

Glossary of Terms

Advocate (noun) a person who, on behalf of a marginalized group, works to educate others, confronts intolerance, and promotes social equity. (verb) to actively promote a specific cause; to work to educate others, confront intolerance, and promote social equity.

Affectional minority (noun) a person whose affectional orientation differs from that of the majority of other members of the surrounding society and its corresponding culture. This term also indicates a sense of marginalization experienced by the person who is not heterosexual. Sometimes referred to as **sexual minority**, although that can be a problematic term (see “Problematic Terms to Avoid”).

Affectional orientation (noun) the direction in which one is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with others. This alternative term is meant to replace **sexual orientation** (see “Problematic Terms to Avoid”), which can overemphasize sexuality in the bonding and relationship process.

Affectional orientation variance (noun) an affectional orientation that differs from that of the majority of other members of the surrounding society and its corresponding culture.

Agender (adjective) describing a person who identifies as being without gender. This term reflects having a nonbinary gender identity (not male or female) or being gender neutral. A synonym of **neutrois**.

Allosexism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of allosexual persons and discrimination and prejudice against

in being part of romantic relationships.

Asexual (adjective) describing a person who feels little or no sexual desire and/or attraction to other people and lacks interest in having a sexual relationship. Asexuality is recognized as an affectional orientation. Also known as “ace” in the asexual community.

Assigned sex (noun) see **assigned sex at birth**

Assigned sex at birth (noun) the sex that a person was interpreted to be at birth, typically by a medical professional, based on external physical sex characteristics (e.g., genitalia) that represent cultural concepts of male and female sex as well as a potential chromosomal analysis. Used most often to describe intersex persons.

Bi (adjective) see **bisexual**

Bias incident (noun) any act intended to harm and/or harass a person based on that person's demographic background and/or identity. In relation to LGBTQI+ persons, such incidents are typically due to affectional orientation and gender variance but can also be experienced due to another demographic (e.g., race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, or ability) or intersectional identity.

Bigender (adjective) describing people who experience two distinct genders within their identity, typically culturally assigned feminine and masculine.

Binary (noun) the classification of gender and/or affectional orientation into only two separate categories (e.g., masculine/feminine and heterosexual/gay), indicating that these are distinct and opposite ways of being.

Biphobia (noun) negative attitudes regarding bisexual individuals expressed through fear, aversion, anger, intolerance, and/or discomfort. Biphobia can result from a belief in bisexual stereotypes and/or discomfort with a nonbinary identity.

Bisexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with more than one sex or gender. Some use this identity to indicate bonding with both males and females, whereas others use this identity to indicate bonding with other gender identities beyond a male/female binary, including third-gender, genderqueer, and transgender persons. The attraction or interest is not necessarily equally split among these sexes or genders.

BlaQ (adjective) see **BlaQueer**

BlaQueer (adjective) describing a Black person who identifies intersectionally as a queer person.

Bottom surgery (noun) surgical intervention on one's genitals for the purposes of aligning one's body with one's gender identity and expression.

Butch (noun) a person who identifies with masculine cultural traits at a physical, sexual, mental, and/or emotional level. Although this term has been used in a derogatory manner, it has also been reclaimed as an affirmative identity. (adjective) describing someone who is butch.

Cisgender (adjective) describing a person whose gender identification matches that person's designated sex at birth. This term is meant to describe a non-transgender person.

Cisnormativity (noun) an assumption that all persons are cisgender, with an implicit assumption that the cisgender identity and cisgender people are superior to the transgender identity and transgender people.

Cissexism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of cisgender persons and discrimination and prejudice against transgender, third-gender, and genderqueer people, with the implicit assumption that cisgender is the preferred or correct way of

being. A synonym of **genderism**.

Closeted (adjective) describing a person who does not disclose their affectional orientation or gender identity to others. This lack of disclosure could be due to fear regarding the reaction of others, which could include rejection, loss of family and peer relationships, and/or loss of housing/employment.

Coming out (verb) a process in which a person identifies and accepts their own affectional orientation and/or gender variance and shares this identity with others. Coming out can be a partial, gradual, or lifelong process.

