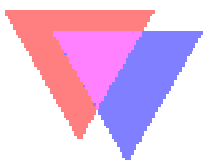


LesBiGay and Transgender Glossary



This pamphlet is intended for people who want to learn more about sexual identity (e.g. lesbian, bisexual, gay, straight, asexual) and gender identity (e.g. transvestite, transgender, transsexual) vocabulary and issues. It attempts to provide basic information and vocabulary to enable you to interact with members of these communities as a respectful and informed individual, rather than one who knows nothing (and by inference probably does not care) about their community, the oppression they deal with, and their personal experience.

The definitions in this pamphlet were put together by a bisexual-identified mixed-class white male from the Midwest and Northeast of the US. The definitions of these words are not standardized and are used differently by different individuals and in different regions. The meanings of words also change over time. Concepts and attitudes toward gender identity and sexual identity are changing in society as a whole, as well as within the LesBiGay and Transgender communities (including reclaiming derogatory slang.) Therefore, the meanings of these words will continue to change as well.

These definitions mostly assume the existence of two and only two each of sexes, genders, and sex/gender roles, which are separate and distinct from one another. Many people see gender role, gender, and sex as overlapping, closely related, or as a limited view or model of a much richer reality. For instance, some hermaphrodite and neuter people regard themselves as male or female, while others regard themselves as neither. Not everyone uses these terms to distinguish between physical sex and social role, and some people

Camp makes fun of the stereotype and laughs at the sting of the oppression. Also, *to camp it up*. (See *butch it up*.)

Celibate *n., adj.* One who is not sexually active with anyone else. May abstain from all sexual activity, or may be autosexual.

Come/be out (of the closet) *vi.* 1. To disclose one's own sexual identity to another person. [I *came out* to my mother over Thanksgiving vacation.] 2. (*come out to oneself*) To discover that one's own sexual identity is different than one previously assumed. [I *came out to myself* three months ago.] 3. To be open about and deal with one's own and others' reactions to the discovery or disclosure of one's sexual identity. [I am *out* to my mother.] [I am *out* at work.] 4. (*come out for*) To disclose another person's sexual identity to a third person with the second person's permission or at their request. [I asked my mother to come out to my grandparents for me.] (See *out*). 5. May be generalized to disclosure of any information about oneself, not just one's sexual identity.

Cross Dress(er) (CD) *vi., n.* To wear clothes makeup, etc., regardless of the motivation, which are appropriate for another gender role than the gender assigned one at birth.

Drag *adj., n.* 1. Clothes, often unusual or dramatic, especially those considered appropriate to another gender. 2. (*In drag*)

Wearing clothes considered appropriate to another gender. [I went to the Halloween party *in drag*.] [She was wearing *butch drag*.] 4. May be generalized to refer to any recognizable clothes "look" (e.g. corporate drag, military drag.)

Drag Queen(M2F) / Drag King(F2M) *n.* A transvestite who employs dramatic clothes, makeup, and mannerisms, often for other people's appreciation or for its shock value.

Dyke *n.* Reclaimed derogatory slang. Refers to lesbians, or to lesbians and bisexual women.

Electrolysis *n.* Process of killing hair follicles, especially facial and neck hair, usually with an electric needle. (See *secondary sex characteristics*.)

F2M/F→M/FTM *adj.* Female to male. Used to specify the direction of a change in gender or sex.

Female *n., adj.* One who has (only) female primary sex characteristics.

Female Impersonator (FI) *n.* A male who on specific occasions, cross dresses and employs stereotypical feminine dialog, voice, and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people. (See *camp, drag queen*.)

may not even know what is meant by them. Some people may use different terms (e.g. some transsexuals

regard themselves as a third sex.) But these terms are used in this pamphlet because they are in wide use.

