



DEFINITIONS

A Note on Definitions: Please know that all definitions and labels do not mean the same to all people. Use the preferred terminology of the person/people with whom you are interacting. This list represents common usages and meanings of these terms within communities, but is not exhaustive nor universal.

Gender: The wide set of characteristics that are conducted to distinguish between the two institutionally recognized sexes: male and female. Gender is not static and can shift over time. Gender may be influenced by a number of facts including the following:

- a) **Physical Markers** – Aspects of the human body are considered to determine sex and/or gender for a given culture or society, including genitalia, chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics, and internal reproductive organs.
- b) **Role/Expression** – Aspects of behavior and outward presentation that may (intentionally or unintentionally) communicate gender to others in a given culture or society, including clothing, body language, hairstyles, socialization, relationships, career choices, interests and presence in gender spaces (restrooms, place of worship, etc.).
- c) **Gender Identity** – An individual’s internal view of their gender. One’s own innermost sense of themselves as a gendered being and/or as masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc. This will often influence name and pronoun preference for an individual.

Sexual Orientation: The culturally-defined set of meaning through which people describe their sexual attraction. Sexual orientation is not static and can shift over time. Sexual orientation may be influenced by a number of factors including the following:

- d) **Attraction** – One’s own feelings or self-perception about which gender(s) one feels drawn. Can be sexual, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and/or political.
- e) **Behavior** – What one does sexually and/or with whom.
- f) **Sexual Identity** – The language and terms one uses to refer to their sexual orientation. It may or may not be based on either of the above and can also be influenced by family, culture, and community.

Transgender: A term used broadly that may refer primarily to individuals who identify differently from the sex assigned at birth or a term used by people for whom the sex they were assigned at birth is an incomplete or incorrect description of themselves. The term “genderqueer” has the same basic meaning but may be used somewhat loosely.

Gender Nonconforming: This term can refer to gender identity, or gender role and refers to someone who falls outside of or transcend what is considered to be traditional gender-norms for their assigned sex.

Working to Improve the Lives of LGBTQ Youth and Adults

Facebook Group - UWDPRIDE

<http://uwde.org/affinity-groups/pride-council>



DEFINITIONS

Gay: Most frequently used by male-identified people who experience attraction primarily or exclusively for other male-identified people.

Lesbian: Most frequently used female-identified people who experience attraction primarily or exclusively for other female-identified people.

Bisexual: A term generally used to indicate attraction or potential for attraction to more than one gender.

Queer: A political and sometimes controversial term that some LGBT people have reclaimed, while others consider it derogatory. Used more frequently by activist, academics, and some younger LGBT people, the term can refer either to gender identity, sexual orientation, or both and can be used by any gender.

Questioning: A term that may refer to an identity, or a process of introspection whereby one learns about their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Can happen at any age in and multiple times throughout one's lifetime.

Transphobia: Societal, systemic, and interpersonal oppression against people of transgender experience. Also something experienced by some gender queer and gender nonconforming people.

Homophobia: Societal, systemic, and interpersonal oppression against LGBTIQ people and communities. Also can be experienced by those who are perceived to be LGBTIQ.

Biphobia: Societal, systemic, and interpersonal oppression against people that identify as bisexual.

Heterosexism: Systemic belief that heterosexually and binary gender system are superior. Also, the overall creation of institutions that benefit heterosexual people exclusively and/or oppress LGBTQ people.

A note on gender pronouns: People tend to refer to someone as either “he” or “she” based on physical appearance. Like names, pronouns are identity terms that can be chosen or rejected. A person can identify as “he”, “she” or both or another pronoun altogether. When an individual voices a pronoun preference, it is considered basic respect to use the preferred gender-language consistently.

*Adapted from “NY Anti-Violence Project – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Terms and Definitions”.

Working to Improve the Lives of LGBTQ Youth and Adults

Facebook Group - UWDPRIDE

<http://uwde.org/affinity-groups/pride-council>