and "women").

Genderqueer may also refer to people who identify as both transgendered AND queer, i.e. individuals who challenge both gender and sexuality regimes and see gender identity and sexual orientation as overlapping and interconnected

## Ally

Typically any non-LGBTI person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBTI people, though LGBTI people can be allies, such as a lesbian who is an ally to a transgender person.

*Definitions taken from-  
<https://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>*

Each of these concepts sit on a sliding scale, for more information see the Gender resource.

## How to establish inclusive dialogue

*(Adapted from Queensland Association for Healthy Communities –LGBTI Identities fact sheet)*

- Use correct name and pronoun consistently
- Never assume someone's sexual orientation or gender identity
- If you are unsure how to address someone, ask in a sensitive and respectful manner
- If you are really unsure, use gender- neutral pronouns and let the other person lead the way
- Employ best practice by using terms your client has conveyed to you
- If you don't know – ask – there is no such thing as a stupid question

## Language and how it changes:

The LGBTIQAAA..... acronym is growing, and this will continue to occur as smaller minorities are labelled and acknowledged publicly. Event within generations there is a shift in language and peoples comfort levels with using it. e.g. Queer is often seen as a derogatory term, yet the younger generation (predominantly) has embraced this former slur and made it their own. That being said some older LGBTI community members proudly stand up and announce themselves as queer.

As one of the fastest evolving cultures, the language used to describe the LGBTI community is also evolving fast. Each group and sub culture within communities including the LGBTI communities has its own language. Listen to the personal you are talking to and take your language cues from them.

For more information on the evolution of the LGBTI language visit: <http://smartgaylife.com/lgbt-community-language/>



# Flags for all

## LGBTI Rainbow flag



This flag represents the LGBTI Community as a whole. The first rainbow flag was designed in

1978 by Gilbert Baker, a San Francisco artist, in response to calls by activists for a symbol for the community. Baker used the five-striped "Flag of the Race" as his inspiration, and designed a flag with eight stripes: pink, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. ([www.stop-homophobia.com/rainbow-flag-history](http://www.stop-homophobia.com/rainbow-flag-history))

## Transgender Flag



The Transgender Pride flag was designed by Monica Helms, and was first

shown at a pride parade in Phoenix, Arizona, United States in 2000. The flag represents the transgender community and consists of five horizontal stripes, two light blue, two pink, with a white stripe in the centre.

[www.rainbowstore.com.au/categories/TRANSGENDER-PRIDE/](http://www.rainbowstore.com.au/categories/TRANSGENDER-PRIDE/)

## Intersex Flag



There is no one flag used within intersex communities. However this is the most widely used symbol in

Australia. It was designed as something that is not derivative, but yet is firmly grounded in meaning.

The colour yellow has long been regarded as the hermaphrodite colour, neither blue nor pink. Purple, too, has been used for the same purpose. The circle is unbroken and unornamented, symbolising wholeness and completeness, and our potentialities. We are still fighting for bodily autonomy and genital integrity, and this symbolises the right to be who and how you want to be. ([ihra.org.au/22773/an-intersex-flag/](http://ihra.org.au/22773/an-intersex-flag/))

## Bisexual Flag



Michael Page designed the flag in 1998. It comprises of magenta, lavender and royal blue in a

ratio of 2:1:2. Or two fat stripes in pink and blue, with a thinner purple stripe sandwiched between them. Each colour had a specific meaning: pink, a colour often associated with homosexuality, represents same sex attraction; blue, its opposite in the common consciousness if not on the colour wheel, different sex attraction; and the purple a melding of the two. ([www.thisisbiscuit.co.uk/hoisting-our-colours-a-brief-history-of-the-bisexual-pride-flag/](http://www.thisisbiscuit.co.uk/hoisting-our-colours-a-brief-history-of-the-bisexual-pride-flag/))

## Other symbols



Transgender – not colour dependant



Lesbian (left) and Gay (right) –not colour dependant



Pink Triangle - gay (used as a symbol of homosexuals by the Nazi's but more recently reclaimed as a symbol of pride)

Black triangle – less common symbol for lesbians (also reclaimed from the Nazis)

## Welcome Here Project



Acon's Welcome Here project is another way to display your inclusion using their stickers and to list your church on their inclusive services database. For more information visit: <https://www.welcomehere.org.au>

**Claire Allen** is the LGBTI Project Officer for Uniting, the Community Services arm of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT.

