



**Belong To** LGBTQ+  
Youth Ireland

# Belong To

# Education

# Resource

Glossary of Terms

## Glossary of Terms

The most important thing you need to know about language and terminology is that you don't need to know it all. Most people want to use LGBTQ+ inclusive language, but they are unsure where to begin, and LGBTQ+ terminology can feel like a minefield. A good place to start is to learn some of the key concepts and understand what the letters in LGBTQ+ stand for. Here we share a glossary of LGBTQ+ terminology



## Belong To Glossary of Terms

### Terms related to sexual orientation/sexuality

---

**Sexual Orientation or Sexuality**

This is a term used to describe someone's emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction to other people.

---

**LGBTQ+**

This stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer people. The plus sign includes people with other minority sexual orientations and gender identities.

---

**Lesbian**

A woman who is attracted to other women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

---

**Gay**

Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender.

---

**Bisexual/Bi**

Someone who is attracted to more than one gender. e.g. both men and women.

---

**Queer**

An umbrella term used to describe people who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. Queer was used as a slur against the LGBTQ+ community for many years and still can be. However the word has been reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community and many now embrace the term. Check if someone is comfortable with this term before referring to them as queer.

---

**Pansexual**

Someone whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex assignment, gender identity or gender expression.

---

**Questioning**

The process of exploring your sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

---

**Asexual/Ace**

Someone who experiences limited or no sexual attraction

---

**Ally**

A person who fights for, and supports others in their fight for equality, despite not being a member of the marginalised group, e.g. a heterosexual and/or cisgender person who believes in, and fights for the equality of LGBTQ+ people.

---

**+**

The 'plus' is used to signify all of the gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials.

---

## Belong To Glossary of Terms

### Terms related to sexual orientation/sexuality

---

**Heterosexual/Straight**

Someone who is mainly attracted to people of a gender different to their own.

---

**Coming Out**

For LGBTQ+ people, coming out is the process of sharing your sexual orientation and/or your gender identity with people in your life

---

**Discrimination**

Treating individuals or a particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way than how a person might generally treat others, because they hold negative views about people with certain characteristics – e.g. a person's race, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, class etc.

---

**Homophobia**

Discrimination against and/or fear of lesbian and gay people (including those perceived to be gay or lesbian). This also includes the perpetuation of negative myths and stereotypes through jokes and/or through personal negative thoughts about lesbian and gay people.

---

**Biphobia**

Discrimination against and/or fear or dislike of bisexual people (including those perceived to be bisexual) or of bisexuality. This also includes the spreading of negative myths and stereotypes through jokes and/or through personal negative thoughts about bisexual people.

---

**LGBTQ+ Bullying**

Bullying based on prejudice or discrimination towards LGBTQ+ people.

---

**Outing**

The deliberate or accidental sharing of another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission. Outing is disrespectful and presents a danger for many LGBTQ+ individuals.

---

## Belong To Glossary of Terms

# Terms related to gender identity/ expression & sex characteristics

---

### **Gender Identity**

---

Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender.

---

### **Gender Expression**

---

How we show our gender through our clothing, hair, behaviour, etc.

---

### **Sex Assigned at Birth**

---

The designation of a person at birth as male or female based on their anatomy (genitalia and/or reproductive organs) or biology (chromosomes and/or hormones).

---

### **Gender Roles and Expectations**

---

People are assigned a sex at birth and this often predetermines a gender role that a person is expected to fulfill e.g. someone assigned female at birth will be expected to live, identify, and outwardly present as a woman. Gender roles also created expectations such as being expected to 'act' like a woman and carry out jobs that society deems appropriate for women. Gender roles are expectations are often reinforced by society, people around us, and the media. People of all genders can find these expectations limiting and oppressive.

---

### **Gender Binary**

---

The concept that there are only two genders, man and woman, and that everyone must be one or the other. The concept of the gender binary is often misused to claim that gender is biologically determined, e.g. that our bodies and biology define our genders. This concept reinforced the idea that men and women are opposites and have different roles in society.

---

### **Transgender or Trans**

---

A term describing a person's gender identity that does not match their assigned sex at birth. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe some groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression.

---

### **Trans Man**

---

A person who was assigned female at birth, but who experiences their gender identity as a man and identifies as a man.

---

### **Trans Masculine**

---

A trans person whose gender identity and/or expression is closer to masculinity than to femininity

---

## Belong To Glossary of Terms

### Terms related to gender identity/ expression & sex characteristics

---

**Trans Woman**

A person who was assigned male at birth, but who experiences their gender identity as a woman and identifies as a woman.

---

**Trans feminine**

A trans person whose gender identity and/or expression is closer to femininity than masculinity.

---

**Non-Binary**

People whose gender identity is neither exclusively woman or man or is in between or beyond the gender binary.

---

**Genderfluid**

Someone who does not have a constant or fixed gender identity and/or gender expression.