Sexual Identity and Gender Identity are similar in some ways and very different in others. Both refer to how one thinks of oneself, but gender identity is based on which gender role one identifies with, and sexual identity is based on whether one's romantic or sexual attractions are to members of the same or another gender/sex. The existence and perpetuation of gender identities and sexual identities is based at least in part in the historic and continuing oppression of people who do not conform to certain aspects of society's gender roles. Sex, gender identity, and sexual identity refer to different aspects of oneself. Therefore, one may be any combination or blend of sex (e.g. male, female, intersex, neuter), gender (e.g. masculine, feminine, androgynous), and sexual identity (e.g. straight, bisexual, lesbian/gay, asexual.)

In recent history bisexuals, lesbians, gay men and transgendered people have formed communities which are mostly separate but partly overlap with one another and with other communities. Because of this historic separation, someone who is a member of one of these communities does not necessarily understand and prioritize the vocabulary and issues of the other communities. One who belongs to more than one of these communities may feel welcome in each, but usually none addresses all one's needs or the way that one's needs from different communities overlap or interact. All these communities are affected by the way that other oppressions (including those based on race, class, and physical or mental ability) divide people from one another, and many are working to be welcoming to people of other colors, class backgrounds, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

One may identify with a sexual identity without necessarily identifying with the corresponding community (e.g.. one may think of oneself as a lesbian without thinking of oneself as a member of the lesbian community.) Also, sexual identity terms used as nouns (instead of as adjectives) have sometimes been used to suggest that LesBiGay people are entirely defined by their sexual identity, and this usage is therefore distasteful to some people. Corrections and additions to this glossary are welcome. Please send them to the address at the end of this pamphlet.

Feminine *adj.* The gender role assigned to females.

Generally includes: nurturing, emotional, timid/quiet, wears dresses and makeup.

Femme *adj., n.* 1. Feminine or effeminate dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2. A sub-identity of lesbian, gay, or bisexual, based on feminine or effeminate dress and behavior. (See *butch*.)

Fetishistic Transvestite *n.* A transvestite who consistently eroticizes cross dressing. May also eroticize fantasies of changing gender or sex.

Gay *n., adj.* 1. One who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions primarily to members of the same gender or sex, or who identifies as a member of the gay community. May be of any gender identity. 2. Sometimes used as a synonym for gay male, lesgay, or LesBiGay. Lesbians and Bisexuals often do not feel included by this term.

Gay community *n.* 1. The group of people who identify as members of the gay community. One may identify as gay without identifying as a member of the gay community and vice versa. 2. Sometimes used as a synonym for gay male, lesgay, or LesBiGay community. Lesbians and bisexuals often do not feel included by this term.

Gay man/male *n.* A boy or man who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions primarily to members of the same gender or sex. One may identify as a gay man without identifying with the gay community. Derogatory slang includes: queer, faggot, swish. (Note: In personal ads, GM often means gay man. Not to be confused with genetic male.)

Gay male/men's community *n.* The group of people who identify as members of the gay male community. One may identify as a gay male without identifying as a member of the gay male community and vice versa.

Gender (identity) *n.* How one thinks of oneself in terms of one's gender role. Masculine feminine, androgynous. (See *butch, femme*.)

Gender (identity) community *n.* See transgender community.

Gender dysphoria (GD) *n.* Medical term for the unhappiness or discomfort which may be experienced by one whose primary sex characteristics do not match one's gender identity.

Gender fuck *n., vi.* To mix stereotypical aspects of gender roles (e.g. wearing a beard and a dress together.)

Gender neutral language *n.* Language which does not use one gender to represent all people (e.g.. does not use "he" and "his" to represent people in general.) (See unisex.)

Androgynous/androgyny *adj., n.* [Gr. *andros*(man) + *gyne*(woman)] 1. Exhibiting approximately equal proportions of masculine and feminine characteristics simultaneously. 2. Independence from the gender roles specified by society.

(An)other sex/gender *n., adj.* Another gender or sex than the reference person's own. [Are you currently in a relationship with a member of *another gender* (than your own)?] [She has an *other sex* partner.]

Asexual *n. adj.* 1. One who has no significant (to oneself) interest in sexual activity, or who identifies as asexual. 2. Sometimes used to mean autosexual.

Autosexual *n., adj.* One whose significant (to oneself) sexual activity is masturbation.

