

# Glossary of Terms

**Ally:** A heterosexual person whose attitudes and behaviors are anti-heterosexist, who is actively committed to educating themselves about heterosexism, and who is actively working against homophobia and heterosexism on various levels.

**Bi-phobia:** Term that is used to define fear and/or hatred of bisexual men and women.

**Bisexual:** A person who acknowledges their ability to feel attracted to, or engage in loving and sensual/sexual relationships with, people of both genders.

**Bi-gender:** Not to be confused with bisexuality, bi-gender refers to a person who feels comfortable identifying with both a masculine and feminine side.

**Coming Out:** A short version of the phrase "Coming out of the closet," which is a metaphor for disclosing one's sexual orientation to either themselves (often stated as "Coming out to themselves,") or to others.

**Dyke:** A term most often used in a negative way to describe lesbian women as "masculine." It has also been reclaimed by some in the lesbian community as a symbol of pride, strength and independence.

**Faggot:** Translating into "bundle of sticks," gays were described using this term when they were used, literally, as kindling for burning witches during the Spanish Inquisition. This term is almost always used negatively to denote "weakness" or "lack of masculinity" in men.

**Gay:** Term used to describe men who are attracted to men emotionally and physically in a positive way, but has also been used as an umbrella term for those who are not heterosexual.

**Gender:** Not necessarily related to biological sex, gender is a more fluid term that describes a continuum between masculine, feminine and androgynous.

**Heterosexism:** A system of attitudes, behaviors, cultural norms, and institutional practices that directly or indirectly subordinate lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people on the basis of their sexual orientation. Heterosexism is the prejudice that only heterosexuality is normal coupled with the social power to enforce that privilege on every level.

**Heterosexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to a member or members of the opposite sex.

**Homophobia:** The fear and/or hatred of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, or of same gender attractions within oneself. This also incorporates the fear of anything or anyone who deviates from traditional gender norms associated with one's biological sex.

**Homosexual:** A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted or committed to a member or members of the same sex.

**Internalized Homophobia:** The manifestation of homophobic myths and stereotypes within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. Products of internalized homophobia include self put-downs, putting down other members of the same community, living out stereotypical roles, and failing to confront heterosexism.

**Lesbian:** A term of pride for women who are attracted to women both emotionally and physically.

**LGBT:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

**Privilege:** A right that only some people have access to because of their social group membership.

**Queer:** A traditionally derogatory umbrella term for those who are not heterosexual, which denotes strangeness or freakishness. Some in the LGBT movement as a term of pride and empowerment have reclaimed this term.

**Right:** A resource that everyone has equal access to regardless of social group membership.

**Sex:** In this context, sex describes whether a person is biologically male, female or intersexual (hermaphroditic). A person's sex is not necessarily the same as a person's gender.

**Transsexual:** A person who transverses the boundary of sex they were given at birth-often with the use of hormones or surgery.

**Transgender:** (1) Everyone who challenges the boundaries of sex and gender. (2) Those who reassign the sex they were given at birth. (3) Those who express gender in a form considered inconsistent with their biological sex.