

LGBTQ terminology

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AIDS

A disease of the immune system characterized by increased susceptibility to opportunistic infections caused by a retrovirus and transmitted chiefly through blood or blood products that enter the body's bloodstream, especially by sexual contact or contaminated hypodermic needles. *See also HIV, Safe Sex*

Androgyne / Androgyny

A person appearing and/or identifying as neither male nor female, presenting a gender which is either mixed or neutral.

Bisexual / Bisexuality

- An individual who is sexually attracted to both men and women, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a proper noun for this individual. A common misconception is that *bisexuality* means being equally attracted to both sexes – in fact, many people who state a distinct or exclusive preference for one sex over another, may still identify as bisexual. An alternative, less commonly used term, is **ambisexual**.

Butch

- A term historically applied to a 'masculine' (but not necessarily **gay**) woman or **lesbian**. Traditionally, the butch used to be paired with the **femme** in a lesbian relationship. However, the modern butch may prefer other butch women. This archaic term should not be used without full justification, as it is often used derogatively and may cause offence. A famous example of the butch-femme relationship is portrayed in Radclyffe Hall's novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Exaggeratedly masculine men (not necessarily gay) might also be described as butch. *See also 'Femme'*.

Camp

- An extremely subjective and challenging term that is open to a wide variety of **LGBTQ** interpretations. Some of these are as follows:
 - o Camp is used to describe aspects associated with the effeminate **gay** male stereotype, such as a playful, coquettish, theatrical and/or teasing manner.
 - o Camp also describes an intangible design or style aesthetic. Original camp (or kitsch) was seemingly unaware of its own absurdity, being artlessly mannered or stylized. Newer camp is more self-aware, and probably best described as bad taste knowingly taken to extremes.
 - o Despite dubious aestheticism and patent absurdity, camp objects can have a perversely sophisticated appeal. Outdated objects may be reclaimed as camp style icons by the connoisseur.

Some aspects of popular culture are traditionally enjoyed by the LGBTQ community for 'camp' appeal, i.e. old Hollywood musicals. However, despite the popular stereotype, camp is not an exclusively LGBTQ preserve.

Cross-dresser

A person who wears the clothes of another gender. *See also 'Transvestite'.*

Drag

The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically.

Drag King

A person, usually female, who performs masculinity theatrically.

Drag Queen

A person, usually male, who performs femininity theatrically.

Femme (or Fem)

- A term historically applied to a 'feminine' **gay** woman or **lesbian**. Traditionally the femme used to be paired with the **butch** in a lesbian relationship. However, the modern femme may prefer other femmes. This archaic term should not be used without full justification, as incorrect usage may cause offence. A famous example of the butch-femme relationship is portrayed in Radclyffe Hall's novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Very rarely, the term is sometimes used for extremely 'feminised' gay men. *See also 'Butch'.*

Gay

- An individual who is gay is sexually attracted to members of their own sex, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a noun for the individual. Unlike **lesbian**, which always indicates the female, the term 'gay' can indicate both men and women. This can be clarified by using it as a prefix, e.g. *gay man/male*, or *gay woman/female*. Some individuals who identify as gay may feel sexually attracted to and/or have relationships with members of the opposite sex, but not identify as **bisexual**. The term 'gay' as a sexual slang term first emerged in the late 1600s (a 'gay woman' was a prostitute, a 'gay fellow' a lothario), in addition to its general meaning, 'colourful' or 'happy'. In the early 20th century the term was appropriated by the **homosexual** community. By 1990 it was a widely accepted synonym for 'homosexual'. The actual word is slightly problematic, as it is currently used as mildly pejorative (possibly not intentionally **homophobic**) slang (e.g. "That's so gay!") to mean something is rubbish. When using the word 'gay' it should be clearly used to avoid any such misunderstanding. If used in a historical context, i.e. in quotation (e.g. 'gay house' = brothel) the meaning must be explicitly explained.

Gender Identity

A person's sense of being masculine, feminine, or other gendered.

HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus, a retrovirus that causes AIDS by infecting helper T cells of the immune system.

See also AIDS.

Hermaphrodite

Historically, the term hermaphrodite was used to describe people with ambiguous genitalia or gender. The word hermaphrodite entered the English lexicon in the late 14th century, derived from the Greek Hermaphroditus, the child of the Greek god Hermes and the goddess Aphrodite. He was a minor deity of bisexuality and effeminacy. According to Ovid, born a remarkably handsome boy, he was transformed into an androgynous being by union with the water-nymph Salmacis.

Recently, the word **intersex** has come into preferred usage for humans, since the word hermaphrodite is now considered to be misleading, offensive and stigmatizing, as well as clinically problematic. *See also 'Intersex'.*

Heterosexual

An individual who is heterosexual is solely attracted to members of the opposite sex. The term also acts as a proper noun for this individual. Some people who have same-sex experiences may identify as heterosexual rather than **bisexual**. Sometimes, to avoid adverse attention (i.e. **homophobia**), **gay**, bisexual, or **lesbian** individuals will identify themselves as heterosexual, or allow this to be assumed.

