

12th Annual Thomas and Alice Morgans Fear Memorial Conference

Gender Equity and Shared Care:
Bridging the Know-How Gap

Gender Affirming Care:
An Advocate and Educator's Voice

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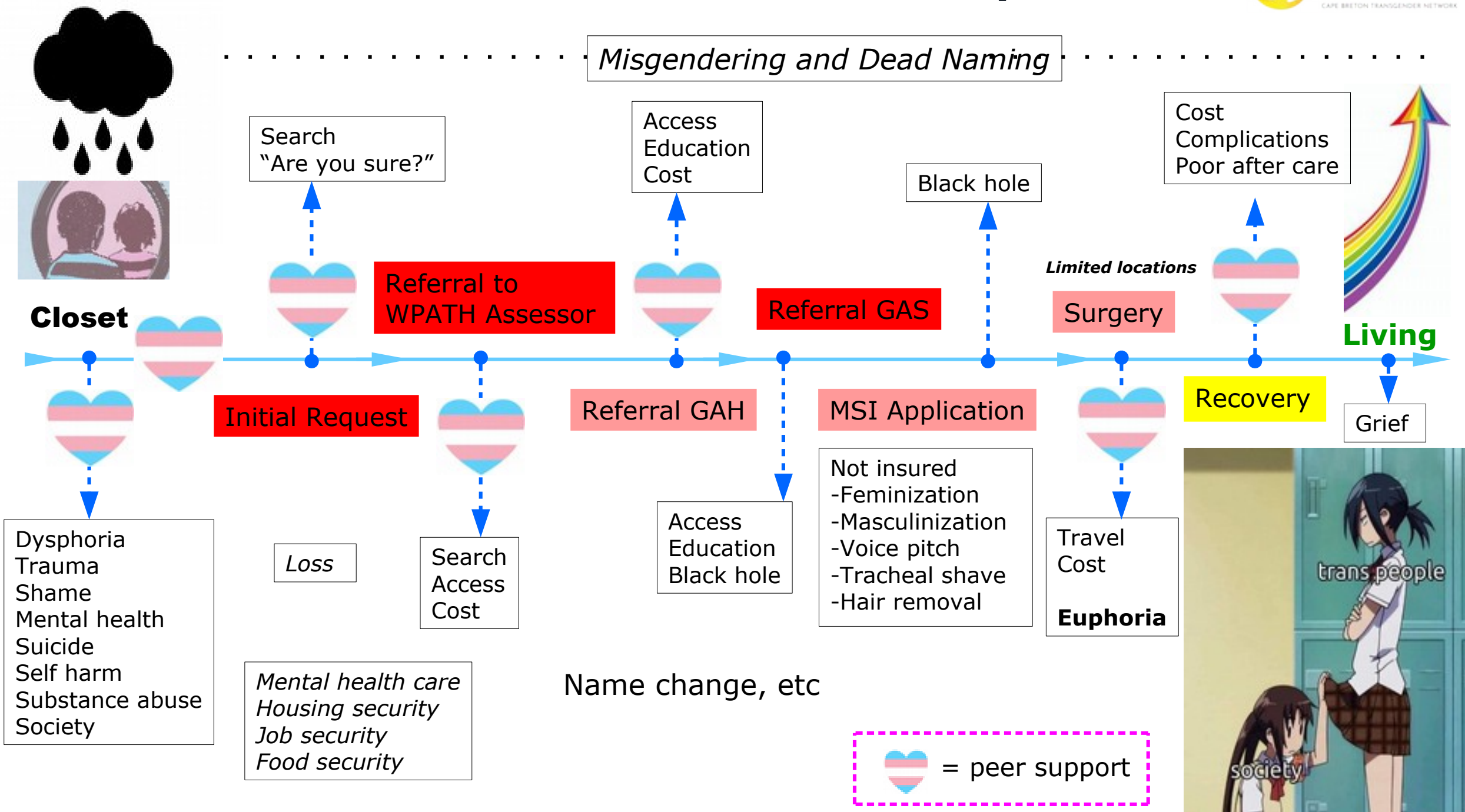
May 27th 2024

Veronica Merryfield she/her

- Founder of the Cape Breton Transgender Network
- Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission 2023 Award winner
Individual Advocacy
- Recognized at the legislature on
Transgender Day of Visibility 2023



The Actual 'Medical' Journey



Thank you

What questions do you have?

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Extra Material



Importance of Pronouns

Pronouns are one of the ways we portray our identities. When someone asks you to use their pronouns, they are asking you to respect their identity.

When someone refers to another person using the wrong pronouns, especially on purpose, that can lead to that person feeling disrespected, leading to dysphoria, exclusion and alienation.

Contributing factor to suicide.

Choosing to ignore or disrespect someone's pronouns is not only an act of oppression but can also be considered an act of violence.

What role does privilege play?



If you don't know, don't use anything!

Introduce yourself using your pronouns

“Hello, my name is Veronica. My pronouns are she/her”.

This helps people know you are a safe space.

Don't demand.



Misgendering

Happens in many places often from a lack of training

- Call centers and cold callers.
- Drive throughs.
- Retail.

If you do misgender someone, simply apologize and don't make a big deal of it, it gets embarrassing.

Cis people get misgendered too.

What role does privilege play?



What you actual say when you ignore someones pronouns

- I know you better than you know yourself
- I would rather hurt you repeatedly than change the way I speak to you
- Your sense of safety is not important to me
- Your identity isn't real and shouldn't be acknowledged
- I want to teach everyone round me to disrespect you
- Offending you is fine if it makes me feel more comfortable
- I can hear you talking but I am not listening
- Being who you truly are is an inconvenience to me
- I want you to stop being honest with me
- I am not an ally, friend or someone you can trust



What does gender dysphoria feel like?

Gender is a lot like a pair of shoes.

If you have a good, comfortable, well fitting pair, you don't notice it or think about it..

But if your shoes are too small and tight or there is a rock in them it's all you can think about.

Every step is annoying and miserable, and you don't want to do anything else until you fix them and take the damned rock out.



Trapped

it's wrong!
the mirror lies!
it's image wrong!
thats not the body of my soul.
a prisoner,
body, the cell, barred.
struggling to find a way out,
locked, the door.
the path, unseen.
dark the walls.
caged, languishing soul,
clawing at walls to get out,
unyielding, their stoniness.

curled in the minds corner,
time passes like flowing tar.
living, a lie.
existing, a chore.
treadmilling, life.
suicide, a lusted blissful escape.
inconsistency consuming,
incongruity, the norm familiar.
the island of the soul,
ravaged by the ocean storm,
the making of every day,
after every day,
each day.

it's wrong!



An anime-style illustration of two female students in a school locker room. The student on the right is standing, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a brown plaid skirt, with her arms crossed and a somber expression. The student on the left is kneeling, wearing a similar white shirt and red bow, looking up at the standing student. The background consists of teal lockers and a yellow wall. The text 'trans people' is overlaid on the standing student, and 'society' is overlaid on the kneeling student.

trans people

society

It's the Gender Binary that is New

Mediterranean 7000–1700 BC

- depictions of 3rd sex in Neolithic and Bronze Age drawings and figurines

Prague 2900–2500 BC

- A male buried in the outfit usually reserved for women

Egypt 1351-1334 BC

- Pharaoh Akhenaten, intersex.

Egypt 1479-1458 BC

- Pharaoh Hatshepsut, transgender

Greece 400 BC

- Hippocrates writes of the enarei, a class of androgynous Scythian priests and healers

Asia 300 BC

- Hijra (colonial criminalization 1860)

Middle east and Asia ?? BC

- Eunuch – often used as a blanket term for 3rd sex, intersex and transgender



It's the Gender Binary that is New

Hebrew

Zachar male.

