



CCGSD Queer Vocabulary

Note about Terminology

It is important to acknowledge that due to the evolving nature of language and the personal meanings attributed by groups and individuals, these definitions are not rigid - they are mutable and ever changing, much like our community itself.

When referring to an individual's identity, the words and definitions that they use to describe themselves overrule and supercede the definitions in this glossary.

AGENDER (*adjective*)

A term meaning “without gender,” people who are agender do not identify anywhere on the gender spectrum, but rather see their gender as non-existent.¹

ALLOSEXUAL (*adjective*)

A word to describe those who are *not* on the asexual spectrum. Other terms for this include **zedsexual**, **zsexual**, or **non-ace**, which are less sexological in nature.²

ANDROGYNOUS (*adjective*)

Identity or umbrella term for a kind of non-binary gender implying some combination of conventionally masculine and feminine aspects.³

AROMANTIC (*adjective*)

A term used to describe those who do not experience romantic attraction.⁴

ASEXUAL (*adjective*)

A term used to describe a person who either:

1. Does not experience sexual attraction
2. Does not experience a desire for sex, or
3. Experiences these to a lesser degree than most⁵

ASSIGNED SEX (*noun*)

Assigned sex is the classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs, often at birth. We say assigned sex versus biological sex to acknowledge that sex is often a value assigned by medical professionals to newborns based on visual assessment of external genitalia. Inclusion here of the

¹ “Queer Terms,” OUT Saskatoon, accessed July 13, 2018.

² “Ace Toronto’s Glossary,” AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁵ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

recognized category of “intersex,” frequently overlooked in discussions of sex, serves as a reminder that even at the level of biology, sex is not a binary system.⁶

BI-CURIOUS (*adjective*)

A term used to describe a person who is questioning or exploring the possibility of being bisexual, gay/lesbian, or otherwise being not heterosexual.⁷

BI-ERASURE (*noun*)

A societal issue, existing even within the rainbow community, that privileges monosexual identities and ignores, or even denies the existence or legitimacy of bisexual and/or polysexual identities.

BIGENDER (*adjective*)

A gender identity describing a fluctuation between two distinct gender identities, or the experience of two genders simultaneously.⁸

BIPHOBIA (*noun*)

Hatred of bisexuality exhibited in ways such as prejudice, discrimination, or violence. Anyone who is not monosexual (or is assumed not to be) can be a victim of biphobia.⁹ It need not necessarily include homophobia or lesbophobia because there are stereotypes and prejudices specifically targeting the bisexual community.

BIROMANTIC (*adjective*)

A term used to describe those who experience romantic attraction to two genders, not necessarily to the same extent.

BISEXUAL (*adjective*)

A term used to describe those who experience sexual or sexual and romantic attraction to two genders, not necessarily to the same extent.¹⁰

CISGENDER (*adjective*)

A term used to describe people for whom their gender identity and assigned sex match, and who fit the societal expectations surrounding their birth-assigned sex. It is the opposite of **transgender**.¹¹

CISNORMATIVITY (*noun*)

A societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges cisgender identities and gender norms, and ignores or underrepresents trans identities and/or gender diversity by assuming that all people are cisgender and will express their gender in a way that aligns with perceived gender norms.¹²

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Queer Terms,” OUT Saskatoon, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁸ “What does LGBTQ+ mean?” Ok2BeMe, accessed August 16, 2018.

⁹ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

¹⁰ “Sexual Orientation Definitions,” Carleton University Equity Services, accessed July 13, 2018. *Bisexual* used to signify people attracted to both genders, however as the rainbow community begins to acknowledge an entire spectrum of gender, many people choose to identify as *pansexual*, or have begun to use this definition of *bisexual*.

¹¹ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

¹² Ibid.

CISSEXISM (*noun*)

Prejudice and discrimination against trans or gender diverse identities and/or expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable identity.¹³

COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY (*noun*)

The patriarchal presumption that heterosexuality is the normal and necessary default of all individuals in society. It imposes a “heterosexual lens” on all individuals throughout all aspects of life, beginning in early childhood. This system imposes the coercive violence of homophobia and heterosexism in order to “make people” be straight.¹⁴

COMPULSORY SEXUALITY (*noun*)

This is the set of social expectations, ideologies, institutions and practices, etc. that hold that all people should desire sex, that having and wanting sex is a form of personal empowerment, and that participation in sex is an expected and required part of a romantic relationship.¹⁵

CPATH (*noun*)

An acronym for the Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health. CPATH, the Canadian counterpart to WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health), was launched in 2007. Their website (www.cpath.ca) offers membership to professionals and non-professionals alike, as well as resources and information.¹⁶

DEMIROMANTIC (*adjective*)

Someone who only experiences romantic attraction after an emotional bond of a non-romantic nature has been formed.