Constellation (noun) the structure of a polyamorous relationship (e.g., a couple with an additional partner, a person with two separate partners, or a group of four persons who partner with one another).

Cross-dresser (noun) a person who wears clothes and accessories that represent cultural concepts of another gender as a practice of gender expression. This alternative term is meant to replace **transvestite** (see “Problematic Terms to Avoid”), which has become associated with a sexual fetish and paraphilia identified by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as transvestic disorder.

Demisexual (adjective) describing a person who feels no sexual desire and/or attraction to other people unless the person experiences a strong emotional connection with that other person. This term is meant to indicate an identity along a continuum between asexual and allosexual.

Designated sex at birth (noun) the sex that a person was interpreted to be at birth, typically by a medical or birthing professional, based on a cursory inspection of external physical sex characteristics (e.g., genitalia) that represent cultural concepts of male and female sex. The designation of sex occurs prior to one's own self-identification of gender identity.

Differences of sex development (noun) a medical term used to describe individuals who are born intersex.

Disorders of sex development (noun) see **differences of sex development**

Diverse sexualities and genders (noun) a term referring to LGBTQI+ people as a group representing both affectional orientation and gender identity. A synonym of **gender and affectional minority**; **LGBTQI+**; and **marginalized orientations, gender identity, and intersex**.

Down low (adjective) describing a person, typically from within the African American community, who does not disclose their affectional orientation to others. This person may also live a heterosexual life in public, with heterosexual romantic and sexual relationships.

Drag (noun) the wearing of clothes and accessories that represent cultural concepts of another gender as a form of entertainment and performance.

Drag king (noun) see **drag queen**

Drag queen (noun) a person who wears clothes and accessories that represent cultural concepts of another gender as a form of entertainment and performance. A drag queen dresses in traditional female attire, whereas a drag king dresses in traditional male attire.

Ey/eir (pronouns) see **hir/ze**

Feminine of center (adjective) describing gender expression (as in feminine presenting) and gender identity as represented by one's own understanding of oneself, one's behavior, and how one relates to others in a culturally assigned feminine manner. Feminine of center is consistent with femme, transfeminine, submissive, and so on.

Feminine presenting (adjective) describing gender expression, evidenced by demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories, that represents culturally defined feminine concepts.

Femme (noun) a person who identifies with feminine cultural traits at a physical, sexual, mental, and/or emotional level.
(adjective) describing someone who is femme.

Fluid (adjective) an aspect of an identity, either affectional orientation, gender, or sexual behavior, that may shift and change over time within or between multiple options.

Fluidity (noun) see **fluid**

FtM/F2M (adjective) see **MtF/M2F**

Gay (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with someone of the same sex and/or gender. The term is most often used to refer to males who are predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with other males, as in "gay men."

Gender (noun) the feelings, attitudes, and behavior associated with a person's sex, which typically represent cultural concepts of male and female sex. In many cultures, a third option is also recognized.

Gender affirming surgery (noun) see **gender confirmation surgery**

Gender and affectional minority (noun) LGBTQI+ people as a group, both representing affectional orientation and gender identity. A synonym of **diverse sexualities and genders; LGBTQI+; and marginalized orientations, gender identity, and intersex.**

Gender binary (noun) the classification of gender and sex into

only two separate categories, masculine and feminine, indicating that these are distinct and opposite ways of being.

Gender confirmation surgery (noun) a set of surgical procedures that modify a person's body to reflect that person's gender identity. This term most often refers to top and/or bottom surgery but may also include surgery to modify secondary sex characteristics, such as face shape. The term is more affirming than **sex reassignment surgery** (see "Problematic Terms to Avoid").

Gender dysphoria (noun) a mental disorder as defined by the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition*. The symptoms included are meant to encompass a transgender person's experiences in which intense distress is experienced over the mismatch between one's designated sex and gender identity. This is a controversial diagnosis, as it pathologizes gender variance and being transgender as a psychiatric illness. Some argue that the transgender experience would be better represented as a medical issue; others argue that its inclusion in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* helps legitimize treatment in terms of gender confirmation surgery.

Gender expansive (adjective) describing a person who expands conventional notions of gender identity and expression beyond the binary of masculine and feminine. A synonym of **gender variant**.