Nekevah female.

Androgynos having both male and female characteristics.

Tumtum lacking sexual characteristics.

Aylonit hamah identified female at birth but later naturally developing male characteristics.

Aylonit adam identified female at birth but later developing male characteristics through human intervention.

Saris hamah identified male at birth but later naturally developing female characteristics.

Saris adam identified male at birth and later developing female characteristics through human intervention.



It's the Gender Binary that is New

2 Spirit

Aleut: *tayagigux'*, "Woman transformed into a man."

Aleut: *ayagigux'*, "Man transformed into a woman."

Blackfoot: *ninauh-oskitsi-pahpyaki*, "Manly-hearted-woman."

Blackfoot: *ááwowáakii*, "A male homosexual."

Blackfoot: *a'yai-kik-ahsi*, "Acts like a woman."

Cree: *iskwêw ka-napêwayat*, #Bñ Dì È O8 ε?, "A woman who dresses as a man."

Cree: *napêw iskwêwisêhot*, È OD #Bñ / ²P/α, "A man who dresses as a woman."

Cree: *înahpîkasoht*, \$ È Rì ¾?, "A woman dressed/living/accepted as a man."

Cree: *napêhkân*, Í Oñ Ç "One who acts/lives as a man."

Cree: *iskwêhkân*, #Bñ ñ Ç "One who acts/lives as a woman."

Crow: *batée*. A word that describes both trans women and homosexual males.

Navajo: *nádleeḥ* (also given as *nádleeḥi*), "One who is transformed" or "one who changes".

Ojibwe: *ininiikaazo*, "Women who functioned as men" / "one who endeavours to be like a man".

Ojibwe: *ikwekaazo*, "Men who chose to function as women" / "one who endeavours to be like a woman"

Zuni: *lhamana*, men who at times may also take on the social and ceremonial roles performed by women in their culture.



Privilege

Privilege is a set of unearned benefits.

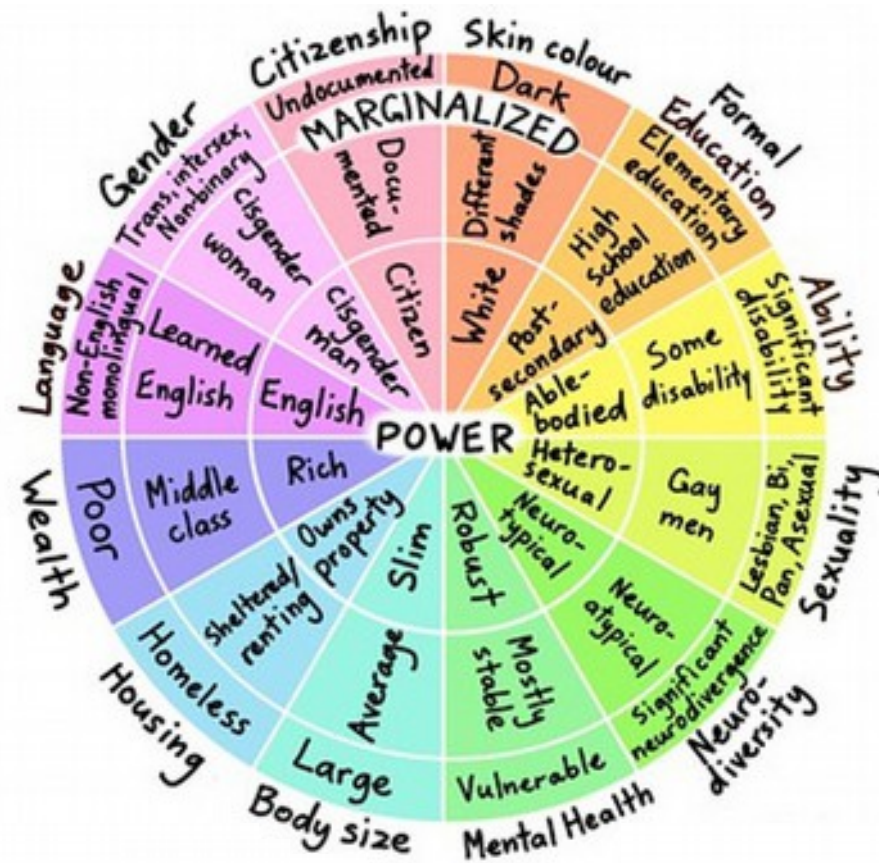
When you're accustomed to privilege, equity can feel like oppression.

Privilege is invisible to those who have it.

It's up to people who hold positions of privilege to be active allies to those with less access, and take responsibility for making changes that will help others be successful.



Privilege Wheel



The Misuses of “Biological Sex”

The definition of sex relies on the sex designation on a birth certificate

- nature doesn't decide where “male” ends and “female” begins
- nature doesn't decide where “male” ends and “intersex” begins, or where “intersex” ends and “female” begins
- humans decide, with a quick glance - **GATEKEEPING**

Definition of biological sex includes

- chromosomes, gonads, hormones, and genitals

Example: someone with what are understood as female-typical genitals and 46,XY chromosomes would be classified as female if genitals are used as the indicator but male if chromosomes are used.

Decisions about which traits or sets of traits are used, in what combination, and for what purpose are inextricably tied to why sex categorization exists and whom or what it serves.

Far from neutral or objective, sex classification and definition rely on cultural norms about the “appropriate” relationships between sex, gender, and sexuality, and work in tandem with power to support social norms and goals as well as sociopolitical hierarchies that determine opportunities, rights, and privileges.

Science does not drive policies; the desire to exclude does. – The Lancet, November 2019



Active Allies

The **Sponsor** vocally supports the work of colleagues from underrepresented groups in all contexts, but specifically in situations that will help increase their reputation and standing.

Example: “What I learned from Veronica is the following ...”

The **Champion** acts similarly to a sponsor, but is more of an advocate for underrepresented colleagues, namely at public venues such as events and conferences.

Example: Direct questions about specific topics to people with subject-matter expertise instead of answering them yourself.

The **Amplifier** works to ensure that marginalized voices are both heard and respected. This type of allyship can take many forms, but is focused on representation within communication.

Example: “I agree with David’s recommendation for improving our net promoter score.”

The **Advocate** uses their power and influence to propel colleagues from underrepresented groups into highly exclusive circles. The Advocate recognizes and addresses unjust omissions, holding their peers accountable regardless of status, gender, race and ethnicity, ability, age, body shape and size, religion, and sexual orientation.

Example: Offer to introduce colleagues from underrepresented groups to influential people in your network.

The **Scholar** seeks to learn as much as possible about the challenges and prejudices faced by colleagues from marginalized groups. It’s important to note that Scholars never force their own opinions, experiences, or ideas upon others, but instead simply listen and learn.

Example: Investigate and read publications, podcasts, or social media by and about underrepresented groups.

The **Upstander** is someone who sees wrongdoing and acts to combat it. This person condemns offensive comments or jokes, even if no one within earshot might be offended or hurt.

