



Glossary of LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) Definitions

LGBTQIA Life:

In the Closet – to be “in the closet” means to hide one’s homosexual, bisexual or gender identity in order to keep a job, a housing situation, friends, or in some other way to survive. Many LGBTQIA people are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others.

Coming Out – to “come out” or to publicly declare and affirm one’s LGBTQIA identity, sometimes to one person in conversation, sometimes by an act that places one in the public eye. It is not a single event but instead a life-long process. In each new situation, a LGBTQIA person must decide whether or not to come out: accepting and/or disclosing to others that one is LGBTQIA. For a transgender person coming out may involve gender transition, which involves physical changes requiring the transgender person to disclose their intentions to all family, work and other contacts.

Family of Choice – persons forming an individual’s social, emotional and practical support network and often fulfilling the functions of blood relations. Many LGBTQIA people are rejected when their families learn of their sexual orientation or gender identity, or they may remain “closeted” to biological relatives. In such cases, it is their partner/significant other and close friends who will be called on in times of illness or personal crisis.

Family of Origin – biological family, or the family in which one was raised. These individuals may or may not be part of a LGBTQIA person’s support system.

Gender Awareness:

Cisgender – a person whose current gender identity matches the sex or gender they were assigned at birth.

Crossdresser – person who dresses as another gender from the one they were assigned at birth.

F2M/FTM (Female to Male) – a person who was female-bodied at birth and who identifies as a male, lives as a male, identifies as masculine or who is otherwise transitioning from female to male in some aspect of their lives.

Gender Expression – how a person represents or expresses one’s gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.

Gender Identity – an individual’s internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Genderqueer – a term used by some people who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female.

Gender Transition – The process of changing the physical body to match one’s true gender identity. Usually done under the guidance of counselors and medical specialists trained in gender transition and following the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care. May include a period of time living in the true gender (Real Life Experience.), hormone therapy, electrolysis (MtF), speech therapy, along with surgery (GRS/SRS).

Intersex/Intersexual – a person whose sex chromosomes, genitalia, and/or secondary sex characteristics are determined to be neither exclusively male nor female. “Hermaphrodite” is an outdated and derogatory term for intersex community.

M2F/MTF (Male to Female) – a person who was male-bodied at birth and who identifies as female, lives as a female, identifies as feminine or who is otherwise transitioning from male to female in some aspect of their lives.

Sex/Gender/Genital Reassignment/Reconstruction Surgery (SRS/GRS) – Permanent surgical refashioning of genitalia to resemble the genitalia of the desired gender. Sought to attain congruence between one’s body and one’s gender identity. The commonly used terms “sex change” or “sex change operation” are considered factually inaccurate.

Transgender – an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth, including but not limited to transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous people, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming people. Transgender is a broad term and is good for cisgender people to use. “Trans” is shorthand for “transgender.”

Transsexual – a term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth. Often transsexual people alter or wish to alter their bodies through hormones or surgery in order to make it match their gender identity.

Sexual Identity:

Sexual Orientation – an enduring pattern of a person’s emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions for members of the same sex or different sex or both.

Asexual – a person who does not experience sexual attraction. Unlike celibacy, which people choose, asexuality is an intrinsic part of who someone is. Asexual people have the same emotional needs as everybody else and are just as capable of forming intimate relationships.

Bisexual – a person who has the potential to be emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to people of the same sex/gender and/or other sex/genders.

Gay – a homosexual person, often used to describe males but may be used to describe females as well. A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to members of the same sex.

Heterosexual – a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to members of the other sex.

Homosexual – a clinical term that originated in the late 1800s to describe a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to members of the same sex. Some avoid using the word because it contains the base word “sex.” An outdated term and should not be used to describe gay community members.

Lesbian – a woman who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to members of the same sex.

Pansexual – a person who has the potential to be emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to people of any sex or gender identity.

Queer – a term used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual and, often also transgender people. Some use queer as an alternative to “gay” in an effort to be more inclusive, since the term does not convey a sense of gender. Depending on the user, the term has either a derogatory or an affirming connotation, as many have sought to reclaim the term that was once widely used in a negative way. The term may also refer to one’s gender identity, such as one who identifies as genderqueer.

Discrimination:

Biphobia – a fear of bisexual people or fear of ambiguous sexual behavior that doesn’t fit the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Includes the beliefs that bisexuals don’t exist, are afraid to come out, or are just confused. The extreme behavior of biphobia is violence against bi people and the lack of bi inclusiveness.

Heterosexism – the assumption or belief that everyone is heterosexual, and, if not, they should be. The systematic oppression of LGBTQIA people, including prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory practices against LGBTQIA people.