DEMISEXUAL (*adjective*)

Someone who only experiences sexual attraction after an emotional bond has been formed. This bond does not have to be romantic in nature.¹⁷

GAY (*adjective*)

A term used to describe self-identified men who are romantically/sexually attracted to other self-identified men. It has also been used as an umbrella term for everyone who has same-gender attraction. Although it is most commonly used for men, “Gay” can refer to men or women, or more generally, the entire rainbow community. It should be noted that this term, when used for the whole community, excludes, silences, and further marginalizes the rest of the rainbow community.¹⁸

GENDER (*noun*)

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Definitions: Social Structures & Relationships,” AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Rupert Raj, “A (Trans) Gender Glossary,” last updated August 12, 2016.

¹⁷ “General FAQ,” The Asexual Visibility and Education Network, accessed July 13, 2018.

¹⁸ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

Gender is a system that operates in a social context to classify people. In many Western contexts this takes the form of a binary “man” or “woman” classification, although many are beginning to recognize a broader spectrum.¹⁹ An individual’s gender is comprised of both their gender identity and their gender expression.

GENDER EXPRESSION (*noun*)

How a person outwardly expresses their gender identity, whether through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body modifications.²⁰ A person’s gender expression may not always be stereotypically congruent with their gender identity, and any mismatch does not invalidate their identity.

GENDER FLUID (*adjective*)

Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may change from day to day. Gender fluid people do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of women or men. In other words, they may feel they are a woman some days and a man on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.²¹

GENDER IDENTITY (*noun*)

A person’s individual experience of gender. It is their internal sense of being a man, a woman, or any other gender. Often, gender identity corresponds with an individual’s assigned sex at birth, but sometimes it does not. Gender identity, which is internal and is not visible to others, is one of two aspects that make up gender as a whole.²²

GENDER NON-CONFORMING (*adjective*)

A community-generated term to describe those who depart from the societally-sanctioned binary gender norms of masculine or feminine. It is often more commonly used to refer to youth, without placing the label **transgender** on anyone at a young age.²³

GENDERQUEER (*adjective*)

A term used by some individuals to describe their gender identity as neither entirely masculine nor entirely feminine.²⁴ It should be noted that not all people who fit this definition are okay with the term or are comfortable with using it for themselves. For this reason, no one should be called “genderqueer” without their consent.

GREY-ASEXUAL (*adjective*)

a.k.a. Grey-a or Grey-sexual

Someone who identifies with the area between asexuality and sexuality, for example because they experience sexual attraction very rarely, only under specific circumstances, or at a low intensity.²⁵

HETERONORMATIVITY (*noun*)

¹⁹ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018. The gender binary is a very Western concept, and many other cultures had a more fluid view of gender.

²⁰ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

²³ Rupert Raj, “A (Trans) Gender Glossary,” last updated August 12, 2016.

²⁴ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

²⁵ “General FAQ,” The Asexual Visibility and Education Network, accessed July 13, 2018.

A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges heterosexuality, and ignores or underrepresents diversity in attraction and behaviour by assuming all people are heterosexual.²⁶

HETEROSEXISM (*noun*)

Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable form of attraction.²⁷

HOMONORMATIVITY (*noun*)

The social pressure to assimilate into heteronormative society and to become the ideal of the “mainstream gay” or “respectable queer”. It is the approach of broadening heteronormative institutions very slightly to integrate *some* LGBTQ+ people, instead of fundamentally challenging those institutions, thus upholding heteronormative social structures such as nuclear families, the gender binary and gender roles.²⁸

HOMOPHOBIA (*noun*)

Hatred of homosexuality exhibited in ways such as prejudice, discrimination, or violence. Anyone who is not “straight” (or is assumed not to be) can be the target of homophobia.²⁹

HOMOROMANTIC (*adjective*)

A term used to describe someone who is romantically attracted to those who identify as the same gender, or a gender similar to, the one they do.

HOMOSEXUAL (*noun or adjective*)

A term used to describe someone who is sexually attracted to those who identify as the same gender, or a gender similar to, the one they do.³⁰ However, this term has a history of medicalization and criminalization, and should not be used for someone without their consent.