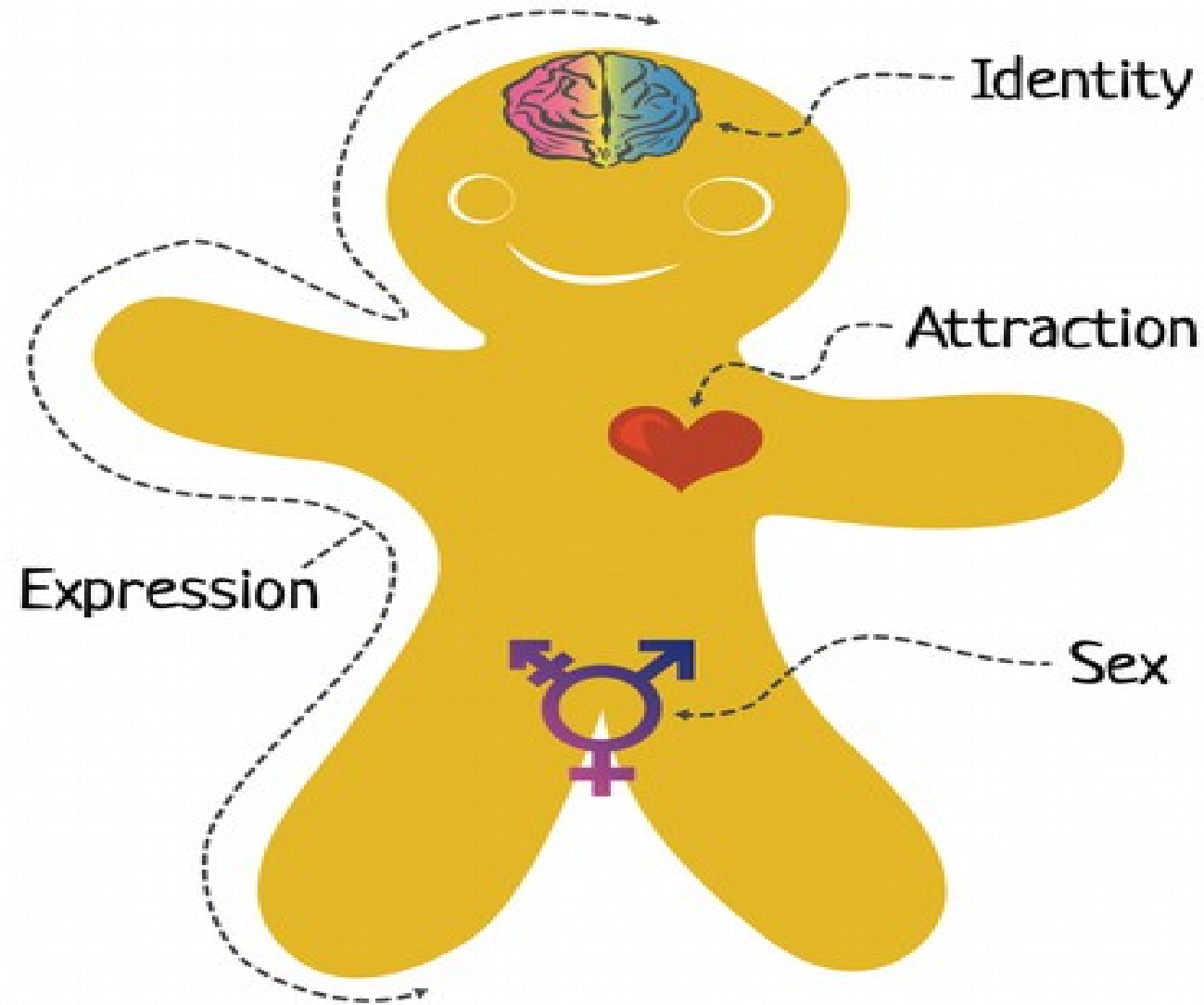
Example: Always speak up if you witness behaviour or speech that is degrading or offensive.

The **Confidant** creates a safe space for members of underrepresented groups to express their fears, frustrations, and needs.

Example: Believe others’ experiences. Don’t assume something couldn’t happen just because you haven’t personally experienced it.



The Gingerbread Person





It's a continuum

Typically based solely on external genitalia present at birth

Common things – body hair, chest, hips, shoulders, voice pitch, hormones, chromosomes



It's a continuum

Is how you, in your own mind, experience and define your gender

It's based on how you align, or don't, with what you understand the options to be

Common things – personality traits, likes, dislikes, roles, expectations





It's a continuum

Is how you present gender

and how those presentations are viewed based on social expectations

Common things – style, grooming, clothing, mannerisms, appearance, hair, make-up





It's a continuum

Is how you find yourself drawn, or not, to some other people in a sexual or romantic



Appendix A - 50 Potential Workplace Privileges

1. You are white.
2. You are male.
3. You are straight.
4. You are cisgender (identify as the same gender assigned at birth)
5. You are not significantly younger or older than your co-workers.
6. You do not have disabilities - visible or otherwise.
7. You have a college degree.
8. You attended an elite university.
9. You were born in Canada or are a Canadian citizen.
10. English/French is your first language.
11. You do not receive comments about your accent or the way you pronounce certain words.
12. You have never been denied a job opportunity (or fired from one) based on your gender, race or ethnicity, religion, age, body shape or size, disability or sexual orientation.
13. You have a significant other and feel comfortable speaking openly about them.
14. You are not the primary caregiver for anyone.
15. You feel welcome at networking and social events.
16. You are not asked to do menial tasks that colleagues of another gender or race are asked to do.
17. Other people do not regularly assume that you are in a lower rank/level than you are.
18. You feel comfortable attending all your meetings, and are able to make an effective contribution.
19. You are rarely ignored or interrupted in meetings.
20. You feel confident that you will be praised and credited for the ideas you raise in meetings.
21. Your manager maintains eye contact when speaking to you.
22. You recently received feedback about a technical skill and/or opportunities for improvement.
23. You can spare time to learn about new technology.
24. You have not been delayed nor denied a promotion/assignment compared to an equally qualified colleague.



25. You received a promotion by simply knowing a friend or family member.
26. You can talk about political or identity-oriented topics without fear of judgment or bias.
27. You can observe religious holidays without having to use your annual leave entitlement.
28. You feel welcomed and valued when engaging in group projects.
29. You have never been called a 'diversity hire'.
30. People at technical/scientific events always assume you are the invitee (rather than a plus-one).
31. People do not mistake you for being part of the catering or cleaning team.
32. You do not receive unwanted sexual advances at work.
33. You have never had to change teams or companies because of harassment.
34. You feel physically safe both at work and at events.
35. You feel safe leaving work late at night and going home alone after evening events.
36. You have stable housing.
37. You are confident that if made redundant, you would be able to find another job without financial strain.
38. You are always invited to, and can afford to join, out-of-office lunches and after-hours social activities.
39. You can manage monthly payments regardless of the debt you incur.
40. You never have to decide which bills to pay or forgo meals, because you can always afford food.
41. You do not have to support any immediate/extended family members financially.
42. You have a partner that is responsible for the majority of housework and family responsibilities.
43. You are rarely, if ever, late to work or miss work because of a child's illness or family emergency.
44. You do not have a long career gap in your resume.
45. You have never been arrested, incarcerated or charged with a criminal offence.
46. People never touch your or your hair without consent.
47. You are comfortable speaking out in meetings, without worrying that someone will find faults in your logic or try to discredit you.
48. You do not receive abusive comments on social media.
49. People do not patronise when explaining a topic to you.
50. You do not depend on a sponsor, mentor, or any other ally in order to be taken seriously / respected.



Appendix B – Active Allies

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The **Upstander** is someone who sees wrongdoing and acts to combat it. This person condemns offensive comments or jokes, even if no one within earshot might be offended or hurt. **Example:** Always speak up if you witness behaviour or speech that is degrading or offensive.

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Appendix C

Affinity bias, also known as similarity bias, is the tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds.