Homoerotic

- This term is usually applied to items where the portrayal of males is perceived as designed (intentionally or unintentionally) to sexually appeal to a **gay** and **bisexual** male audience. The creators can be either male or female, and not necessarily gay themselves. The term 'homoerotic' implies an item has artistic or aesthetic qualities, though certain individuals (not necessarily **homophobic**, but from any culture or social group, and of any sexuality) might consider such items to be inartistic, lewd, pornographic, and/or otherwise offensive. The term 'homoerotic' is almost never applied to the **lesbian** equivalent of such artwork, for which no single-word official term exists. The term *female homoeroticism* should be used

very carefully as many portrayals of lesbian activity were, and still are, explicitly created for a **heterosexual** male audience. Depictions of male homosexual activity created by women for a female audience (e.g. Japanese **yaoi** comics or manga) also exist; again to label such work homoerotic may be problematic.

Homophobia

- The fear and/or hatred of **homosexuals** and homosexuality. Homophobia can manifest at any level, ranging from mild discomfort around **LGBTQ** people, to avoidant tactics, to hate speech and acts of violence against **gays & lesbians** e.g. 'queer-bashing' or active incitement of hatred against LGBTQ people. Some people who identify as homosexual or **bisexual** may have attitudes best described as *homophobic* towards certain sections of gay culture, or certain 'types' of LGBTQ people. For example, some gay men may have **lesbophobia**, the fear or dislike of lesbians. Gay men and lesbians can also show **biphobia** or even **heterophobia**.

Homosexual

- An individual who is homosexual is sexually attracted to members of their own sex, or gives the impression of being so. The term also acts as a noun for the individual. The term can apply to both men and women, though it is usually used for **gay** men. The term can be qualified as *male homosexuality*, or *female homosexuality*. Same sex individuals seldom apply the term to themselves, generally preferring the terms **gay** or **lesbian**. This is because the term is problematic due to negative clinical associations. It is often used by **homophobes** to depersonalise and dehumanise gays and lesbians, without using more obviously derogatory terms. Cataloguers often innocently use this term in preference to what they perceive as more colloquial terms, such as 'gay'. An alternative adjective is **same-sex**, as in 'same-sex relationship'.

Intersexed Person / Intersex

Someone whose sex a doctor has a difficult time categorizing as either male or female. A person whose combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, gonads, and/or genitals differs from one of the two expected patterns.

People with intersex conditions sometimes choose to live exclusively as one sex or the other, using clothing, social cues, genital surgery, and hormone replacement therapy to blend into the sex they identify with more closely.

Some people who are intersex, such as some of those with androgen insensitivity syndrome, outwardly appear completely female or male already, without realizing they are intersex.

Other kinds of intersex conditions are identified immediately at birth due to visible differences in genitalia. *See also 'Hermaphrodite'.*

Lesbian

- A woman who is sexually attracted to other women, or who gives the impression of being so. As a term, 'lesbian' (or Lesbian) dates back to the early 18th century. By the 1870s it was

known to refer to sexual orientation rather than to Sappho and the Lesbos islanders. Until the early 20th century, lesbian and Sapphist were used interchangeably.

LGBTQ

- These initials stand for '**Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer**'.

Safe sex

Sexual activity (especially intercourse) with the use of measures (such as latex condoms) to avoid the transmission of disease (especially **AIDS**).

Trans

An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a gender variant person. This use allows a person to state a gender variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant community as a whole and can be written also with an asterisk to make a wider umbrella term, trans*.

Transgender

of, relating to, or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from the one which corresponds to the person's sex at birth. Transgender can also be defined as a person who lives as a member of a gender not necessarily based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

Transsexual

A person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

Transman (or trans man)

An identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transsexuals (FTM) to signify that they are men while still affirming their biological history as females.

Transwoman (or trans woman)

An identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals (MTF) to signify that they are women while still affirming their biological history as males.

Transvestite

Someone who dresses in clothing generally identified with the opposite gender/sex. While the terms 'transsexual' and 'transvestite' have been used synonymously in the past, they are in fact two significantly different groups. Statistically, the majority of transvestites are heterosexual males who enjoy dressing, frequently or infrequently, in what is stereotypically considered to be "women's clothing". (The preferred term in the USA is '**cross-dresser**,' but the word 'transvestite' is still used in a positive sense in Britain.)

Queer

An umbrella term which embraces a spectrum of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively- heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. Queer can include lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered people, intersex persons, the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive people.

It is a reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur or term of abuse until the 1980s, but has now been semantically overturned by LGBT persons who use it as a term of defiant pride.