Gender expression (noun) the external representation of one's gender identity, evidenced by demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories. A synonym of **gender presentation**.

Gender fluid (adjective) describing how gender identity may shift and change over time within or among multiple options.

Gender identity (noun) a person's own feelings and sense surrounding being male, female, or transgender. Gender identity

is expressed through how people label themselves and is typically reflected in their expression and presentation, which may reflect cultural concepts of male and female sex or a blending, as may be the case for androgynous or genderqueer persons.

Gender minority (noun) a person whose gender identity, in relation to their designated sex at birth, differs from that of the majority of other members of the surrounding society and its corresponding culture. This term also indicates a sense of marginalization experienced by the person who is gender nonconforming.

Gender-neutral (adjective) denoting unisex or all-inclusive gender quality (e.g., a gender-neutral bathroom or gender-neutral pronouns).

Gender-nonconforming (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity and gender presentation are not aligned with cultural expectations of masculine and feminine.

Gender-normative (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity and gender presentation are aligned with cultural expectations of masculine and feminine.

Gender orientation (noun) a person's own feelings and sense surrounding being male, female, or transgender. Gender orientation is expressed through how people label themselves and is typically reflected in their expression and presentation, which may reflect cultural concepts of male and female sex or a blending, as may be the case for androgynous or genderqueer persons. A synonym of **gender identity**.

Gender presentation (noun) the external representation of one's gender identity, evidenced by demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories. A synonym of **gender expression**.

Gender role (noun) the set of societal and cultural norms that identify acceptable and desired behaviors associated with someone's sex, typically represented as male or female.

Gender variance (noun) see **gender variant**

Gender-variant (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity and expression differ beyond the binary of conventional notions of masculine and feminine. A synonym of **gender expansive**.

Genderism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of cisgender persons and discrimination and prejudice against transgender, third-gender, and genderqueer people, with the implicit assumption that cisgender is the preferred or correct way of being. A synonym of **cissexism**.

Genderqueer (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity is not reflected by the binary of male or female. This is also used as an umbrella term, similar to *third gender* and *transgender*, to reflect people who are gender nonconforming and/or nonbinary. Genderqueer persons may think of themselves as a combination of male and female (e.g., bigender), no gender (e.g., agender), multiple genders (e.g., pangender, omnigender), genderfluid, or third gender. Similar to *queer*, this term reclaims a once derogatory term as an affirmative identity. Be aware, however, that some persons still find the term *queer* offensive.

Gynephilic (adjective) see **gynesexual**

Gynesexual (adjective) describing a person who is attracted to females and/or femininity. This term is typically used by persons who identify as genderqueer, as categories such as heterosexual or gay indicate bonding with someone of the opposite or same sex, which does not apply to genderqueer persons.

He/his (pronouns) terms used to describe association with a male

gender-identified person. These are based on a person's preference. Always ask gender-nonconforming persons what pronouns they utilize.

Heteronormativity (noun) an assumption that all persons are heterosexual, with an implicit assumption that the heterosexual identity and heterosexual people are superior to the LGBTQI+ identity and LGBTQI+ people.

Heterosexism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of heterosexual persons and discrimination and prejudice toward affectional minorities or queer people, with the implicit assumption that heterosexuality is the preferred or correct way of being.

Heterosexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with someone of the opposite sex or gender.

Hir/ze (pronouns) terms used to describe association with a third-gender-identified person. These are based on a person's preference. Always ask gender-nonconforming persons what pronouns they utilize.

Homophobia (noun) an umbrella term for negative attitudes regarding sexual minorities or queer individuals expressed through fear, aversion, anger, intolerance, and/or discomfort. Homophobia can result from a belief in gay stereotypes and/or discomfort with same-sex relationships and sexuality. The term is sometimes used to describe negative attitudes toward any member of the LGBTQI+ community, although *biphobia* and *transphobia* specifically address these other populations. In the past, homophobia has been overly associated with extreme cases of fear and hate crimes, despite its definition encompassing a range of negative attitudes. A synonym of **homoprejudice**.