Confirmation bias is the inclination to draw conclusions about a situation or person based on your personal desires, beliefs and prejudices rather than on unbiased merit.

Attribution bias is a phenomenon where you try to make sense of or judge a person's behavior based on prior observations and interactions you've had with that individual that make up your perception of them.

Conformity bias is the tendency people have to act similar to the people around them regardless of their own personal beliefs or idiosyncrasies — also known as peer pressure.

The **halo effect** is the tendency people have to place another person on a pedestal after learning something impressive about them.

The **horns effect** is the tendency people have to view another person negatively after learning something unpleasant or negative about them.

The **contrast effect** is when you compare two or more things that you have come into contact with — either simultaneously or one after another — causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other.

Gender bias is the tendency to prefer one gender over another gender.



Ageism in the workplace is the tendency to have negative feelings about another person based on their age.

Name bias is the tendency people have to judge and prefer people with certain types of names — typically names that are of Anglo origin.

Beauty bias is a social behavior where people believe that attractive people are more successful, competent and qualified.

Height bias or heightism is the tendency to judge a person who is significantly short or tall.

Anchor bias or expectation anchor bias is when someone holds onto an initial, singular piece of information to make decisions.

Nonverbal bias is analyzing nonverbal communication attributes such as body language and letting it affect a decision or opinion.

Authority bias refers to when an idea or opinion is given more attention or thought to be more accurate because it was provided by an authority figure.

Overconfidence bias refers to a person's tendency to be more confident in their capabilities than they should be.



Appendix D – Terms

AFAB: (pronounced ā-fab) Acronym meaning Assigned Female at Birth. AFAB people may or may not identify as female some or all of the time. AFAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to womanhood or femaleness.

Affirmed Gender: An individual's true gender, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. This term should replace terms like new gender or chosen gender, which imply that an individual chooses their gender.

Agender: (pronounced ā-jen-dər) Refers to a person who does not identify with or experience any gender. Agender is different from nonbinary (see Nonbinary) because many nonbinary people do experience gender.

Ally: A term relating generally to individuals who support marginalized groups. In the LGBTQ+ community, this term is used to describe someone who is supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate. Allies include both heterosexual and cisgender people who advocate for equality in partnership with LGBTQ+ people, as well as people within the LGBTQ+ community who advocate for others in the community. "Ally" is not an identity, and allyship is an ongoing process of learning that includes action.

AMAB: (pronounced ā-mab) Acronym meaning Assigned Male at Birth. AMAB people may or may not identify as male some or all of the time. AMAB is a useful term for educating about issues that may happen to these bodies without connecting to manhood or maleness.

Androgynous: Having physical elements of both femininity and masculinity, whether expressed through sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Androgyne (pronounced an-druh-jain) is another term for an androgynous individual.

Aromantic: Sometimes abbreviated as aro (pronounced ā-row), the term refers to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction. Aromantic people exist on a spectrum of romantic attraction and can use terms such as gray aromantic or grayromantic to describe their place within that spectrum. Aromantic people can experience sexual attraction.

Asexual: Sometimes abbreviated as ace, the term refers to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction. Each asexual person experiences relationships, attraction, and arousal differently. Asexuality is distinct from chosen behavior such as celibacy or sexual abstinence; asexuality is a sexual orientation that does not necessarily entail specific chosen behaviors. Asexual people exist on a spectrum of sexual attraction and can use terms such as gray asexual or gray ace to describe themselves.

Assigned Sex: The sex assigned to an infant at birth based on the child's visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.

Assumed Gender: The gender assumed about an individual, based on their assigned sex as well as apparent societal gender markers and expectations, such as physical attributes and expressed characteristics. Examples of assuming a person's gender include using pronouns for a person before learning what pronouns they use, or calling a person a man or a woman without knowing their gender.



Bi-curious: A term used to identify a person who is interested in exploring their attraction to people of a variety of genders. Many view this term as offensive, as it implies that sexual orientation is something that must be explored sexually and romantically before it can be determined (see [Heteroflexible](#)). Additionally, many feel that this term invalidates bisexuality by implying that it is a questioning or exploratory phase, instead of a valid sexual orientation. Similar to the term [queer](#), use this term only when self-identifying or when quoting someone who self-identifies as bi-curious.

Bigender: While gender is now widely understood to be a spectrum and not on a binary, this is a term used to identify a person whose gender identity encompasses two genders, (often man and woman, but not exclusively) or is moving between two genders. More commonly used terms include [genderfluid](#) (see [Genderfluid](#)) or [genderqueer](#) (see [Genderqueer](#)), which better reflect the spectrum of all genders.

BIPOC: Acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It acknowledges the specific histories of Black, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islanders (API), and Native people within the United States without collapsing them into a homogenous category of people of color.

Binary: Refers to someone who fits into the gender binary (see [Gender Binary](#)).

Binding: The process of tightly wrapping one's chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts, often by using a binder. Note: One must bind themselves carefully, with appropriate materials, and for reasonable periods of time in order to avoid discomfort and potential negative health impacts. Unsafe binding can lead to negative health outcomes, such as broken ribs and trouble breathing.

Bioessentialism: Short for biological essentialism. Reliance or weaponization of biology in an attempt to disprove trans people's genders. Common bioessentialist arguments reduce people to their chromosomes (though there are more than 30 chromosome combinations that people have); their genitalia (though there are many natural variations; or their binary gender (though gender and sex are not binary).

Biological Sex: Refers to anatomical, physiological, genetic, or physical attributes that determine if a person is male, female, or intersex. These include both primary and secondary sex characteristics, including genitalia, gonads, hormone levels, hormone receptors, chromosomes, and genes. Often also referred to as "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth." Biological sex is often conflated or interchanged with gender, which is more societal than biological, and involves personal identity factors.

Biphobia: Animosity, hatred, or dislike of bisexual people (see [Bisexual](#)) which may manifest in the form of prejudice or bias. Biphobia often stems from lack of knowledge about bisexual people and the issues they face, and can sometimes be alleviated with education and support. PFLAG does not use this term as it frequently prevents such educational dialogue. Related to homophobia (see [Homophobia](#)) and transphobia (see [Transphobia](#)).

Bisexual: Commonly referred to as bi or bi+. According to bi+ educator and advocate [Robyn Ochs](#), the term refers to a person who acknowledges in themselves the potential to be attracted--romantically, emotionally and/or sexually--to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or in the same degree. The "bi" in bisexual can refer to attraction to genders similar to and different from one's own. People who identify as bisexual need not have had equal sexual or romantic experience—or equal levels of attraction—with people across genders, nor any experience at all; attraction and self-identification determines orientation.

Bottom Surgery: Surgery performed on an individual's reproductive system as a part of gender-affirming surgery. (See [Gender-Affirming Surgery](#).) Not all trans people undergo medical interventions as part of their transition. As with any other aspect of transition, trans people retain the right not to discuss their surgical history, and surgery does not define gender.



Butch: A person who is masculine of center in dress, attitude, and/or presentation. It is often, but not exclusively, used in a lesbian context. Often on a spectrum from butch to femme (see Femme) or stud (see Stud) to femme.

Chosen Family: Also known as Found Family, people who support an LGBTQ+ person, who are not biologically related, and who often fill the role of the biological family if an LGBTQ+ person's family is not supportive of them. PFLAG supports LGBTQ+ people in the pursuit of their Found Families through local chapter meetings.