Berdache *n.* See *Two Spirit*.

Biphobia *n.* The oppression or mistreatment of bisexuals, either by heterosexuals (often called homophobia if it does not target bisexuals separately from lesbians and gay men), or by lesbians or gay men. (See *monosexual*.)

Bi(sexual) *adj., n.* One who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions to members of both the same gender and/or sex and another gender and/or sex, or who identifies as a member of the bisexual community. Contrary to popular myths, people who are attracted to members of both genders or sexes (just like people who are attracted only to members of the same or other gender or sex) may be monogamous, polyfidelitous or nonmonogamous. Derogatory terms from homophobes are the same as those for lesbians and gay men, plus AC/DC, double-ga[i]ted, confused. Derogatory terms used by lesbians, gay men, and some heterosexuals include: traitor, fraternizing with the enemy, confused.

Bi(sexual) community *n.* The group of people who identify as members of the bisexual community. One may identify as bisexual without identifying with the bisexual community or vice versa.

Born (wo)man *n.* See *genetic (wo)man*. May be derogatory.

Boy *n.* 1. A young human male. 2. Colloquial term for masculine. Often used to specify the gender of clothes. [I changed into my boy clothes.] Boy has often been used as a condescending term for a man (especially a man of color), and is therefore distasteful to many people. (See *girl*.)

Butch *adj., n.* 1. Masculine or macho dress and behavior, regardless of sex or gender identity. 2. A sub-identity of lesbian, gay male, or bisexual, based on masculine or macho dress and behavior. (See *femme*). 3. (*butch it up*) To exaggerate masculine behaviors, usually for others' entertainment. (See *camp it up*.)

Camp *n., adj., vi.* A form of humor, in which one makes fun of one's oppression by taking on and exaggerating stereotypes which the oppressor projects onto the oppressed.

Gender role *n.* Rules assigned by society that define what clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. are considered appropriate and inappropriate for members of a given gender. Which things are considered masculine, feminine, or unisex varies according to location, class, occasion, and numerous other factors.

Genetic *adj.* Having to do with the genes in DNA, which determine heredity. With respect to sex, the genes on the X and Y chromosomes, which most heavily influence primary and secondary sex characteristics. However, terms like *genetic male/female* actually refer to the *gender role* assigned at birth, as much as to genes.

Genetic male/man/boy (GM/GB) *n.* One classed as male from birth, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity. (See *born (wo)man, boy*.) (Note: In personal ads, GM usually means gay man, not genetic male.)

Genetic female/woman/girl (GF/GW/GG) *n.* One classed as female from birth, regardless of one's present sex or gender identity. (See *girl*.)

Girl *n.* 1. A young human female. 2. Colloquial term for feminine. Often used for gender of people or clothes. [I changed into my *girl* clothes.] *Girl* has often been used as a condescending term for a woman, and is therefore distasteful to many people. (See *boy*.)

Hermaphrodite *n.* 1. Medically, one who has partially expressed primary or secondary sex characteristics. Pseudo-male hermaphrodites are born with a penis, but do not develop most other male secondary sex characteristics such as facial hair, greater muscle density, or sperm with the potential to procreate. Pseudo-female hermaphrodites are born with a vagina, but are often infertile, have more facial hair than most women, and have much lower breast development. 2. Mythically (almost never happens in reality), one who has both female and male primary and secondary sex characteristics. Also *intersex*.

Heterosexism/ist *n.* The oppression of LesBiGay people. The assumptions that identifying as heterosexual and having sexual and romantic attractions only to members of another gender or sex is good and desirable, that other sexual identities and attractions are bad and unacceptable, and that anyone whose sexual identity is not known is heterosexual. Usually coupled with both unconscious and willful "blindness" to the existence and concerns of LesBiGay people. (See *homophobia, biphobia*.) A heterosexist is one who practices heterosexism.