Homophobia – a hatred or fear of gays and lesbians and the acts of discrimination based on those feelings. The extreme behavior of homophobia is violence against gays and lesbians, disapproval and irrational fear towards gays and lesbians and based on myths and cultural heterosexism.

Transphobia – a fear of transgender people and the acts of discrimination based on those feelings. The fear enforces sexism and heterosexism. The extreme behavior of transphobia is violence against transgender people, disapproval and irrational fear towards people who are transgender or transitioning and based on myths and cultural heterosexism.



Internet Resources: Boston & New England

SpeakOUT

www.speakoutboston.org

The first LGBTQIA speakers bureau in the nation! SpeakOUT raises awareness about LGBTQIA people by sending volunteer speakers to schools, colleges, businesses, religious classes, and community organizations to share their lives and experiences—openly and honestly—to dispel stereotypes and to let other members of the LGBTQIA community know they're not alone.

AVEN: Asexual Visibility & Education Network

www.asexuality.org

AVEN hosts the world's largest online asexual community as well as a large archive of resources on asexuality. AVEN strives to create open, honest discussion about asexuality among sexual and asexual people alike.

Bay Windows

www.baywindows.com

Bay Windows is a weekly newspaper and website that serves the LGBTQ community in New England.

Bisexual Resource Center

www.biresource.net

The BRC is the oldest national bisexual organization in the U.S that advocates for bisexual visibility and raises awareness about bisexuality throughout the LGBTQ and straight communities. The BRC sponsors a variety of support and social groups for the Boston bi community.

Boston Pride

www.bostonpride.org

Boston Pride produces events and activities such as to achieve inclusivity, equality, respect, and awareness in Greater Boston and beyond. Organizes Youth Pride in May and Boston Pride in June.

EDGE Boston

www.edgeboston.com

EDGE is a group of writers, artists and promoters dedicated to the goal of presenting news and information to the LGBTQIA community.

Fenway Community Health

www.fenwayhealth.org

For more than 35 years, Fenway Community Health has been working to improve the physical and mental health of our community, especially those who are traditionally underserved like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, women, those living with HIV/AIDS, and people from communities of color.

GLAD

www.glad.org

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, HIV status and gender identity and expression.

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition

www.masstpc.org

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) is dedicated to ending discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. MTPC educates the public, lobby state and local government, encourage political activism, and empower community members through collective action.

The Rainbow Times

www.therainbowtimesmass.com

As a New England LGBTQ newspaper founded in 2006–*The Rainbow Times* is a liaison that increases awareness of LGBT issues and serves as a vehicle to unify and strengthen the communities throughout the New England region while providing quality news to its diverse readers.

Youth Resources:

PFLAG

www.pflag.org/education/schools.html

Provides resources for LGBTQIA youth and their families and friends.

Gay Youth Resource

www.youthresource.com/

A website by and for LGBTQIA youth - taking a holistic approach to exploring sexual health and issues of concern.

Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Youth

www.bagly.org/

BAGLY provides weekly and monthly social activities and special events for people ages 22 and under. These activities provide an opportunity for youth to socialize, have fun and develop a sense of personal and community identity. BAGLY has a Halloween Dance,

Winter Ball, and the world's first and largest LGBT Prom. BAGLY also has HIV, STD, Drugs, and Alcohol education and prevention programs in place.

GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network)

www.glsen.org

The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. The website includes contacts for local chapters and information about starting GSAs (Gay Straight Alliances) in schools.

LGBTQIA Elders:

LGBT Aging Project (Fenway Health)

www.lgbtagingproject.org

The mission of the LGBT Aging Project is to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender elders have equal access to the life-prolonging benefits, protections, services and institutions that their heterosexual neighbors take for granted.

Ethos

www.ethocare.org

Ethos is dedicated to promoting independence, dignity and well-being among the elderly and disabled through quality, affordable, and culturally-appropriate home and community-based care.

Boston Prime Timers

www.bostonprimetimers.org

Boston Prime Timers provides mature gay and bisexual men, and their friends, with opportunities to come together in a supportive atmosphere to enjoy social, educational, and recreational activities.

Stonewall Communities

www.stonewallseniors.com

Stonewall Communities is a non-profit organization that was created to better understand and advocate for the needs of older GLBT people and their friends. We strive to support and enhance the well-being and independence of GLBT in their choice to age at home or in a Stonewall community. We are committed to creating community among older GLBT individuals by creating residential, educational, social and supportive opportunities.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

www.umb.edu/olli

OLLI's mission is to foster accessible lifelong learning, individual growth, and social connection for mature learners age 50+ by providing stimulating opportunities to enrich the intellectual, social, and cultural lives of members, regardless of educational background.