Cisgender (pronounced sis-gender): A term used to refer to an individual whose gender identity aligns with the one associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. The prefix cis- comes from the Latin word for "on the same side as." People who are both cisgender and heterosexual are sometimes referred to as cishet (pronounced "cis-het") individuals. The term cisgender is not a slur. People who are not trans should avoid calling themselves "normal" and instead refer to themselves as cisgender or cis.

Cisnormativity: The assumption that everyone is cisgender and that being cisgender is superior to all other genders. This includes the often implicitly held idea that being cisgender is the norm and that other genders are "different" or "abnormal."

Cissexism: Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination on the basis of sex, specifically towards transgender and gender-expansive people (see Transphobia).

Closeted: Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. A closeted person may be referred to as being "in the closet." There are many degrees to being out/closeted; closeted individuals may be out (see Out) to just themselves, close friends, or to their larger network, or not publically open about their status as LGBTQ+ people.

Coming Out: For LGBTQ+ people, coming out is the process of self-identifying and self-acceptance that entails the sharing of their identity with others. Sometimes referred to as disclosing (see Disclosure). Individuals often recognize a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/gender-expansive, or queer identity within themselves first, and then might choose to reveal it to others. There are many different degrees of being out, and coming out is a lifelong process. Coming out can be an incredibly personal and transformative experience. It is critical to respect where each person is within their process of self-identification, and up to each person, individually, to decide if and when and to whom to come out or disclose.

Culturally Queer: From the Queerspawn Resource Project: Living Language Guide, "Speaks to the feeling shared by many people with LGBTQ+ parents that they grew up immersed in queer culture, including traditions, celebrations, media, and language. Queerspawn are often raised in the queer community and learn about society primarily through a queer lens, and experience heterosexual culture and its norms as a secondary cultural influence."

Deadnaming: Occurs when an individual, intentionally or not, refers to the name that a transgender or gender-expansive individual used at a different time in their life. Avoid this practice, as it can cause trauma, stress, embarrassment, and even danger. Some may prefer the terms birth name, given name, or old name.

Demiromantic: Used to describe an individual who experiences romantic attraction only after forming an emotional connection.

Demisexual: Used to describe an individual who experiences sexual attraction only after forming an emotional connection.

Demiboy: A person whose gender identity is only partly male, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.

Demigirl: A person whose gender identity is only partly female, regardless of their assigned sex at birth.



Disclosure: A word that some people use to describe the act or process of revealing one's transgender or gender-expansive identity to another person in a specific instance. Some find the term offensive, implying the need to disclose something shameful, and prefer to use the term coming out, whereas others find coming out offensive, and prefer to use disclosure.

Drag: The theatrical performance of one or multiple genders (often including makeup, costume, dance, lip-syncing, and temporary body modifications). Performers who present in a feminine manner are called Drag Queens, while performers who present in a masculine manner are called Drag Kings. These performances often push traditional boundaries of gender presentation, calling into question societally defined gender roles.

Dyke: A queer woman or AFAB person. While some believe it to only describe masculine lesbians, many bisexual and gender-expansive people also connect to this term. Traditionally a slur, the term has been reclaimed and should only be used to self identify or to refer to the way someone else has identified themselves, i.e., "She identifies as a dyke."

Femme: A person who is feminine of center in dress, attitude, and/or presentation. It is often, but not exclusively, used in a lesbian context. Often on a spectrum from butch (see Butch) to femme or stud (see Stud) to femme.

Folx: An alternative spelling to folks. The two words are pronounced the same way. Folx is viewed by some as a more inclusive version of the word folks, though both are gender-neutral ways of addressing a group of people. PFLAG National does not use folx because it is difficult for screen readers (for people with visual disabilities) to read.

FTM/F2M: An abbreviation of Female to Male; a transgender man.

FTX/F2X: A genderqueer or gender-expansive person assigned female at birth.

Gatekeeping: A broad term, not only used within the LGBTQ+ community, which describes the process by which an individual decides who does or does not belong to a certain community, group, or identity. For example, a gay man telling a questioning man that he has to have sex with another man before he can call himself gay is an example of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping, which can come from inside or outside the LGBTQ+ community should be avoided, as it is painful and invalidating to the recipient in either instance.

Gay: An term used to describe people who are emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender (e.g., gay man, gay people). In contemporary contexts, lesbian is often a preferred term for women, though many women use the term gay to describe themselves. People who are gay need not have had any sexual experience. Attraction and self-identification determines sexual orientation, not the gender or sexual orientation of one's partner. The term should not be used as an umbrella term for LGBTQ+ people, e.g. "the gay community," because it excludes other sexual orientations and genders. Avoid using gay in a disparaging manner, e.g. "that's so gay," as a synonym for bad.

Gayby: A person with one or more LGBTQ+ parent or caregiver. Typically, a term used for self identification only.

Gender: Broadly, gender is a set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate (see Social Construction Theory).



Gender-Affirming Surgery (GAS): Surgical procedures that can help people adjust their bodies to match their innate gender identity more closely. Used interchangeably with gender affirmation, gender confirmation, and gender-confirming surgery. Not every transgender person will desire or have resources for gender-affirming surgery. Use this term in place of the older term sex change. Also sometimes referred to as gender reassignment surgery, genital reconstruction surgery, or medical transition. (See [Top Surgery](#) and [Bottom Surgery](#)).

Gender Binary: The disproven concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and that everyone must be one or the other. Also often misused to assert that gender is biologically determined. This concept also reinforces the idea that men and women are opposites and have different roles in society (see [Gender Roles](#)).

Gender Dysphoria: The distress caused when a person's assigned sex at birth and assumed gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term "...is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

Gender Euphoria: A euphoric feeling often experienced when one's gender is recognized and respected by others, when one's body aligns with one's gender, or when one expresses themselves in accordance with their gender. Focusing on gender euphoria instead of gender dysphoria shifts focus towards the positive aspects of being transgender or gender expansive.

Gender Expansive: An umbrella term sometimes used to describe people who expand notions of gender expression and identity beyond perceived or expected societal gender norms. Some gender-expansive individuals identify as a mix of genders, some identify more binarily as a man or a woman, and some identify as no gender (see [agender](#)).

Gender-expansive people might feel that they exist among genders, as on a spectrum, or beyond the notion of the man/woman binary paradigm. Sometimes gender-expansive people use gender-neutral pronouns (see [Pronouns](#)), but people can exist as any gender while using any pronouns. They may or may not be comfortable with their bodies as they are, regardless of how they express their gender.

Gender Expression: The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may incorporate both masculine and feminine expressions—or neither—through androgynous expressions. An individual's gender expression does not automatically imply one's gender identity. All people have gender expressions.

Genderfluid: Describes a person who does not consistently adhere to one fixed gender and who may move among genders.

Gender Identity: A person's deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender (see [Gender](#)). Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. People become aware of their gender identity at many different stages of life, from as early as 18 months and into adulthood. According to Gender Spectrum, one study showed that "...the average age of self-realization for the child that they were transgender or non-binary was 7.9 years old, but the average age when they disclosed their understanding of their gender was 15.5 years old." Gender identity is a separate concept from sexuality (see [Sexual Orientation](#)) and gender expression (see [Gender Expression](#)).



Gender Neutral: Not gendered. Can refer to language (including pronouns and salutations/titles—see Gender-neutral salutations or titles), spaces (like bathrooms), or other aspects of society (like colors or occupations). Gender neutral is not a term to describe people (see Gender Expansive). A person who experiences no gender may be agender (see Agender) or neutrois (see Neutrois).