Homoprejudice (noun) negative attitudes regarding sexual

minorities or queer individuals expressed through fear, aversion, anger, intolerance, and/or discomfort. Homoprejudice can result from a belief in gay stereotypes and/or discomfort with same-sex relationships and sexuality. A synonym of **homophobia**.

Hormone replacement therapy (noun) a medical process, typically for transgender or gender variant persons, in which sex hormones are administered and carefully monitored to help transition persons from their designated sex at birth to a gender expression and presentation that is more congruent, authentic, and in harmony with their gender identity. This can involve the administration of hormone blockers and sex hormones in order to feminize or masculinize one's body.

In drag (adjective) see **drag**

In the closet (adjective) see **closeted**

Intersectionality (noun) interdependent and overlapping demographic social categories (e.g., affectional orientation, age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender/gender orientation, immigration status, indigenous identity, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic status). These overlapping categories can carry varying and more complex experiences of marginalization and/or privilege.

Intersex (adjective) describing a person whose sex development in utero differs from the expected sex presentation at birth, resulting in ambiguous or both male and female chromosomes, hormones, internal/external sexual organs, and/or secondary sex characteristics. A synonym of **disorders of sex development/differences of sex development**.

Latinx (adjective) a gender-neutral descriptor for a person who identifies as Latin American. This term is a replacement for *Latina* and *Latino*, which carry connotations of female and male sex, respectively.

Lesbian (noun) a female-identified person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with other women. (adjective) describing someone who is lesbian.

LGBTQI+ (adjective) an acronym used to describe those with affectional orientation and gender variance. It represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, plus other identities, including but not limited to questioning, asexual, allied, pansexual/polysexual, and two-spirited. A synonym of **diverse sexualities and genders; gender and affectional minority; and marginalized orientations, gender identity, and intersex.**

Marginalized orientations, gender identity, and intersex (noun) LGBTQI+ people as a group, representing both affectional orientation and gender identity. A synonym of **diverse sexualities and genders, LGBTQI+, and gender and affectional minority.**

Masculine of center (adjective) describing gender expression (as in masculine presenting) and gender identity as represented by one's own understanding of oneself, one's behavior, and how one relates to others in a culturally assigned masculine manner. Masculine of center is consistent with butch, transmasculine, aggressive, boi, and so on.

Masculine presenting (adjective) describing gender expression, evidenced by demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories, that represents culturally defined masculine concepts.

Men who have sex with men (noun) males who participate in sexual behavior with other males. This term differentiates between affectional identity and sexual behavior. It is most frequently used in the field of medicine and HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

Misgender (verb) to refer to a person by pronouns and other gendered words that do not align with that person's gender identity. Most often utilized in the context of transgender identity.

Monogamous (adjective) see **monogamy**

Monogamy (noun) a relationship practice of committing to one person at a time for purposes of bonding.

Monosexism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of monosexual persons and discrimination and prejudice against nonbinary people, with the implicit assumption that monosexual is the preferred or correct way of being.

Monosexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with people of only one sex or gender.

MtF/M2F (adjective) an abbreviation describing a transition for a transgender person, where the first letter indicates the designated sex at birth and the second letter indicates the individual's gender identity and expression. FtM/F2M indicates a female transition to male, whereas MtF/M2F indicates a male transition to female.

Mx. (noun) a gender-neutral descriptor for use with a surname. This term replaces *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, and *Ms.*, which carry connotations of male or female sex.

Ne/nir (pronouns) see **hir/ze**

Neutrois (adjective) describing a person who identifies as being of a neutral gender. This term reflects having a nonbinary gender identity (not male or female) or being gender neutral. A synonym of **agender**.

Nonbinary (adjective) describing the classification of gender and/or affectional orientation into more than two categories that are conceptualized as not separate and distinct.

Non-monosexual (noun) a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with people of more than one sex or gender. This term describes persons who identify as bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual.

Omnigender (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity reflects multiple gender identities, expressions, and presentations. A synonym of **pangender** and **polygender**.

Omnisexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with others regardless of sex or gender. A synonym of **pansexual**.

Open (adjective) see **out**

Out (adjective) describing a person who has disclosed their affectional orientation or gender identity to others. This could be a partial or gradual process and may not occur in certain contexts out of fear of rejection and discrimination. See **coming out**.

