

WHAT DO ALL THESE LETTERS (LGBTIQ) ACTUALLY MEAN?

Sexuality and gender identity is very diverse and so there are lots of different ways that people can identify themselves.

Over time various categories have emerged that can be useful for describing different orientations. These aren't necessarily clear-cut definitions but are a useful starting point for discussing the breadth of sexuality. The acronym LGBTIQ is often used to try and encapsulate a majority of people who do not identify as strictly heterosexual.

While there is common ground between these groups it is important to note that some transgender and intersex people do not identify with the LGBTIQ acronym, preferring to see their issues as distinct from those of the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. This resource deals with issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people, so we will use the acronym LGBQ.

DEFINITIONS

BISEXUAL – A person emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to both men and women, though not necessarily simultaneously. A bisexual person may not be equally attracted to both sexes, and the degree of attraction may vary as sexual identity develops over time.

GAY – A word describing a man or a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to members of the same sex.

LESBIAN – A woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to other women.

QUEER – A term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual. For some LGBT people, the word has a negative connotation; however, many younger LGBT people are comfortable using it.

TRANSGENDER – A term describing a broad range of people who experience and/or express their gender differently from what most people expect. It is an umbrella term that includes people who are transsexual or otherwise gender non-conforming.

TRANSSEXUAL – A medical term describing people whose gender and sex do not match, and who often seek medical treatment to bring their body and gender identity into alignment. Avoid using this term unless an individual self-identifies as transsexual.

INTERSEX – A term used to describe people who, as individuals, have genetic, hormonal and physical features that may be thought to be typical of both male and female at once. Intersex people may be born with physical differences in reproductive parts like the testicles, penis, vulva, clitoris, or ovaries. Intersex is also physical differences in secondary sexual characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breast development and stature.

SUMMARY

Types of sexual expression have been grouped together, and often the acronym LGBTIQ is used to encompass all non-hetero sexualities.

Sexuality is a varied and wonderful thing.

SOME RESOURCES

Twenty10 - twenty10.org.au
Queer Youth Support and drop in centre

ACON - acon.org.au
Run workshops for young men and women