



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland



LGBTQ+ Language and Terminology



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Understanding LGBTQ+ language and terminology is an important step in supporting LGBTQ+ young people.

LGBTQ+ terminology might be new to you, and may feel a little overwhelming. The most important thing to remember is that you don't need to know it all. Most people want to use LGBTQ+ inclusive language, but they are not sure where to begin. By learning some of the key concepts and understanding what the letters in LGBTQ+ stand for, you can feel more confident in discussing LGBTQ+ topics with young people.

Terms change over time and some people prefer certain words to others. The terms here are relevant and accurate at the moment. Their meaning and definition will gradually change, and new terms will be introduced.

If a term comes up that you aren't familiar with, it's ok to ask what this means or to ask an individual what term they prefer to use. Remember that it is not the responsibility of the LGBTQ+ student in your class to educate others on LGBTQ+ topics and terminology. You can find more information and resources about using LGBTQ+ inclusive language in your school or youth service at our [online education hub](#) ➔.

Everyday Language

Using more inclusive language every day is a great way to show that you are supportive and inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. Often, our default is to use gendered language, or to assume that everyone in the room is straight (heterosexual). There are lots of ways to use more inclusive language in your classroom or youth service. Consider the following word replacements:

~~“How are you this morning, girls/lads?”~~

“How is everyone this morning?”

~~“How many brothers and sisters do you have?”~~

“How many siblings do you have?”

~~“In pairs with the girl/boy beside you...”~~

“Partner up with the person sitting beside you...”

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used when we are talking about someone without using their name. For example, instead of saying ‘Sarah is running late because Sarah needed to go back to Sarah’s locker’, you might say ‘Sarah is running late because she needed to go back to her locker’.

The pronouns that someone uses are often connected to how they understand their gender. Common pronouns include **they/them**, **she/her**, and **he/him**. If you don’t know what pronouns someone uses, it’s best to use the gender-neutral pronouns **they/them/theirs** until you have a chance to find out. If you are not sure of someone’s pronouns, it’s best to ask rather than making an assumption.

By using your own pronouns in your email signature, Teams/Zoom account, on forms, and anywhere else you see an opportunity, you are sending a clear message to young people and your colleagues that you understand the importance of pronouns and are an ally.



LGBTQ+ Terminology

LGB

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual About Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Our sexual and romantic attraction to other people.
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	Someone who is attracted to more than one gender <i>e.g. both men and women.</i>

Related Terms

Pansexual	Someone whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex assignment, gender identity, or gender expression.
Asexual (Ace)	Someone who experiences limited or no sexual attraction.

T

Trans About Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Our personal sense of our own gender.
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.

Related Terms

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).
Non-Binary	People whose gender identity is neither exclusively woman or man or is in between or beyond the gender binary.
Pronouns	The words used to refer to a person other than their name, e.g. he/she/they.
Cisgender	Someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
Gender Expression	How we show our gender through our clothes, hair etc. This is different to gender identity. Gender identity refers to how we feel inside, and gender expression is how we present ourselves outside.

Q Queer

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 LGBTQ+ communities and many now embrace the term. Check if someone is comfortable with this term before referring to them as queer.
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+	The 'plus' is used to signify all of the gender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the other five initials.
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