Gender-Neutral Salutations or Titles: A salutation or title that does not specify the gender of the addressee in a formal communication or introduction. Also used for persons who do not identify as a binary gender, addressing someone where the gender is unknown, or if the correspondence-sender is unsure of the gender of the person to whom the correspondence is being sent. Mx. (pronounced mix) and M. are the most commonly used gender-neutral salutations (e.g. “Dear Mx. Smith...” or “Hello M. Moore...”). Generally, M. is used when the gender is unknown, and Mx. is used when the person uses that prefix.

Gender Nonconforming (GNC): A term for those who do not follow gender stereotypes. Often an umbrella for nonbinary genders (see TGNC). Though fairly uncommon, some people view the term as derogatory, so they may use other terms including gender expansive, differently gendered, gender creative, gender variant, genderqueer, nonbinary, agender, genderfluid, gender neutral, bigender, androgynous, or gender diverse. PFLAG National uses the term gender expansive. It is important to respect and use the terms people use for themselves, regardless of any prior associations or ideas about those terms.

Gender Performance Theory: Coined by Judith Butler, gender performance theory is the concept that people do not have inherent genders based on their biological sex. According to this theory, people continually perform their genders, instead of relying on their assigned sexes to determine their genders for them.

Genderqueer: Refers to individuals who blur preconceived boundaries of gender in relation to the gender binary (See Gender Binary); they can also reject commonly held ideas of static gender identities. Sometimes used as an umbrella term in much the same way that the term queer is used, but only refers to gender, and thus should only be used when self-identifying or quoting someone who uses the term genderqueer for themselves.

Gender Roles: The strict set of societal beliefs that dictate the so-called acceptable behaviors for people of different genders, usually binary in nature. Many people find these to be restrictive and harmful, as they reinforce the gender binary (see Gender Binary).

Gender Socialization: A process that influences and teaches an individual how to behave as a man or a woman, based on culturally defined gender roles (see Gender Roles). Parents, teachers, peers, media, and faith traditions are some of the many agents of gender socialization. Gender socialization looks very different across cultures, both inside and outside of the U.S. It is heavily impacted by other intersecting identities (see Intersectionality).

Gender Spectrum: The concept that gender exists beyond a simple man/woman binary model (see Gender Binary), but instead exists on a continuum. Some people fall towards more masculine or feminine aspects, some people move fluidly along the spectrum, and some exist off the spectrum entirely.

Gender Variant: A term often used by the medical community to describe individuals who dress, behave, or express themselves in a way that does not conform to dominant gender norms (see Gender Expansive). People outside the medical community tend to avoid this term because it suggests that these identities are abnormal, preferring terms such as gender expansive.



Hermaphrodite: An offensive term for someone who is intersex (see [Intersex](#)). The term has valid uses within academic circles relating to the study of non-human animals and plants but should not be used to describe humans.

Heteroflexible: A straight person who is most often attracted to people of a different gender from themselves but sometimes experiences attraction to people of the same gender as them. It is distinct from bisexuality. The term can have negative connotations of experimentation or indecision (see [Bi-curious](#)).

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. This includes the often implicitly held idea that heterosexuality is the norm and that other sexualities are “different” or “abnormal.”

Heterosexual: Refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to a person of a different gender. Also referred to as straight.

Homoflexible: A gay person who is most often attracted to people of the same gender as themselves but sometimes experience attraction to people of other genders or engage in sexual behavior with people of different genders from their own. It is distinct from bisexuality (see [Bisexual](#)).

Homophobia: Animosity, hatred, or dislike of LGBTQ+ people that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Homophobia often stems from lack of knowledge about LGBTQ+ people and the issues they face and can sometimes be alleviated with education and support. PFLAG does not use this term as it frequently prevents such educational dialogue. Related to biphobia (see [Biphobia](#)) and transphobia (see [Transphobia](#)).

Homosexual: A term to describe gay, lesbian, or queer people which may be offensive depending on the speaker. Originally used as a scientific or clinical term to describe LGBTQ+ people, the word has been reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community and may be colloquially used by an LGBTQ+ person to reference themselves or another member of the community. Non-LGBTQ+ people should avoid using the term.

Hormone Blockers (also referred to as **Puberty Blockers**): Medical treatment which allows young trans and gender-expansive people to prevent the potentially negative outcomes of going through a puberty that does not match their gender identity.

House-Ballroom Community: The underground subculture consisting of mainly Black and Latinx members of the LGBTQ+ community who ‘walk’ to earn recognition and awards within their community. ‘Houses’ are chosen families that individuals compete with and often live with (see [Chosen Family](#)). These categories represent the barriers that Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC) face in accessing formal employment, housing, and public services.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): Treatment which allows trans and gender-expansive people to medically transition or feel more at home in their bodies (see [Gender-Affirming Surgery](#) and [Transition](#)). Those taking testosterone (masculinizing hormones) may grow more facial/body hair and notice their voices deepening. Those taking estrogen (feminizing hormones) may see some breast growth and decreased libido. Many intersex people take HRT to balance the naturally occurring levels of estrogen and testosterone in their bodies. Benefits of such therapy can include improved mental and physical wellness, and reduced anxiety and dysphoria, for those who experience it.

Hyperfemininity: Term for the exaggeration of stereotypically female behavior, based on so-called gender roles (see [Gender Roles](#)). Hyperfeminine behavior is often expected of trans women in order to be seen as “real” women.



Hypermasculinity: Term for the exaggeration of stereotypically male behavior, based on so-called gender roles (see Gender Roles). Hypermasculine behavior is often expected of trans men in order to be seen as “real” men. Heterosexual men may display hypermasculine behaviors to “prove” that they are not gay, even though gay men have many understandings of their own masculinity.

Intersectionality: Coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, this term refers to the overlap of social categorizations or identities such as race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, geography, and class which exist in an individual or group of people that can contribute to discrimination or disadvantage.

Intersex: Intersex is the current term used to refer to people who are biologically between the medically expected definitions of male and female. This can be through variations in hormones, chromosomes, internal or external genitalia, or any combination of any or all primary and/or secondary sex characteristics. While many intersex people are noticed as intersex at birth, many are not. As intersex is about biological sex, it is distinct from gender identity and sexual orientation. An intersex person can be of any gender identity and can also be of any sexual orientation and any romantic orientation. The Intersex Society of North America opposes the practice of genital mutilation on infants and children who are intersex, as does PFLAG National [Read our policy statement]. Formerly, the medical terms hermaphrodite and pseudohermaphrodite were used; these terms are now considered neither acceptable nor scientifically accurate.

Kinsey Scale: A scale developed in the 1940s by Alfred Kinsey which places an individual’s sexual orientation on a spectrum from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual). The scale included the measurement “X” which indicated an absence of sexual behavior. The scale was an early recognition of fluid sexual orientation and was credited with challenging the heterosexual/homosexual binary.

Latinx: (Pronounced Latin-ex or la-TEEN-ex) An inclusive, gender-neutral term--sometimes used in place of the gendered, binary terms Latino or Latina--used to describe a person of Latin-American origin or descent. While many in the progressive space use this term, 2019 Pew research shows that, while one-in-four U.S. Hispanics have heard the term, only 23% of U.S. adults who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino have heard the term, and just 3% say they use it to describe themselves .

Lesbian: Refers to a woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women. People who are lesbians need not have had any sexual experience: Attraction and self-identification determines orientation, not the gender or sexual orientation of one’s partner.

LGBTQ+: An acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, sometimes stated as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) or, historically, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). The addition of the Q for queer is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term queer focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed definition (see Queer). The Q can also stand for questioning, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The “+” represents those who are part of the community, but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity.