Out of the closet (adjective) see **out**

Outing (noun) unwanted and/or involuntary disclosure of a person's affectional orientation or gender identity.

Pangender (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity reflects multiple gender identities, expressions, and presentations. A synonym of **omnigender** and **polygender**.

Pansexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with others regardless of sex or gender. A synonym of **omnisexual**.

Pass (verb) see **passing**

Passing (adjective) describing (a) a transgender person who

is perceived and/or accepted as their gender of identity or (b) an affectional minority who is perceived and/or accepted as heterosexual.

Polyamorous (adjective) see **polyamory**

Polyamory (noun) a relationship practice of being romantically involved with and/or committing to more than one person at a time for purposes of bonding.

Polygender (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity reflects multiple gender identities, expressions, and presentations. A synonym of **omnigender**, **pangender**, and **polygender**.

Polysexual (adjective) describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually with many different sexes or genders. The attraction and interest are not necessarily equally split among these sexes or genders.

Pomosexual (adjective) describing a person who challenges, avoids, or denies alignment with any affectional orientation label.

Queer (adjective) (a) describing a person whose gender identity and affectional orientation are not reflected in traditional heterosexual or gay labels and categories; or (b) an umbrella term used to describe the entire community of LGBTQI+ persons, as in the "queer community." This term reclaims a once derogatory term as an affirmative identity. Be aware, however, that some persons still find the term *queer* offensive.

Queer community (noun) an umbrella term used to describe the entire community of LGBTQI+ persons, reflecting a rejection of conventional gender identity and affectional orientation. This term reclaims a once derogatory term as an affirmative identity. Be aware, however, that some persons still find the term *queer* offensive.

Questioning (adjective) describing a person who is not sure about

or is actively exploring their affectional orientation and/or gender identity. (verb) to be unsure about or actively exploring one's affectional orientation and/or gender identity.

Relationship systems (noun) a desire for and consensual practice of intimate relationships in a particular context, either monogamous or polyamorous, with or without sexual intimacy (as may be the case for some asexuals).

Romantic attraction (noun) an experience of affinity for another person that directs the wish to participate in intimate behavior (e.g., flirting, dating, commitment). Romantic attraction is often conflated with other types of attraction, including sexual, physical, emotional, and spiritual attraction.

Same-gender-loving (adjective) a term used most often in the African American community to reflect a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually with people of the same sex or gender.

Sex (noun) a classification of a person as male or female, typically assigned at birth based on a cursory examination by a medical or birthing professional.

Sexism (noun) behavior that permits preferential treatment of one sex (typically male) and discrimination and prejudice against another sex (typically female), with the implicit assumption that one sex (typically male) is the preferred or correct way of being.

Sexual assignment surgery (noun) a set of surgical procedures that modify a person's body to assign a gender in the case of a person being intersex, having ambiguous or both male and female genitalia. Although doctors often recommend that it occur shortly after birth and throughout childhood, this is controversial, as it does not require the consent of the child (just the guardian). Current recommendations by intersex advocacy organizations and the American Counseling Association are that sexual assignment

surgery wait until the child is old enough to consent.

Sexual attraction (noun) an experience of affinity for another person that directs the wish to participate in physical intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse). Sexual attraction is often conflated with other types of attraction, including romantic, emotional, and spiritual attraction.

Sexual behavior (noun) a person's sexual practices that usually involve kissing, touching, stimulation of genitalia, and intercourse, as well as other erotic behaviors designed to increase sexual arousal and satisfaction. This term is often used in medical and HIV/AIDS education and prevention, as in "risky sexual behavior," which involves having unprotected sex, having multiple sexual partners, having sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and so on.

Sexual orientation change efforts (noun) methods utilized by faith-based and secular organizations in an attempt to convert a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (LGBQ) person to heterosexual.

Sexuality (noun) broad feelings, thoughts, experiences, and expressions surrounding sex, attraction, sensuality, sexual behavior, and preferred activities.

She/her (pronouns) terms used to describe association with a female gender-identified person. These are based on a person's preference. Always ask gender-nonconforming persons what pronouns they utilize.