Heterosexual (het) *n., adj.* 1. Sexual or romantic behavior between a member of one sex and a member of another gender or sex. 2. One whose significant (to oneself) sexual

or romantic attractions are primarily to members of another gender or sex. Derogatory terms used by homophobes toward heterosexuals who (are perceived to) associate with lesbians: queer lover, queer bait, and (woman who associates with gay men) fag hag. Derogatory terms used by LesBiGays toward heterosexuals: breeder. (See *straight*.)

Homophile (community) n., adj. Obsolete term for gay male (community).

Homophobia n. [Gr. *homo*(man) + *phobia*(fear).] 1. An irrational fear of sexual attraction to the same gender or sex. 2. A term for all aspects of the oppression of LesBiGays. (See *heterosexism*, *biphobia*.)

Homophobe/homophobic n., adj. One who fears, hates, and oppresses people because one perceives them to have sexual or romantic attractions to members of the same gender or sex.

Homosexual(ity) n., adj. 1. Sexual or romantic behavior between members of the same gender or sex. 2. Formal or clinical term for gay. Homosexual and homosexuality are often associated with the proposition that same gender attractions are a mental disorder (medical term: homophilia), and are therefore distasteful to some people.

Hormone therapy n. Used, especially by transsexuals, to change secondary sex characteristics, including breast size, weight distribution, and hair growth. (See *electrolysis*.)

Identify/ied (as) vi. To hold a particular identity, whether it is a sexual identity, gender identity, national heritage identity (e.g.. Italian), class heritage (e.g.. working class), etc. [I *identify* as a transvestite.] [I am bi *identified*.]

Identity n. How one thinks of oneself, as opposed to what others observe or think about one. (See *self-identify*, *label*.)

In the Life adj. In the African American community, someone who does not fit the traditional gender role assigned to people of their physical sex, either in appearance, behavior, or gender of sexual partner. [He is *In the Life*.]

Internalized homophobia/biphobia n. The *internalized oppression* of LesBiGays people. This includes the often-conflicting feelings that we are bad at the core; that the entire world is unsafe, that we can only trust other members of our own group; that members of our group are untrustworthy; that for safety we must stay in hiding; that for safety we must come out everywhere, all the time, that our love is bad, or is not the same as other people's love.

Internalized oppression n. The turning inward and acceptance as true of negative messages and feelings about oneself and one's group, and misinformation about how members of the group (including oneself) deserve to be treated. Internalized oppression often includes messages which contradict one another, as well as messages which reinforce one another.

hormone therapy and (if M2F) electrolysis to modify secondary sex characteristics.

Primary sex characteristics n. Inclusive term for the male penis, prostate and testicles; and for the female clitoris, vagina, uterus and ovaries. (See *female*, *male*, *hermaphrodite*, *neuter*.)

Queer n., adj. 1. Reclaimed derogatory slang for the sexual minority community (e.g.. Queer Nation.) Not accepted by all the sexual minority community, especially older members. 2. Sometimes used for an even wider spectrum of marginalized or radicalized groups and individuals. 3. Weird, different, not normal, apart from the mainstream.

Read 1. vt. To perceive that someone else is attempting to pass as a member of a particular group, especially as a member of a different gender than that which was assigned to them at birth. 2. (*to be read*) *vi.* To have someone else read one as trying to pass.

Same gender/sex n., adj. 1. The same gender or sex as the reference person's own. [Are you currently in a relationship with a member of the *same gender* (as yourself)?] [I have a *same sex* partner (as my own sex).] 2. Two or more people of the same gender. [I met another *same gender* couple at church today.]

Secondary sex characteristics n. General term including facial and body hair, vocal timbre and range, breast size, weight distribution.

(Self-)identify/identity (as) vi. Emphasizes one's internal reality (identity), as opposed to external factors and others' interpretations of them (labels.)

Sex 1. n., adj. Male, female, hermaphrodite, or neuter, depending on one's primary sex characteristics. 2. *vi., n.* Having to do with sexual behavior and behavior or feelings associated with sexual behavior.

Sex role n. Gender role.

Sexism/sexist n., adj. 1. Oppression of women as women. 2. Sometimes used for oppression based on (perceived) gender role, whether female or male.

