

Health Terms Related to Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity: (Glossary)

Agender: A term for someone who does not identify with any gender.

Ally: When someone acts as an upstander to support a person whose identity is different from their own.

Aromantic: A term for a person who does not usually experience romantic attraction to other people.

Asexual: A term for a person who does not usually experience sexual attraction to other people.

Bisexual: A person who can be attracted to other people of more than one gender. Keep in mind that the definition has evolved from being “an attraction to men and women” into a recognition of attraction that can include non-binary and gender-fluid people.

Cisgender: A term for a person who feels that their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity match up. (Ex: a person assigned male at birth, who feels like a guy or a person assigned female at birth, who feels like a girl. You may hear people use “Cis” for short.)

Demiromantic: A person who only experiences romantic attraction to someone with whom they’ve formed a strong emotional bond.

Demisexual: A person who only experiences sexual attraction to someone with whom they’ve formed a strong emotional bond.

Female: A medical designation usually given to a person with a vulva, ovaries and xx chromosomes.

Fluid: A term for when a person’s gender expression changes at different times.

Gay/Lesbian: Terms for men who are mostly attracted to other men, and women who are mostly attracted to other women.

Gender Affirming Care: Encompasses a range of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions designed to support and affirm an individual’s gender identity when it conflicts with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: The way a person expresses their gender through style, behavior, pronouns, and other outward markers.

Gender Identity: A person’s sense of who they are as a boy, girl, neither or somewhere in between.

Gray-asexual: A person who experiences sexual attraction, but not very often, or to a minimal extent.

Intersex: A medical designation usually given to a person whose sexual body parts, puberty development, and chromosomes may not fit typical medical definitions of male or female.

Male: A medical designation usually given to a person with a penis, testes and xy chromosomes.

Nonbinary/Genderqueer/Expansive/3rd Gender: All of these terms may be used by a person who expresses a gender identity outside of the boy/girl binary.

Pansexual: A person who can be attracted to others regardless of gender.

Queer: An umbrella term that can be used by anyone who identifies as LGBTQ+, or anyone who does not identify as straight or cisgender. It is important to know that the term “queer” was historically used as an insult or slur against LGBTQ+ people and is sometimes still used that way today. However, LGBTQ+ people have also reclaimed this term, and it is now commonly used as an umbrella word to describe anyone who does not identify as straight. You can even major in “Queer Studies” at many colleges!

Questioning: A person who is unsure about their sexual orientation or who is still figuring out their identity and attractions.

Sex: A person’s designation as male, intersex or female based on the sexual body parts they were born with. Sometimes referred to as “assigned sex” or “sex assigned at birth.”

Sexual/Romantic Orientation: Describes who a person is sexually or romantically attracted to.

Straight: A term for men who are mostly attracted to women, or women who are mostly attracted to men.

Transgender: A term for a person who feels that their sex assigned at birth does not match with their gender identity (Ex: a person who was assigned female at birth, and feels like a boy, a person who was assigned male at birth who feels like a girl, or a person assigned either female or male at birth, who identifies as genderqueer or nonbinary).

Two Spirit: A term encompassing many different traditional North American Indigenous concepts of gender & sexuality.