Social transition (noun) the process of moving from a designated sex at birth to a gender expression and presentation congruent, authentic, and in harmony with one's gender identity. This coming out process may be gradual or planned for one specific time. A social transition involves gender presentation and expression, which involves demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories. It also may involve a name change, with gender and name changes on legal documents.

Third gender (noun) a gender identity not reflected by the binary of male or female. (adjective) (a) describing a person whose gender identity is not reflected by the binary of male or female; (b) describing the societies, both historic and modern, that have three or more recognized gender identities; or (c) an umbrella term, similar to *genderqueer* and *transgender*, that reflects people who are gender nonconforming and/or have nonbinary identities.

Top surgery (noun) surgical intervention on one's chest or breasts for the purposes of aligning one's body with one's gender identity and expression.

Trans (noun) a person whose gender identity does not match their designated sex at birth. This term is inclusive of binary (male/female) and nonbinary (genderqueer) identities. The term was sometimes expressed in the past as *trans**, as some persons use *trans* as an abbreviation for *transman* and *transwoman*. As a result, this term may be used in a confusing manner. (adjective) describing a person whose gender identity does not match their designated sex at birth.

Transgender (adjective) (a) describing a person whose gender identity does not match their designated sex at birth or (b) an umbrella term for both binary (male/female) and nonbinary (genderqueer) identities whose gender identity and designated sex at birth are incongruent. Some transgender persons will identify as genderqueer, whereas some may identify as transmen or transwomen. Some others will identify simply as male or female.

Transgender man (noun) a transgender person who wishes to identify as male while recognizing and/or honoring his transgender identity. A transgender man's gender identity is male, but he was designated as female at birth.

Transgender woman (noun) a transgender person who wishes to identify as female while recognizing and/or honoring her

transgender identity. A transgender woman's gender identity is female, but she was designated as male at birth.

Transition (noun) the process of moving from a designated sex at birth to a gender expression and presentation congruent, authentic, and in harmony with one's gender identity. This coming out process may be gradual or planned for one specific time. It may involve a social transition (e.g., involving demeanor, body language, behavior, interests, activities, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories, name change, legal documents) and/or a physical transition (e.g., involving hormones, gender confirmation/affirming surgery). (verb) to undergo such a transition.

Transman (noun) see **transgender man**

Transphobia (noun) negative attitudes regarding transgender individuals expressed through fear, aversion, anger, intolerance, and/or discomfort. Transphobia can result from a belief in transgender stereotypes and/or discomfort with nonbinary gender identification and affectional orientation.

Transwoman (noun) see **transgender woman**

Two-spirit(ed) (noun) an indigenous/Native person to the Americas who embraces a third gender, which represents both masculine and feminine spirits in one person. This person's identity can involve both affectional orientation and gender variance. Two-spirited persons were historically valued, respected, and honored for their spiritual and social roles in a tribe. (adjective) describing someone who is two-spirit(ed).

Ve/vis (pronouns) see **hir/ze**

Women who have sex with women (noun) females who participate in sexual behavior with other females. This term differentiates between affectional identity and sexual behavior. It is most frequently used in the field of medicine and HIV/AIDS

education and prevention.

Problematic Terms to Avoid

Biological sex (noun) a medicalized term indicating classification as female or male based on hormonal, chromosomal, and anatomical indicators. This term is problematic, as biology and genetics do not always result in a concordant and clear sex presentation, as in the case of intersex persons. It is also problematic because it undermines the role of the gendered brain and/or gender identity, which may not match these physiological indicators. It also suggests that transgender persons wish to move against their biology, when it is very likely that something biological or physiological is causing their gender variation.

Biologically female (adjective) see **biological sex**

Biologically male (adjective) see **biological sex**

Born a man/woman (adverb) a phrase used to indicate someone's designated sex at birth. This term is problematic for the same reason *biological sex* is. In addition, people are born as babies, not as men or women.

Genetic sex (noun) see **biological sex**

Genetically female (adjective) see **biological sex**

Genetically male (adjective) see **biological sex**

Hermaphrodite (noun) an outdated term describing an intersex person, or a person whose sex development in utero differs from the expected sex presentation at birth, resulting in ambiguous or both male and female chromosomes, hormones, internal/external sexual organs, and/or secondary sex characteristics. This term is medically problematic, as the word was originally meant to indicate two complete sets of genitalia, which intersex persons do not

have. Historically the term was used to describe intersex people as oddities or freaks and used to stigmatize.