Sexual identity n. How one thinks of oneself, in terms of having significant sexual and romantic attractions to members of the same gender or sex or to another gender or sex. Based on one's internal experience, as opposed to the gender of one's actual sexual partners. (See *sexual orientation/preference*.)

Sexual identity/orientation/preference community n. LesBiGay people.

Sexual minority n. adj. Used variously to refer to LesBiGay and Transgender people or LesBiGay people or LesGay

Intersex adj. One whose external genitalia at birth do not match the standards for male or female (e.g. large clitoris, tiny penis), or one whose sex glands do not totally match the sex assigned at birth (e.g. male with ovarian tissue or female with testicular tissue), or one whose sexual development does not match the sex assigned at birth (e.g. development of penis or extensive facial hair in one assigned as female or the development of breasts in one assigned as male). See also *hermaphrodite*.

Label 1. n. Term for oneself or one's own community. 2. *n., vt.* How someone else thinks of one, as opposed to how one thinks of oneself. (See *identity*.)

Lesbian n., adj. A girl or woman who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions primarily to members of the same gender or sex, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. Bisexual women often do not feel included by this term. Derogatory slang: dyke, lezzy.

LesBiGay n., adj. Contraction of "lesbian, bisexual, and gay." Colloquial term for members of sexual identity minorities. One may identify as LesBiGay without identifying as a member of the LesBiGay community. Usually spelled with capital L, B, G and pronounced with a long "i" to prevent misinterpretation as "only lesbian and gay." Does not include the gender community.

LesGay n., adj. Contraction of "lesbian and gay." Sometimes used to mean LesBiGay, but bisexuals often do not feel included by this term.

M2F/M→F/MTF adj. Male to female. Used to specify the direction of a change in sex or gender.

Male n., adj. One who has (only) male primary sex characteristics.

Male Impersonator n. A female who, on specific occasions, cross dresses and employs stereotypical masculine dialog, voice, and mannerisms for the entertainment of other people. (See *drag king*.)

Man n. 1. A male, usually an adult. 2. One who identifies with the masculine gender role regardless of present sex or sexual identity. Plural: men.

Masculine adj. The gender role assigned to males. Generally includes: strong, stoic, good at sports, wears pants, does not wear makeup.

Monosexual n., adj. One who has significant sexual or romantic attractions only to members of one gender or sex. Straight, gay, lesbian. Not bisexual or asexual. Regarded as derogatory and offensive by some, especially gay men and lesbians.

Monosexism/ist n. A particular subset of the oppression of bisexuals. The assumption that one can (or should) be attracted to members of only one gender or sex, and that having sexual or romantic attractions to members of both genders/sexes is bad and unacceptable. A monosexist is one

person or LesBiGay, Transgender and other groups associated with sex and sexuality (such as S/M people, polyamorists). The term is currently in flux and may vary considerably by region and specific community.

Sexual minority community n. People who identify as members of the sexual minority community. One may identify as a member of a sexual minority without identifying as a member of the sexual minority community.

Sexual orientation/preference n. 1. A constellation of personal factors, including sexual identity. (See the pamphlet "Using the Klein Scale to Teach about Sexual Orientation," available from BRC.) 2. Sexual identity. *Sexual orientation* emphasizes that some people feel that one has no control or influence over the development of one's sexual identity. *Sexual preference* emphasizes that some people feel that one does or should have some control or influence over the development of one's sexual identity.

Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS) n. A surgical procedure which changes one's primary sexual characteristics from those of one sex to those of another sex, to align them with one's gender identity.

She-Male n. Used by the pornography industry to refer to women with penises, who are generally non-op or pre-op transsexuals, emphasizing the fact that while appearing to be women in other regards, they most definitely do have a penis. Derogatory term, reclaimed by some people.

Straight n., adj. Colloquial for heterosexual. *Straight* has connotations of "unadulterated," "pure," and "honest," and some members of the sexual identity community find distasteful the implication that one who is not straight is "bent," "adulterated," "impure," or "dishonest." *Straight* also has connotations of "narrow," "straight-laced" or "conservative," and some heterosexual people find that distasteful. Alternate spellings: strait, strait, str8.