Lifestyle: A previously used and offensive term used to describe LGBTQ+ people’s sexual orientation and gender expression/identity as a “choice.”

Lived Experience: To value the personal experiences of individuals as much as quantitative data. For example, believing narratives of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people persisting even if they counter larger narratives of acceptance. The concept of lived experience as a criterion on meaning was coined by Patricia Hill Collins.



Misgender: To refer to someone using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, which does not correctly reflect their gender. This may be unintentional and without ill intent or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering has a harmful impact.

Misogynoir: A term coined by queer Black feminist Moya Bailey to describe misogyny directed towards Black women where race and gender both play roles in bias.

Mispronoun: Similar to misgendering (see Misgender), mispronouncing is to refer to a person with the incorrect pronouns. This term is less common than misgendering, as pronouns are often an important aspect of people's genders. This may be unintentional and without ill intent, or can be a maliciously employed expression of bias. Regardless of intent, mispronouncing has a harmful impact.

MLM: Men Loving Men, refers to gay, bisexual, pansexual or otherwise same-gender loving men. Used most commonly within the Black community, the term is more often written than used in conversation.

Monogamous: A term referring to individuals who are intimate or involved romantically with one person at a time.

Monolith: Refers to a large single upright block of stone, formally, and a group or organization with unified and unchanging attributes, informally. In context, the term monolith is used to show that "[group of people] are not a monolith." It means that members of a group have varying experiences, and the voice of one member of the group should not be taken as a representation of the experiences of all members of that group.

Monosexism: The opinion that being attracted to one gender is superior to being attracted to multiple genders.

Monosexual: People who only experience attraction to one gender. Examples of monosexual groups include gay men, lesbians, and straight people.

MSM: Men Who Have Sex with Men. Reports on STIs and public health commonly use this term, although those who identify as MSM might or might not identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. This designation often allows discrimination against LGBTQ+ men, for example in blood donation.

MTF/M2F: A trans woman/trans feminine person assigned male at birth.

MTX/M2X: A genderqueer or gender-expansive person assigned male at birth.

Nibling: A gender-neutral term for niece/nephew.

Nonbinary: Refers to people who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer (see Genderqueer), genderfluid (see Genderfluid), gender nonconforming (see Gender Nonconforming), gender diverse, or gender expansive. It can also be combined with other descriptors e.g. nonbinary woman or transmasculine nonbinary. Language is imperfect, so it's important to trust and respect the words that nonbinary people use to describe their genders and experiences. Nonbinary people may understand their identity as falling under the transgender umbrella, and may thus be transgender as well. Sometimes abbreviated as NB or Enby, the term NB has historically been used to mean non-Black, so those referring to non-binary people should avoid using NB.

Nonbinary Lesbian: A term to describe a nonbinary person whose primary romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction is to women. Lesbianism has historically included people of varying gender expressions (see Butch, Stud and Femme) and people with varying relationships to the lesbian community (before bisexual and pansexual came into common use, any woman who felt romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction to women was considered a lesbian). This combination of terms came about due to the lack of a specific term for a nonbinary person who is only attracted to one gender.



Omnisexual: Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people of any gender, and who notice their partner's gender. This term differs from pansexual (see Pansexual), in that people who are pansexual are also emotionally, romantically, and physically attracted to people of all genders, but do not notice their partner's gender.

Opposite Sex: Inaccurate descriptor of gender, implying that there are only two genders that oppose one another. Also an inaccurate descriptor of sex, as biological sexes are also not opposites (see Intersex). Better terms include different gender or AMAB/AFAB, depending on context.

Out: A term which describes people who openly self-identify as LGBTQ+ in their private, public, and/or professional lives. There are many states of being out; individuals can be out only to themselves, close friends, or everyone. Some transgender people prefer to use the term disclose (see Disclosure).

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

Passing: With sexuality, the act of presenting as straight (see Beard). With gender, the act of presenting as cisgender or gender-typical, which is generally accomplished through conforming to gender roles (see Gender Roles). People may try to pass in anti-LGBTQ+ environments to ensure their safety. People who pass as straight or cis have the choice to either talk about their LGBTQ+ experience or to "fit in" to a cis- and hetero-normative world. Passing is not required for LGBTQ+ people to deserve respect and love.

Panromantic: Refers to someone who is romantically attracted to people of all genders, but does not notice their partner's gender. Panromantics will tend to feel that their partner's sex and/or gender does little to define their relationship.

Pansexual: Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders. People who are pansexual need not have had any sexual experience: It is the attraction and self-identification that determine the orientation. Pansexuality and bisexuality are different; pansexuality includes all genders equally, whereas bisexuality can favor some genders over others (see Bisexual).

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP): This is an emergency prescription antiretroviral medication to be taken within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV. Possible exposure includes during sex, sharing needles to inject drugs, or if you have been sexually assaulted. Though PEP is highly effective in preventing HIV, it should not be taken in place of other HIV prevention measures, such as taking PrEP (see PrEP) or practicing safe sex.

Polyamorous: A term used to describe people who have the desire for multiple consenting intimate relationships at the same time. Also referred to as "ethically non-monogamous," "polya" or "polyam;" there is a movement away from shortening polyamorous to "poly" since poly already means Polynesian. Consent and transparency are key components of polyamorous relationships.

Positive: Shorthand for being HIV+. In context, "I'm positive" is a disclosure of a person's HIV status. It is never appropriate to share a person's HIV status without their explicit consent. Refrain from discussing a person's HIV status unless they bring up the topic.



Pre-, Post-, or Non-Operative (or -Op): The terms used to describe the surgery status of a transgender person. Pre-Op means that a person has not had gender-affirming surgery (See Gender-Affirming Surgery) and may or may not plan to. Post-Op means that an individual has had gender-affirming surgery. Non-Op means that a person does not plan to have gender-affirming surgery. The choice to have gender-affirming surgery is highly personal and does not affect the validity of a person's gender identity. Refrain from discussing a trans person's surgical history or future unless they bring up the topic.

Preference: A preference is a specific set of desires people have in romantic, emotional and/or sexual partners. People's sexual orientations are not preferences, but they can have preferences (e.g. having a "type") in the people they become involved with. Preferences can be logistical (e.g. lives within a certain distance, not looking for a relationship) and interest based (e.g. likes to stay in, enjoys long walks on the beach). They can also be influenced by personal and systemic prejudices (e.g. not considering people whose gender expressions do not conform to conventional standards of that gender, people whose bodies are not conventionally attractive, or people with other marginalized identities). People can have their own preferences but should consider examining why they hold these preferences in order to make sure they are not reproducing inequalities.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): A prescription medication those at higher risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. Though PrEP is highly effective in preventing HIV, it should not be taken in place of other HIV prevention measures, such practicing safe sex and not sharing drug-related injection equipment.

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. Pronouns are sometimes called Personal Gender Pronouns, or PGPs. For those who use pronouns--and not all people do--they are not preferred, they are essential.

PTP: Acronym for Person with a Transgender Parent (see Transpawn)

QTPOC: Acronym for Queer and Trans People of Color. This term emphasizes the intersections (see Intersectionality) of race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Queer: A term used by some LGBTQ+ people to describe themselves and/or their community. Reclaimed from its earlier negative use—and valued by some for its defiance—the term is also considered by some to be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. Traditionally a negative or pejorative term for people who are LGBTQ+, some people within the community dislike the term. Due to its varying meanings, use this word only when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as queer (i.e. "My cousin identifies as queer" or "My cousin is a queer person").

