

## Healthcare Equity Glossary – LGBTQ UW Medicine Healthcare Equity

*Keep in mind that definitions can vary greatly across communities and individuals, and that it is best to give all patients an opportunity to provide information on how they identify when seeking care. Here are some terms related to the experience of those who are TGNB.*

**Agender:** A person who is internally ungendered or does not have a felt sense of gender identity.

**Aggressive (Ag):** A term used to describe a female-bodied and female-identified person who prefers presenting as masculine. This term is most commonly used in urban communities of color.

**Ally:** Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways. Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

**Bigender or Dual Gender:** A person possessing and expressing a distinctly

**Bisexual:** A person who is attracted to people of their own gender as well as another gender.

**Cisgender (adj.):** A person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth match (i.e. a person who is not transgender).

**Gender:** A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

**Gender affirming surgery (GAS) (noun):** Surgeries used to modify one's body to conform more with one's gender identity.

**Gender Expansive:** An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone else whose gender in some way is seen to be stretching the surrounding society's notion of gender.

**Gender Expression:** How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous." Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).

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**Gender Fluid:** A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations. Being fluid in motion between two or more genders.

**Gender Identity:** A sense of one's self as trans\*, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.

**Genderism/Cissexism:** Is the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders & that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. In a genderist/cissexist construct, cisgender people are the dominant/agent group and trans\*/ gender non-conforming people are the oppressed/target group.

**Gender Outlaw:** A person who refuses to be defined by conventional definitions of male and female.

**Gender Non-conforming (GNC):** people who do not subscribe to gender expressions or roles expected of them by society.

**Gender Queer:** A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.

**Gender Variant:** A person who varies from the expected characteristics of the assigned gender.

**Heteronormativity:** A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.

**Heterosexism:** The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and erasure.

**Heterosexuality:** A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.

**Homophobia:** See [Heterosexism](#).

**Homosexual/Homosexuality:** An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. Historically, it was a term used to pathologize gay and lesbian people.

**Intersectionality:** An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually

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constitutive. Exposing [one's] multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression. For example, a Black woman in America does not experience gender inequalities in exactly the same way as a white woman, nor racial oppression identical to that experienced by a Black man. Each race and gender intersection produces a qualitatively distinct life.

**Intersectionality:** A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

**Intersex:** Adjective used to describe the experience of naturally (that is, without any medical intervention) developing primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Intersex is an umbrella term and there are around 20 variations of intersex that are included in this umbrella term. Many visibly Intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make the individual's sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Hermaphrodite is an outdated and inaccurate term that has been used to describe intersex people in the past.

**Non-binary (adj.):** Describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary. Sometimes abbreviated to NB or "enby." Some people identify as "non-binary," while others identify with another non-binary gender identity, such as genderqueer, gender fluid, or agender.

**Leather community:** A community, which encompasses those who are into leather, sado-masochism, bondage and domination, uniform, cowboys, rubber, and other fetishes. Although the leather community is often associated with the queer community, it is not a "gay-only" community.

**Lesbian:** A woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.

**LGBT:** Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term that is often used to refer to the community as a whole. Our center uses LGBTQIA+ to intentionally include and raise awareness of Queer, Intersex and Asexual as well as myriad other communities under our umbrella.

**LGBTQIA+ Allyship:** The practice of confronting heterosexism, sexism, genderism, allosexism, and monosexism in oneself and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. Is founded on the belief

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and believes that dismantling heterosexism, monosexism, trans oppression/trans misogyny/cissexism and allosexism is a social justice issue.

**Masculine of Center:** Masculine of center (MOC) is a term, coined by B. Cole of the Brown Boi Project, that recognizes the breadth and depth of identity for lesbian/queer/ womyn who tilt toward the masculine side of the gender scale and includes a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, trans-masculine etc.

**Misgendering:** Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language (i.e. “Hello ladies!” “Hey guys”), or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify (i.e. “Well, since we’re all women in this room, we understand...”).

**MOGAI:** An acronym that stands for “marginalized orientations, gender alignments, and intersex.” Is used by some in a similar way to the umbrella acronym: LGBTQIA.

**Monogamy:** Having only one intimate partner at any one time.

**Monosexism:** The belief in and systematic privileging of monosexuality as superior, and the systematic oppression of non-monosexuality.

