

LGBTIQ EXPLAINED: GENDER, SEX, SEXUALITY

L **G** **B** **T** **I** **Q**
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex Queer

LGBTIQ is used as an inclusive abbreviation to embrace diverse sexualities, genders, and sex characteristics. What LGBTIQ means is always evolving and can mean different things to different people. Understanding the basics is important to being a good ally to the LGBTIQ community.

GENDER

A person's internal sense of self, the way in which they **understand, express, or identify** themselves. The most common genders are woman/girl and man/boy however there are other genders too. Some people may identify as one gender in one setting and a different gender in another, and some people's gender identities may change over time.

- > **Cisgender:** when a person's sense of personal identity and gender aligns with what is usually associated with the sex they were assigned at birth (i.e. girl or boy).
- > **Non-binary gender / gender queer:** a spectrum (or range) of gender identities and expressions, often based on the rejection of the strictly boy/man or girl/woman binary (i.e., one or the other) that is based on sex assigned at birth.
- > **Transgender:** or simply referred to as '**Trans**' these days. This is when a person's gender does not align with the gender usually (or most commonly) associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may or **may not** take hormones and may or **may not** wish to have surgeries that physically transition them into another gender.
- > **Agender:** when a person does not identify with any genders, they have no gender.

SEX

The biological characteristics that often define people as either **male** or **female**. These include chromosomes, hormones, or physical anatomy.

- > **Intersex:** some people may have biological characteristics that do not align with what is commonly considered to fit within the categories of male or female. These people may refer to themselves as being intersex or as having an intersex variation.



LGB

Sexualities

T

Genders

I

Sex

QUEER

Has many meanings to different people but is most commonly used as an umbrella term to describe people with a diverse sexuality or gender identity or experience, usually people who are not heterosexual or cisgender.

SEXUALITY / SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexuality / sexual orientation: describes a person's **sexual or emotional attraction** to another person based on that other person's sex or gender.

- > **Heterosexual / Straight:** attraction to persons of different sex or gender.
- > **Lesbian and Gay:** attraction to persons of the same sex or gender.
- > **Bisexual:** attraction to persons of both the same and different sex or gender.
- > **Asexual:** someone who experiences a lack of or no sexual attraction to others.
- > **Pansexual:** someone who is sexually or emotionally attracted to other people regardless of their sex or gender.

GENDER EXPRESSION

The way a person expresses their gender and the way in which it is interpreted by others in the world. For example, a person may express themselves through actions, clothing, or styling, in ways that are commonly thought of as masculine, feminine, or in between.



HOW TO BE AN LGBTIQ ALLY

WHAT IS AN ALLY?

An ally is someone who supports and promotes the equal treatment of a community other than their own¹. They develop strong ties to that community, while remembering they are there in a supportive role. Becoming an ally to LGBTIQ people is an ongoing process.

The following are 5 tips that can be used as you work towards becoming a better ally:



1

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Don't make assumptions about someone's gender, sex, or sexuality. Don't assume that everyone is heterosexual (straight), or a woman or man. Always use gender neutral language when referring to groups or people you don't know – replace she/he with 'they' and use the term 'partner'¹.

Don't assume people's pronouns (i.e., he/him, she/her, they/them). If you are not sure which pronouns someone uses, don't be afraid to ask and then use that pronoun and encourage others to do so too. It's okay if you make a mistake – just be sure to correct it and practice using the correct terms².

2

SHARE YOUR OWN PRONOUNS

Share your own pronouns and explain why you do it. You could do this in your email signature, and/or at the start of a meeting or conversation with someone.

By sharing your pronouns, you are inviting people to share theirs too and are also alerting everyone that it is common practice. This reminds people that there are other pronouns people may choose to use, and to be mindful of using the correct ones.

4

DON'T TOLERATE DISRESPECT²

Call out negative or uninformed comments and stereotyping about the LGBTIQ community if you feel safe to do so. Respectfully explain to the person why certain language is offensive. You could follow up by providing some resources to the individual for them to explore more deeply if you're comfortable².

Stereotyping contributes to creating an environment in which LGBTIQ people feel unsafe to be out or visible. Having conversations that challenge stereotypes and promote inclusion, and celebrating diversity are important in supporting positive change in our society.

3

LEARN ABOUT THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY AND LISTEN TO AND SHARE LGBTIQ VOICES

If you're at the beginning of your ally journey, consider doing some research. Learn what LGBTIQ means, understand the difference between gender, sex, and sexuality, and learn about the issues that are important to the community.

Listen to the experiences of LGBTIQ people with an open mind and heart and give them space to speak. Read books and other publications, listen to podcasts, and visit businesses or websites run by LGBTIQ people¹. Share LGBTIQ voices, whether it be sharing on social media or organising an LGBTIQ speaker at an event.

5

BE VISIBLE AND SUPPORT THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY, BUT LET LGBTIQ PEOPLE SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES³

Support the LGBTIQ community by turning up for events like Pride marches, putting up posters and sharing resources with your workplace and/or community group.

However, make sure you always allow LGBTIQ people to speak for themselves about their lived experience, because they are the experts on this.

1 <https://about.unimelb.edu.au/news-resources/pride-in-action-ally-network/how-to-be-a-good-LGBTIQ-ally>

2 <https://www.minus18.org.au/articles/how-to-be-a-trans-ally>

3 <https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-an-lgbtqia-ally-and-how-can-i-be-a-good-one>