Queerbaiting: A marketing technique in which media creators or executives allude to the presence of LGBTQ+ characters or relationships within their content, but fail to include actual representation so as not to lose non-LGBTQ+ viewers.

Queerspawn: A person with one or more LGBTQ+ parent or caregiver. Typically a term used for self-identification.

Questioning: Describes those who are in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof. Questioning people can be of any age, so for many reasons, this may happen later in life. Questioning is a profoundly important process, and one that does not imply that someone is choosing to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer.



Same-Gender Loving (SGL): A term coined by Cleo Manago, and sometimes used by some members of the Black community or people of African descent, to express sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.

Sapphic: Drawn from the Greek lesbian poet Sappho's name, a term used to refer to lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or otherwise same-gender loving (see SGL) women.

Sexual Orientation: Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people or no people (see Asexual). While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does not define one's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one. Typically, it is attraction that helps determine orientation.

Sex Worker: Abbreviated as SWer. A person who engages in sexual activity for payment. Often considered a more respectful term than prostitute or hooker. SWERF is an acronym for Sex Worker Exclusionary Radical Feminist (pronounced "swurf"). SWERFs exclude sex workers from feminist organizations with the belief that sex work is not work.

Social Construction Theory: The idea that many of the institutions, expectations, and identities that we consider natural have been created and shaped by societies and people who came before us. Things that are socially constructed still have very real influences and consequences, even if they are not based in an inherent truth. Social constructs can be reconstructed in order to better fit the society and culture they govern.

SOGI: Acronym for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It is typically used as a shorthand in writing and is rarely pronounced out loud.

Stealth: A term used to describe transgender or gender-expansive individuals who do not disclose their gender identity in their public or private lives (or certain aspects of their public and private lives). For example, a person might go stealth in a job interview. Increasingly considered offensive by some, as to them it implies an element of deception. Some use the phrase maintaining privacy instead, while others use both terms interchangeably. Additionally, passing is an alternative term which, for some, has fewer negative connotations.

Stud: A term for Black lesbians who take on a more butch (see Butch) or masculine role. Also known as ag/aggressive or butch. This term is not appropriate for non-Black lesbians to use. Often on a spectrum from butch to femme (see Femme) or stud to femme.

Survival Sex: Term for sexual activity performed in exchange for goods or services. Also known as transactional sex. Since LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be denied fair housing and employment, some may rely on sex to get them a place to sleep or the money they need.

TERF: Acronym for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist (pronounced "turf"). The term TERF originated online in 2008 from trans inclusive cisgender radical feminist blogger Viv Smythe; however exclusion of trans people--especially trans women--from feminist organizing spaces has been gaining traction since the 1970s. TERFs primarily believe that trans women are men trying to invade women's spaces, and work aggressively to deny the existence and identity of transgender people.

TGNC: Initialism for trans and gender nonconforming. An umbrella term for people who are not cisgender. It is pronounced T-G-N-C, but is more commonly written than spoken.

Top Surgery: Surgery performed on an individual's chest/breasts as a part of gender-affirming surgery. (See Gender-Affirming Surgery.) For AFAB people, this can be a chest reduction or a full removal. For AMAB people, this can be an increase in chest size using saline or silicone.



Trans-antagonistic: Active hostility towards trans and gender-expansive people with the goal of enacting harm.

Trancestors: An informal term for trans elders, coming from a combination of the words “transgender” and “ancestors.” The term highlights the fact that many trans people do not get to grow old, and celebrates intergenerational relationships. Trancestors can be well-known within the movement or personal to a community, filling a parent or grandparent-like role (see Chosen Family). Trancestors can make an impact during and after their lives, and prove that there is a long history of transgender people throughout the world.

Transfeminine: An AMAB person who is closer to femininity than masculinity but is not a binary woman. Often abbreviated to transfem or transfemme.

Transgender: Often shortened to trans, from the Latin prefix for “on a different side as.” A term describing a person’s gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically to match their gender identity. This word is also used as an umbrella term to describe groups of people who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression—such groups include, but are not limited to, people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, and androgynous. See above for common acronyms and terms including female to male (or FTM), male to female (or MTF), assigned male at birth (or AMAB), assigned female at birth (or AFAB), nonbinary, and gender-expansive. Trans is often considered more inclusive than transgender because it includes transgender, transsexual, transmasculine, transfem, and those who simply use the word trans.

Transmasculine: An AFAB person who is closer to masculinity than femininity but is not a binary man. Often abbreviated to transmasculine.

Transmedicalism: Also known as transmedicalism, transmedicalists are people, both trans and cisgender, who believe gender dysphoria and the desire to medically transition are criteria to being legitimately trans.

Transmisogyny: Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive women that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.

Transmisogynoir: Misogyny directed against trans and gender-expansive Black women, that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias.

Transphobia: Animosity, hatred, or dislike of trans and gender-expansive people that often manifests itself in the form of prejudice and bias. Transphobia often stems from lack of knowledge about transgender people and the issues they face and can be alleviated with education and support (see Trans-antagonistic for those whose aversion manifests in active oppression). PFLAG does not use this term as it frequently prevents such educational dialogue. Related to biphobia (see Biphobia) and homophobia (see Homophobia).

Transition: A term used to refer to the process—social, legal, and/or medical—one goes through to affirm one’s gender identity. This may, but does not always, include taking hormones; having surgeries; and changing names, pronouns, identification documents, and more. Many individuals choose not to or are unable to transition for a wide range of reasons both within and beyond their control. The validity of an individual’s gender identity does not depend on any social, legal, and/or medical transition; the self-identification itself is what validates the gender identity.



Transpawn: A person with one or more transgender or non-binary parent or caregiver. Typically, a term used for self identification only.

Transsexual: A term which refers to people who consider or use medical interventions such as hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgeries, also called sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or pursue medical interventions as part of the process of expressing their gender. A less frequently used—and sometimes misunderstood—term (considered by some to be outdated or possibly offensive, and others to be uniquely applicable to them). Some transsexual people do not identify as transgender and vice versa. Like the term queer, due to its varying meanings, use this term only when self-identifying or quoting someone who self-identifies as transsexual.

Two-Spirit: A term used within some American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. The term, created in 1990 by a group of AI/AN activists at an annual Native LGBTQ conference, encompasses sexual, cultural, gender, and spiritual identities, and provides unifying, positive, and encouraging language that emphasizes reconnecting to tribal traditions. Non-indigenous people should not use this term. (With thanks to Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board [NPAIHB].)

T4T: Abbreviation of Trans 4 Trans. A trans or gender-expansive person who is only interested in emotional, romantic, intimate, and/or sexual partnerships with other trans people. It centers the beauty of being trans by celebrating the diversity of trans experience. T4T relationships allow trans people space from having to explain their genders or experiences to cisgender partners.

Voguing: A highly stylized, modern, street-style dance, stemming from New York City ballroom culture [particularly in neighborhoods-of-color in Harlem and the Bronx] in the late 1980s. Vogue was created and has been nurtured by Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ people inspired by Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics, as well as poses found in Vogue Magazine.

WLW: Women Loving Women, refers to lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or otherwise same-gender loving women (pronounced “W-L-W” or “wuh-luh-wuh”). Often used in communities of color, this specification grew from the historical notion that any woman who had emotional, romantic, intimate, and/or sexual partnerships with women as lesbians. As more understandings of sexuality have come to light, WLW has largely replaced lesbian as a unifying term to describe these women.

WSW: An abbreviation for Women Who Have Sex with Women. Reports on STIs and in public health commonly use this term, although those who identify as WSW may or may not identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.



Thank you

What questions do you have?

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