Homosexual (adjective) an outdated term describing a person who is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually with someone of the same sex and/or gender. This term is problematic because it has been used in numerous historical, medical, and religious contexts to denote a marginalizing, pathological, immoral, and negative identity.

Lifestyle (noun) a derogatory term when used to describe affectional orientation or gender identity, reflecting it as a choice. For example, heterosexual persons are described as having lives, but LGBTQI+ people are described as having lifestyles.

Post-op (adjective) see **pre-op**

Pre-op (adjective) an outdated term previously used to describe the status of a transgender person's surgical transition. This term is problematic because many transgender persons may not wish to transition surgically. Use of this term suggests that a transgender person must have surgery to have a valid transgender identity.

Same-sex attraction (noun) an outdated term previously used to describe sexual attraction to someone of the same sex. This term is problematic because it is used in a context to represent only sexual attraction rather than bonding and relationships. It has also been used in numerous historical, medical, and religious contexts in a marginalizing, pathological, immoral, and negative manner.

Sex change (noun) an outdated term previously used to describe gender confirmation, gender affirming, or sex reassignment surgery. This term is problematic because it suggests that a person is changing their sex rather than aligning it with an already-existing gender identity. Use of this term suggests that a transgender person must have surgery to transition to the sex of their gender identity.

Sex reassignment surgery (noun) a medical term describing a set of surgical procedures that modify a person's body to reflect that person's gender identity. The term most often refers to top and/or bottom surgery but may also include surgery to modify secondary sex characteristics, such as face shape. A synonym of **gender confirmation surgery/gender affirming surgery**, which are more affirming terms.

Sexual minority (noun) a person whose affectional orientation differs from that of the majority of other members of the surrounding society and its corresponding culture. This term also indicates a sense of marginalization experienced by the person who is not heterosexual. This can be a problematic term because it puts all of the focus on a person's sexual life, similar to the term **sexual orientation**.

Sexual orientation (noun) the direction in which one is predisposed to bond emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically, and spiritually with others. This term is problematic because it focuses solely on the sexual aspect of a person's relationship.

Sexual preference (noun) a derogatory term when used to describe affectional orientation or gender identity, reflecting it as a choice.

Sexuality variance (noun) an affectional orientation that differs from that of the majority of other members of the surrounding society and its corresponding culture. This term also indicates a sense of marginalization experienced by the person who is not heterosexual. This can be a problematic term because it puts all of the focus on the person's sexual life, similar to the term **sexual orientation**.

Straight (adjective) describing a person whose affectional orientation is heterosexual. This term is problematic because it

suggests that non-heterosexuals are the opposite of straight, which is crooked, twisted, or wrong in some manner.

Transgender (noun) a term that has been incorrectly used to describe a transgender person, such as, "Mark is a transgender." This is not an accurate use of the term. It is similar to saying "Mark is a gay."

Transgendered (adjective) a term that has been incorrectly used to describe a transgender person, such as, "Sue is transgendered." This is not an accurate term or accurate usage. It is similar to saying "Sue is gayed."

Transsexual (noun) an older medical and psychological term for *transgender*. It was used to describe a person who desired to transition socially, medically, and/or surgically. Although this term is not utilized as a synonym of *transgender* or as a modern term in the community, some persons still use this as an identity. Never use this term unless a person directly reports identifying with it. A transsexual man's gender identity is male but was designated female at birth. A transsexual woman's gender identity is female but was designated male at birth.

Transvestite (noun) an outdated term used to describe a person who wears clothes and accessories that represent cultural concepts of another gender in order to derive pleasure. This term has now been replaced by the term *cross-dresser*, which reflects someone who dresses in another gender's clothing as a form of gender expression. In the past, *transvestite* as a term was confused with *transgender* and *transsexual*. It has also become stigmatized, as it has become associated with a sexual fetish. It is also highly pathologized as a paraphilia identified by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as transvestite disorder.