

**Ally**

A non-lesbian, gay man or bisexual whose attitudes and behaviors are anti-heterosexist in perspective and who works towards combating homophobia and heterosexism, both on a personal and institutional level.

**Bisexual**

A person who has a range of emotional, social and psychological commitment and responses to members of both genders. A person who is sexually attracted to both men and women, or to a set of qualities that do not necessarily line up with biological sex, public gender or social life.

**Come Out**

To declare to oneself and/or publicly affirm one's homosexual 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 lifelong process. In each new situation, a gay man or lesbian must decide whether or not to come out.

**Crossdresser**

Formerly called transvestites. Typically men (mostly heterosexual) who sometimes wear opposite-gender clothing for personal reasons. There are some women who crossdress also.

**Dyke**

A derogatory slur for lesbians. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride.

**Fag(got)**

A derogatory slur for gay men. Reclaimed by some as a term of pride. Derived from the word faggot (literally "small bundle of sticks"), an allusion to the Inquisition-era practice of burning people at the stake for suspected homosexual practices.

**FTM**

Female-to-male (FTM): A person born or assigned at birth as biologically female, who identifies as a male and who takes the sex, gender, and identity of a male through dress, mannerisms, behavior, hormone therapy, and/or surgery.

**Gay**

While "gay" is sometimes used to refer to both men and women, it generally refers to men. Sometimes used derogatorily (i.e. "That's so gay!")

**Gender**

The social construction of masculinity and femininity in a specific culture in time. It involves gender assignment (the gender designation of someone at birth), gender roles (the expectations imposed on someone based on their gender), gender attribution (how others perceive someone's gender), and gender identity (how someone defines their own gender).

## **Gender Identity**

The gender that a person sees themselves as. This can include refusing to label oneself with a gender. Gender identity is also often conflated with sexual orientation, but this is inaccurate. Gender identity does not cause sexual orientation. For example, a masculine woman is not necessarily a lesbian.

## **Heterosexism**

The belief in the superiority of heterosexuality that is supported by the cultural and institutional practices of society. Also, the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that heterosexuality is right, correct and normal.

## **Heterosexual**

A person whose sexual orientation is toward members of the opposite gender; a person who has emotional, social, psychological and physical commitment and responses to members of the opposite gender.

## **Heterosexual Privilege**

The benefits granted automatically to heterosexual people that are denied to gay men and lesbians.

## **Homophobia**

A fear and hatred of gays, lesbians and bisexuals based on a lack of knowledge and cultural conditioning. It is also manifested as a fear of being perceived as lesbian, gay or bisexual, the fear of one's own attraction for members of the same gender, or the fear of being gay, lesbian or bisexual.

## **Homosexual**

A clinical term for people having emotional, physical, and sexual responses primarily to members of the same gender. Many gays, lesbians, and bisexuals find this term offensive because it is a clinical term assigned to them by others.

## **The “Equal Sign” Logo (Human Rights Campaign)**

As America's largest gay and lesbian organization, the Human Rights Campaign provides a national voice on gay and lesbian issues. The Human Rights Campaign effectively lobbies Congress; mobilizes grassroots action in diverse communities; invests strategically to elect a fair-minded Congress; and increases public understanding through innovative education and communication strategies.



## **In the Closet**

To be “in the closet” means to hide one's identity in order to keep a job, a housing situation, friends, or in some other way to survive. Many LGBTQ individuals are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others.

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### **Interlocking Symbols**

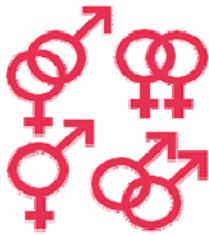
A double male symbol represents gay men.

A double female symbol represents lesbians.

A single female symbol and a single male symbol represents heterosexuals.

A male and female symbol on the same ring, symbolizes the male and female parts inherent in one person, representing transgenders.

A double male symbol with a single female symbol (or double female symbol with a single male symbol) represents bisexuals (not shown).



### **Intersexed**

Formerly called hermaphrodites. People born with chromosomal and/or physiological anomalies, and/or ambiguous genitalia. Many are surgically “normalized” by their parents, which can result in the lack of sexual response in adulthood.