INTERSEX (*adjective*)

A term used to describe people who are born with anatomy or chromosome patterns that do not fit typical definitions of male or female. Intersex persons are often subjected to surgical intervention at birth, with or without parental consent or even knowledge.³¹

Please read here for more information: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/intersex/>

LESBIAN (*noun*)

A term used to describe self-identified women who are romantically/sexually attracted to other self-identified women.³²

LESBOPHOBIA (*noun*)

²⁶ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ “Definitions: Social Structures & Relationships,” AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

²⁹ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

³⁰ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018. Here we say “similar” to acknowledge that an individual may still adopt the term *homosexual* if they are attracted to non-binary people.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Hatred of, or aversion to, lesbians. Anyone who is a lesbian (or is perceived to be) can be the target of lesbophobia.³³

LGBTQ2S+ (*adjective*)

An acronym used to refer to the rainbow community. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and Two-Spirit. The plus sign (+) acknowledges that the acronym does not include all members of the community, and recognizes other terms not represented in the acronym.³⁴

MONOGAMY (*noun*)

The practice of having, or desiring an intimate relationship with only one person at a time.

MONOROMANTIC (*adjective*)

A term for someone who experiences romantic attraction to only one gender.

MONOSEXUAL (*noun or adjective*)

A term for someone who experiences just sexual or sexual and romantic attraction to only one gender.³⁵

MSM (men who have sex with men) or MLM (men who love men) (*noun*)

Men who engage in sexual activities with other men without necessarily identifying as gay/bisexual/bi-curious/queer.³⁶

NON-BINARY or NONBINARY (*adjective*)

An umbrella term to describe gender identities that do not fit within the gender binary system of man/woman. It is important to note that some non-binary identities are culturally specific, and that some people may use the term itself as a specific identity.³⁷ Identities that may fall under this umbrella include but are not limited to: **agender**, **bigender**, **genderfluid**, and **genderqueer**.

PANROMANTIC (*adjective*)

A term for someone who experiences romantic attraction to a person regardless of gender or sex.

PANSEXUAL (*adjective*)

A term for someone who experiences just physical or physical and emotional attraction to a person regardless of gender or sex.³⁸

POLYAMORY (*noun*)

The practice of having, or desiring an intimate relationship with more than one person at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved.³⁹

³³ "Queer Terminology - from A to Q," Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

³⁴ "Terminology," Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & "Queer Terminology - from A to Q," Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018. Other identities commonly added in the acronym are Intersex, Asexual, and Pansexual

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Sexual Orientation Definitions," Carleton University Equity Services, accessed July 13, 2018.

³⁷ "Definitions: Gender-Related Terms," AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

³⁸ "Terminology," Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & "Queer Terminology - from A to Q," Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018. This is a newer term that has evolved from *bisexual* to acknowledge the existence of more than two genders.

³⁹ Ibid.

POLYSEXUAL (*adjective*)

Someone who is attracted to two genders but does not want to use the term **bisexual** for fear of erasing non-binary identities, or someone who is attracted to more than two genders.⁴⁰ Its romantic orientation counterpart is **polyromantic**.

POMOSEXUAL (*adjective*)

A term used to describe an individual who rejects the use of labels to define their sexual/romantic orientation or gender identity.

QUEER (*adjective*)

An umbrella term for a social/intellectual/political movement that seeks to encompass a broad range of sexual identities, behaviours, and expressions. It has also been reclaimed as a personal identity for some, after its historical use as a homophobic and transphobic slur. However, not all individuals are comfortable with the reclamation of the word, and it should not be used to describe someone without their consent. It is sometimes used as a catch-all for the rainbow community, and may or may not be seen to include trans people.⁴¹

QUEERPLATONIC RELATIONSHIP (QPR) (*noun*)

QPRs describe a range of “non-normative” relationships that are not in the “romantic” box and that also do not fit the “friendship” box properly - even if the relationship is or includes friendship, the word/concept of “friendship” does not express it properly or adequately. QPRs can range in significance and represent a “mega-category” of relationships outside of existing categories and expectations. A queerplatonic relationship may also be referred to as a **quirkyplatonic relationship**.⁴²

QUESTIONING (*adjective or verb*)

A term referring to those who are unsure of, or exploring their gender identity, sexual orientation or romantic orientation, or those who are wary of claiming a social label for any reason.⁴³

ROMANTIC ORIENTATION (*noun*)

A term used to describe the direction of a person’s romantic or emotional attraction. It is not a set of absolute categories, and may or may not coincide with the individual’s sexual orientation.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (*noun*)

A term used to describe the direction of a person’s physical attraction. It is not a set of absolute categories, but commonly used terms include **Gay**, **Lesbian**, **Bisexual**, **Asexual**, and **Pansexual** orientations, among others.⁴⁴

SPLIT-ORIENTATION MODEL (*noun*)

⁴⁰ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 31, 2018.