**Monosexual:** People who have romantic, sexual, or affectional desire for one gender only. Heterosexuality and homosexuality are the most well-known forms of monosexuality.

**MSM:** an abbreviation for men who have sex with men; they may or may not identify as gay.

**Non-binary:** A gender identity and experience that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate for an individual. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world. For some people who identify as non-binary there may be overlap with other concepts and identities like gender expansive and gender non-conforming.

**Non-binary (adj.):** Describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary. Sometimes abbreviated to NB or “enby.” Some people identify as “non-binary,” while others identify with another non-binary gender identity, such as genderqueer, gender fluid, or agender.

**Nonmonosexual:** people who are attracted to more than one gender.

**Omnigender:** Possessing all genders. The term is used specifically to [refute the concept of only two genders](#).

**Orientation:** Orientation is one’s attraction or non-attraction to other people. An individual’s orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their orientation. Some, but not all, types of attraction or orientation include: romantic, sexual, sensual, aesthetic, intellectual and platonic.

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**Pansexual, Omnisexual:** Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.

**Phobia:** In terms of mental/emotional wellness - a phobia is a marked and persistent fear “out of proportion” to the actual threat or danger the situation poses, after taking into account all the factors of the environment and situation. Historically this term has been used to inaccurately refer to systems oppression (i.e. homophobia has been used to refer to heterosexism.) As a staff, we’ve been intentionally moving away from using words like “transphobic,” “homophobic,” and “biphobic” because (1) they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears, and (2) for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language is disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

**Pronoun (noun):** A word that takes the place of a noun. She, herself, they, and this are examples of pronouns. You can use the singular pronoun “they” until someone tells you their preferred pronoun.

**Pronouns:** Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect.)

**Questioning (adj.):** Describes an individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Queer:** One definition of queer is abnormal or strange. Historically, queer has been used as an epithet/slur against people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality do not conform to dominant expectations. Some people have reclaimed the word queer and self identify as such. For some, this reclamation is a celebration of not fitting into norms/being “abnormal.” Manifestations of oppression within gay and lesbian movements such as racism, sizeism, ableism, cissexism, transmisogyny as well as assimilation politics, resulted in many people being marginalized, thus, for some, queer is a radical and anti-assimilationist stance that captures multiple aspects of identities.

**Questioning:** The process of exploring one’s own gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Some people may also use this term to name their identity within the LGBTQIA community.

**Questioning (adj.):** Describes an individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

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**Romantic Orientation:** Romantic Orientation is attraction or non-attraction to other people characterized by the expression or non-expression of love. Romantic orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their romantic orientation. See also Orientation.

**Same Gender Loving:** a term used by some African American people who love, date, have attraction to people of the same gender.

**Sex:** a medically constructed categorization. Sex is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia, either in ultrasound or at birth.

**Sex assigned at birth:** The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth. Most often this is based on the child’s external anatomy. Also referred to as “assigned sex at birth.”

**Sexism:** The cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue ways of being that are associated with women.

**Sexuality:** The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc.

**Sexual Orientation:** An enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their sexual orientation. See also [Orientation](#).

**Swinger (Swinging):** A person or people in a committed relationship consensually engaging in sexual activity with others.

**Trans man/transgender man/transmasculine (noun):** A transgender person whose gender identity is male. Some may use these terms to describe themselves, while some will just use the term “man.” The phrase “assigned female at birth” is commonly used by individuals in self-reference.

**Trans woman/transgender woman/transfeminine (noun):** A transgender person whose gender identity is female. Some may use these terms to describe themselves, while some will just use the term “woman.” The phrase “assigned male at birth” is commonly used by individuals in self-reference.

**Transgender (adj.):** Describes a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not match. Also used to include gender identities outside of male and female. Sometimes abbreviated as trans.

**Transition (noun) —** For transgender people, this refers to the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes, such as changing their clothing, name, sex designation and using medical interventions.

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**Transphobia** (noun): The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of transgender or gender non-conforming people or those who are perceived as such.

**Transsexual** (adj.): Sometimes used in medical literature or by some transgender people to describe those who have transitioned through medical interventions. Avoid using this term to describe transgender people unless they identify themselves as such, as it is largely outdated.

**Womyn/Womxn**: some womyn spell the word with a “y” or an “x” as a form of empowerment to move away from the “men” in the “traditional” spelling of women.