(Trans)gender community n. Inclusive term for the community of transsexuals and transvestites. One who identifies as transsexual or transvestite may not identify with the Transgender community. Members of the Transgender community may be of any sexual identity, and often do not identify as members of the LesBiGay community.

who believes that everyone should be attracted to members of only one gender or sex. (See *heterosexist*.)

Transsexual (TS) n., adj. One who changes one's sex to align with one's gender identity. Change of primary sex characteristics is accomplished by *Sexual Reassignment Surgery*. *Hormone therapy*, *electrolysis*, additional surgery, and other treatments can change secondary sex

Neuter adj. 1. One who has neither female nor male primary sex characteristics. 2. Occasionally used to mean androgynous.

Non-op/non-surgical transsexual n. One who thinks of oneself as transsexual and lives as a member of their gender identity but does not (for whatever reasons) plan to undergo SRS. Usually cross dresses and undergoes hormone therapy and (if M2F) electrolysis to modify secondary sex characteristics. Some people already in a relationship choose to remain in the relationship and retain the sex organs from their birth. Also, many F2M people would not be satisfied with the results that phalloplasty surgery (construction of a penis) would produce, and choose not to exchange the genitals they were born with for an unsatisfactory version of the others.

Opposite sex/gender n. Another gender. The word "opposite" suggests that women and men are diametrically opposed to one another, and could never understand or support one another well. The word "sex" actually refers mostly to gender (how one lives in the world) rather than to primary sex characteristics. For these reasons, many people find this term offensive.

Oppress vt. To participate in or collude with the oppression of a group.

Oppression n. Systematic, supported by society, mistreatment of and misinformation about people who are (perceived to be) members of a particular group. Mistreatment includes economic and social marginalization, which ranges from not including members of the group in one's circle of friends and media reports on and representations of society; the cold shoulder; not consulting with or accepting input from them on decisions which concern them; snide comments, verbal harassment, assault, rape, and murder, all based on the perception that the target person is a member of that group.

Oppressive adj. (See *oppression*.)

Out adv. (See *come out*.)

Out vt. 1. To disclose a second person's sexual identity to a third person, especially without the second person's permission. 2. To disclose one's own sexual identity, often without intending or choosing to do so. [I *outed* myself by leaving a political letter on my desk, which my boss saw when he was looking for me.] (See *come out*.)

Pass vi. To be perceived by others as a member of the group one chooses, instead of as a member of another group, especially of the gender one was assigned at birth. (See *read*.)

Pre-operative transsexual (Pre-op TS) n. One who is actively planning to relieve gender dysphoria by aligning one's sex with one's gender identity through Sexual Reassignment Surgery. Usually cross dresses and uses

characteristics. People who live as a member of a different gender than they were assigned at birth prefer to be called man or woman, as appropriate for their chosen gender. May be of any gender identity. Sometimes spelled *transsexual*. (See *pre-op TS*, *non-op TS*, *she-male*.)

Transvestite (TV) n. One who mainly cross dresses for pleasure in the appearance and sensation. The pleasure may be erotic (see *fetishistic transvestite*), empowering, rebellious or something else. May feel comfortable in the corresponding gender role while cross dressed. May occasionally experience gender dysphoria. May be of any gender identity.

Two Spirit adj. In some Native American/American Indian tribes, people who did not fit the traditional gender role (activities or gender of sexual partner) usually assigned to their physical sex. Depending on the tribe, they might fit a different gender role, sometimes as religious leaders, or they might simply choose to live in the gender role usually assigned to another physical sex. The French term *berdache*, meaning mattress, has widely used by anthropologists, but is now considered a derogatory cultural imposition.

Unisex adj. Clothing, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, relationships, etc. which are considered appropriate for members of both genders/sexes. (See *gender neutral language*.)

Woman/womyn/womin n. 1. A female, usually an adult. 2. One who identifies with the feminine gender role, regardless of present sex or sexual identity. Plural: women, wymyn, wimmin.

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