---

**Intersex**

This is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations that do not fit the typical binary notions of male and female bodies. In some cases, intersex traits are visible at birth, while in others they are not apparent until puberty or later in life. Some intersex variations may not be physically apparent at all.

---

**Sex Characteristics**

Sex characteristics are physical features relating to sex. Primary sex characteristics include chromosomes, genitals, gonads, hormones, and other reproductive anatomy, and secondary sex characteristics are that which emerge from puberty such as breast development and the growth of facial hair.

---

**Gender Non-Conforming/  
Gender Variant/Gender  
Expansive**

Someone who does not conform to the gender-based expectations of society.

---

**Cisgender/Cis**

Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

---

**Pronouns**

The words used to refer to a person other than their name. Common pronouns are they/them, he/him, and she/her. Neopronouns are pronouns created to be specifically gender-neutral including xe/xem, ze/zir, and fae/faer. For those who use pronouns (and not all people do) they are not preferred, they are essential.

---

## Belong To Glossary of Terms

### Terms related to gender identity/ expression & sex characteristics

---

#### **Misgender/Mispronoun**

To refer to someone using a word that does not reflect their gender. This could be a pronoun e.g. he/her or form of address e.g. ladies/guys. This may be unintentional and without ill intent or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering/mispronouncing has a harmful impact. If you misgender/mispronoun someone by mistake, apologise, correct yourself, and aim to be more mindful moving forward.

---

#### **Deadnaming**

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition. This is a very hurtful and disrespectful thing to do on purpose. If you say someone's birth name by mistake, apologise, correct yourself, and aim to be more mindful moving forward.

---

#### **Transphobia**

The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact that they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia can result in individual and institutional discrimination, prejudice, and violence against trans, non-binary, or gender variant people. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.

---

#### **Transition/Transitioning**

A process through which some trans people begin to live as the gender in which they identify, rather than the one assigned at birth. Transition might include social, medical or legal changes such as coming out to family, friends, co-workers and others; changing one's appearance; changing one's name, pronoun and sex designation on legal documents (e.g. driving licence or passport); and medical intervention (e.g. through hormones or surgery).

---

#### **Social Transition**

A process in which trans people begin to live as the gender with which they identify, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth. This can involve changing their name and/or pronouns, changing how they dress or certain mannerisms. This will be individual for every trans person, not every trans person will socially transition.

---

## Belong To Glossary of Terms

# Terms related to gender identity/ expression & sex characteristics

---

### **Legal Transition**

A process in which a trans person uses legal means to have their gender legally recognised. This can include legally changing their name via deed poll and/or acquiring a gender recognition certificate. In Ireland, this process is carried out by accessing a gender recognition certificate. (See Gender Recognition Act 2015).

---

### **Gender Recognition Act 2015**

This legislation enables trans people to be legally recognised as their gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. This Act uses a best practice framework of self-declaration, that is the trans person does not need to provide proof in any form that they are trans they can simply declare that to be true for themselves and this is honored by the legislation. However not all trans people will apply for gender recognition or will be able to access it. You currently have to be over 18 to apply and be an Irish citizen and the legislation only recognises people as male or female excluding a large cohort of the trans community. You can apply with parental consent when you are aged 16 & 17. Under 16s cannot under current legislation acquire legal gender recognition.

---

### **Medical Transition**

A process by which trans people use medical means to alter their body to better reflect their gender identity, this can include hormone therapy or surgery. This will be individual for every trans person, not every trans person will medically transition.

---

### **Gender Affirming Healthcare**

Healthcare that holistically attends to trans and non-binary people's physical, mental, and social healthcare needs and well-being while respectfully affirming their gender identity.

---

### **Gender Dysphoria**

Distress resulting from a difference between a person's gender identity and the person's assigned sex at birth, associated gender role, and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics.

---



## Belong To Glossary of Terms

### Terms related to gender identity/ expression & sex characteristics

---

#### **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) or Hormones**

The use of hormones to alter secondary sex characteristics. Some trans people take hormones to align their bodies with their gender identities. Other trans people choose not to take hormones. It is a personal choice.

---

#### **Top Surgery**

This refers to gender-affirming surgeries which are carried out on the chest or breasts. Some trans people will have top surgery to align their bodies with their gender identities. Other trans people choose not to have surgeries. It is a personal choice.

---

#### **Bottom Surgery**

Bottom surgery, also called lower surgery, is used in the trans community to describe a variety of gender-affirming surgeries and other procedures that can be carried out on the reproductive organs or genitals. Some trans will have bottom surgery to align their bodies with their gender identities. Other trans people choose not to have surgeries. It is a personal choice.

---

#### **Binding**

Compressing one's chest to create a more androgynous or masculine appearance. This should be done with a chest binder designed specifically for this purpose. Binding can have negative impacts on your physical health – we advise you to talk to your healthcare provider about it.

---

#### **Tucking**

Tucking is a practice used by some transgender women and gender nonconforming individuals to minimise or hide the bulge of their genitals, creating a flatter and more typically feminine appearance.

---