### **The Lambda**

Chosen by the Gay Activist Alliance in 1970 as the symbol of the gay movement, the lambda is the Greek letter L. The Greeks considered balance to be the constant adjustment necessary to keep opposing forces from overcoming each other. The hook at the bottom of the right leg of the lambda represents the action required to reach and maintain a balance. To the Spartans, the lambda meant unity. They felt that society should never infringe on anyone’s individuality and freedom. The Romans adopted the letter to represent “the light of knowledge shed into the darkness of ignorance.” Finally, in physics the symbol designates an energy change.



### **Lesbian**

A woman who has emotional, social, psychological and physical commitment and responses to other women. “Lesbian” is one of the oldest and most positive terms for gay women. Derived from the Greek Isle of Lesbos where the lesbian poet, Sappho, had a school in 400 B.C.

## **Lifestyle**

The way individuals live their lives, such as an urban or a rural lifestyle, an artistic lifestyle, an entrepreneurial lifestyle, a hedonistic lifestyle; not appropriately used to denote sexual orientation (just as there is no heterosexual lifestyle, there is no homosexual or gay lifestyle either); the phrase 'homosexual lifestyle' is often used by anti-gay groups to imply that sexual orientation is a matter of choice rather than of identity.

## **MTF**

Male-to-female (MTF): A person born or assigned at birth as biologically male, who self-identifies as female and who takes the sex, gender, and identity of a female through dress, mannerisms, behaviors, hormone therapy, and/or surgery.

## **Outing**

Disclosing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without permission (i.e. "He was outed at work".)

## **Partner or Significant Other**

Terms most appropriate to use when referring to a gay or lesbian's spousal equivalent. GLBT people may also use "girlfriend/boyfriend," "lover," "roommate," "life partner," "wife/husband," or other terms when referring to their partners.

## **The Pink Triangle**

During World War II, the Nazis interred gay men and lesbians as well as Jewish people, gypsies and others. Hitler revised Paragraph 175, a clause in German law prohibiting homosexual relations, to include same-sex thoughts, kissing, embracing, and gay sexual acts. In the concentration camps, each group was forced to wear an insignia to mark them as a member of a particular group—the pink triangle for gay men. Some have taken this very powerful reminder and incentive for change and have taken this symbol of discrimination and oppression into use. Since the 1940s, the pink triangle has become one of the most recognizable and powerful symbols for gay people and the oppression they have faced throughout Western history. The pink triangle was a commonly used insignia throughout the early gay liberation movements. It appears in photographs and film footage of early marches and demonstrations. It is a symbol of pride, resistance and solidarity. It reminds us of those who have suffered from homophobic violence and reminds us to continue to work for justice now.



## **Queer**

Once a derogatory term, the word "queer" has been embraced by the gay and lesbian community, and is

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used as an umbrella term for all sexual minorities. Use some caution, as many in the GLBT community consider it only appropriate that other GLBT people use the term.

### **Questioning**

Being unsure of one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity; feeling uncomfortable with or unwilling or unable to self-categorize within traditional labels such as gay, straight, male, female, etc.

### **The Rainbow Flag**

A recognized symbol of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. Use of the rainbow flag began in the 1970s primarily on the West Coast, where it could be seen waving in the wind during Gay Pride marches. Today, it is recognized throughout the U.S. and Europe as a symbol of gay and lesbian pride.



### **Sexual Orientation or Identity**

Emotional, physical, and/or sexual attraction to others, which may be toward the same sex (homosexual), the other sex (heterosexual), or both sexes (bisexual). Innate sexual attraction. In all instances, use this term instead of Sexual Preference.

### **Stonewall & Pride Celebrations**

On June 28, 1969, a routine raid on the Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street in New York City turned into a riot when patrons resisted. The patrons barricaded themselves in the bar. The riot escalated until reinforcements arrived. The riots continued for several evenings. This rebellion, begun by drag queens and bar patrons, marked the beginning of the modern gay and lesbian movement. Each June, Pride marches, rallies and celebrations are held throughout the nation commemorating Stonewall.

### **Transgender**

Transgender 1) An umbrella term that refers to people who transgress gender norms in various ways, including both homosexual and heterosexual transsexuals and transvestites. 2) Refers to persons whose core gender identity, their self-perception as male or female is different than their biological sex and who live full-time as the other sex. Their internal sense of self does not match their biological status.

### **Transsexual**

Transgender persons who opt to have their bodies surgically and hormonally reconstructed to match their gender identity.

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