⁴¹ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018. This is a newer term that has evolved from *bisexual* to acknowledge the existence of more than two genders.

⁴² “Definitions: Social Structures & Relationships,” AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

⁴³ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁴⁴ “Sexual Orientation Definitions,” Carleton University Equity Services, accessed July 13, 2018. Sexual Orientation is not necessarily static; it can shift and change.

A way of conceptualising experiences of attraction wherein romantic and sexual attraction are two separate and distinct entities that may or may not align within an individual. This model says that people can have different sexual and romantic orientations, and it is understood that typically these two things together are being referenced when someone says “sexual orientation”.⁴⁵

TRANS (*adjective*)

An umbrella term to describe those whose gender identity or expression is different than those typically associated with their assigned sex.⁴⁶

TRANSGENDER (*adjective*)

A person who identifies either fully or in part with a gender other than the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex--often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people, like cisgender people, can claim any identity in relation to their sexual/romantic orientation.⁴⁷

TRANSMISOGYNY (*noun*)

A term coined by Julia Serano, a transgender activist, in 2005 to describe the specific oppression of trans women and transfeminine individuals. While transphobia is a more general term that refers to the oppression all trans people face, transmisogyny is an intersectional term that refers to the specific combination of transphobia and misogyny experienced by transfeminine folks.⁴⁸

TRANSPHOBIA (*noun*)

Hatred of any perceived transgression of gender norms exhibited in ways such as prejudice, discrimination, or violence. Anyone who is not cisgender (or is assumed not to be) can be a victim of transphobia.⁴⁹

TRANSSEXUAL (*noun or adjective*)

An older term for those who medically transition or seek to medically transition with Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), surgeries, and/or other procedures. However, like **homosexual**, this term has a history of medicalization and still carries a clinical connotation, and therefore should not be used for people without their consent.⁵⁰

TWO-SPIRIT (*adjective*)

a.k.a. 2-Spirit or Two-Spirited

A term coined at the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations Gay and Lesbian Conference in Winnipeg in 1990 which is used by Indigenous members of the LGBTQ+ community. It is often described as meaning people who possess both masculine and feminine spirits, however it is used across Turtle Island to distinguish the Indigenous views of gender and sexuality from the Western gender binary,

⁴⁵ “Definitions: Social Structures & Relationships,” AceToronto, accessed July 31, 2018.

⁴⁶ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁴⁷ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁴⁸ Serano, Julia. “Julia’s Trans, Gender, Sexuality, & Activism Glossary,” Julia Serano, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁴⁹ “Glossary of Terms,” Egale: Canadian Human Rights Trust, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁵⁰ “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018. It should be noted that not all trans people seek out surgeries and/or HRT for a variety of reasons such as financial barriers, social barriers, or they may simply not want to medically transition.

violently imposed on Indigenous communities through colonialism.⁵¹ It should be noted that Two-Spirit is not a catch-all term for Indigenous people in the LGBTQ community, they must choose to adopt the term for themselves.

Please read here for more information: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/1-who-are-two-spirit-people/>

WSW (women who have sex with women) or WLW (women who love women) (noun)

Women who engage in sexual activities with other women without necessarily identifying as a lesbian or **bisexual/bi-curious/queer**.⁵²

Links

1. http://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Queer_Terminology_Web_Version__Sept_2013__Cover_and_pages_.pdf
2. <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/#>
3. <https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Egales-Glossary-of-Terms.pdf>
4. <http://www.juliaserano.com/terminology.html>
5. <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2SLGBTQINDIGENOUSHEALTHFactSheet.pdf>
6. http://www.outsaskatoon.ca/queer_terms
7. <https://www.asexuality.org/?q=general.html>
8. https://acetoronto.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/ace-toronto-glossary_june-2017.pdf
9. <https://carleton.ca/equity/human-rights/sexual-orientation/sexual-orientation-definitions/>
10. <https://ok2bme.ca/resources/kids-teens/what-does-lgbtq-mean/>

⁵¹ “Two Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous Health,” Rainbow Health Ontario, accessed July 13, 2018.

⁵² “Terminology,” Positive Space Campaign, The University of British Columbia, accessed July 13, 2018. & “Queer Terminology - from A to Q,” Qmunity, accessed July 13, 2018.