



LGBTQ+ Pride Edition

June 2021

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Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as all other human beings. We seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in our communities, serve our country, and take care of the ones we love. Our commitment to equality is one we share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBTQ+. This newsletter introduces terms used by the LGBTQ+ community, a section on the use of pronouns and a history of Pride flags. There are links to all the sources at the end and we welcome you to continue your education during this Pride month and all year long.

People often use LGBTQ+ to mean all the communities included in the “LGBTQQIAA”:

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Transsexual 2/Two-Spirit Queer Questioning Intersex Asexual Agender
+ Pansexual, Gender Queer, Gender Fluid, Bigender, Gender Variant, Pangender

DEFINITIONS TO KNOW

Lesbian - a lesbian is a homosexual woman: a woman who experiences romantic love or sexual attraction to other women.

Gay – gay is a term that primarily refers to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. Gay is often used to describe a homosexual man, but lesbians may also be referred to as gay. However, “gay” as a catch-all term for anything gender-nonconforming is a fast-vanishing vestige of patriarchy.

Bisexual – bisexuality is romantic attraction, sexual attraction or sexual behavior toward both men and women.

Transgender – the word “transgender” – or trans – is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. Although the word “transgender” and our modern definition of it only came into use in the late 20th century, [people who would fit under this definition have existed in every culture throughout recorded history](#).

Trans* – people in the LGBTQ community started using trans* in the 1990s as a way to “cover a wide range of identities” that do not conform to “traditional notions” about gender. Trans* is not just a term that can include all kinds of people; it can also describe a single person who sees themselves in all kinds of categories. Trans* can also serve as a term that refers to everyone who is not cisgender.

Transsexual – a person whose intent is to live as a gender other than that assigned at birth. Most transsexual people engage in some process of altering either primary or secondary sexual characteristics through hormone treatment or surgery or both. Some transsexual people live full time in their chosen gender without any alteration to physiology. (Note: this term is generally seen as outdated and may be offensive to some trans people.)

Two-Spirit – Two-Spirit is a modern umbrella term used by some Indigenous North Americans to describe gender-variant individuals in their communities, specifically people within Indigenous communities who are seen as having both male and female spirits within them.

Queer – queer is an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual or cisgender. Queer was originally used pejoratively against those with same-sex desires but, beginning in the late-1980s, queer scholars and activists began to reclaim the word.

Questioning – the questioning of one’s gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or all three is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons.

Intersex – Intersex is a variation in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, or genitals that do not allow an individual to be distinctly identified as male or female.

Asexual – asexuality (or nonsexuality) is the lack of sexual attraction to anyone, or low or absent interest in sexual activity. It may be considered the lack of a sexual orientation, or one of the variations thereof, alongside heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

Ally – an Ally is a person who considers themselves a friend to the LGBTQ+ community. Some feel the “A” in the LGBTQ+ acronym should not reference allies - here’s [why](#).

Pansexual – pansexuality, or omnisexuality, is sexual attraction, romantic love, or emotional attraction toward people of any sex or gender identity. Pansexual people may refer to themselves as gender-blind, asserting that gender and sex are insignificant or irrelevant in determining whether they will be sexually attracted to others.

Agender – agender people, also called genderless, genderfree, non-gendered, or ungendered people are those who identify as having no gender or being without any gender identity. This category includes a broad range of identities which do not conform to traditional gender norms.

Gender Queer – gender queer is an umbrella term for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine identities which are thus outside of the gender binary and cisnormativity.

Bigender – bigender is a gender identity where the person moves between feminine and masculine gender identities and behaviors, possibly depending on context. Some bigender individuals express two distinct “female” and “male” personas, feminine and masculine respectively; others find that they identify as two genders simultaneously.

Gender Fluid - Gender fluidity refers to change over time in a person’s gender expression or gender identity, or both. That change might be in expression, but not identity, or in identity, but not expression. Or both expression

and identity might change together. Ultimately, anyone who identifies as gender-fluid is a gender-fluid person. Often, the term is used to mean that a person's gender expression or gender identity — essentially, their internal sense of self — changes frequently. But gender fluidity can look different for different people.

Gender Variant – gender variance, or gender nonconformity, is behavior or gender expression by an individual that does not match masculine and feminine gender norms. People who exhibit gender variance may be called gender variant, gender non-conforming, gender diverse or gender atypical, and may be transgender, or otherwise variant in their gender expression. Some intersex people may also exhibit gender variance.

Pangender – pangender people are those who feel they identify as all genders. The term has a great deal of overlap with gender queer. Because of its all-encompassing nature, presentation and pronoun usage varies between different people who identify as pangender.

Cisgender – a person whose gender identity and/or expression is congruent with social expectations of their birth assigned gender.

[Terms to Avoid!](#) GLAAD Media Reference Guide

PRONOUNS!!

Personal pronouns are the ones we use to refer to a specific person or people. Below are some examples of personal pronouns, each with the direct, indirect, and possessive form of the pronoun:

- **She/Her/Hers**: The pronoun set generally used by individuals who identify as a woman and many who identify as femme
- **They/Them/Their**: Traditionally, this pronoun set is used to refer to a group of people, but, despite common misconceptions, can also be used to refer to a single person in a non-binary or gender-neutral fashion. Yes, the singular "they" is grammatically correct, which you can read more about in the [Huffington Post's: Don't Be A Grammar Snob: The Singular 'They' Has Been Around For Centuries!](#)
- **He/Him/His**: The pronoun set generally used by individuals who identify as a man and many who identify as masc
- **Ze/Zir/Zirs**: A gender-neutral pronoun set that was invented more recently and is popularly used by non-binary and gender non-conforming people. Read more about gender-neutral pronouns on the [Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog!](#)

These are just a sample of personal pronouns, as there are many more in use today! They are not “preferred pronouns”. Avoid that term.

Why Are Pronouns Important?

Importantly, an individual's personal pronouns are determined by the person themselves. Thus, we can never assume someone's personal pronouns based on appearances. As the above examples illustrate, personal pronouns are very connected to gender and go beyond the binary of he/she. Thus, they are especially relevant to members of the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming communities and anyone who aspires to be

an ally to these communities. Too often, people default to using binary he or she pronouns to refer to another person based on appearances, a practice which can result in [misgendering](#) that person. Being misgendered can be a deeply hurtful and uncomfortable experience, as it invalidates an individual's personal gender identity and expression. Therefore it is so important to develop inclusive pronoun usage.

How Can I Be More Inclusive Using Pronouns?

Luckily, there are a few ways we can all be more inclusive in the way we use pronouns in everyday life:

- **Ask about Pronouns:** As stated above, we cannot determine someone's personal pronouns based on appearance. Therefore, when meeting someone new, you can ask "What pronouns do you use?" or "What are your pronouns?" This may seem uncomfortable or awkward at first, but it becomes more natural as we practice, and this discomfort is far less than the result of misgendering someone!
- **Pronouns as Introductions:** Alternatively, cisgender allies can volunteer their pronouns first when introducing themselves, rather than asking them of the other person. If you are in a group setting (such as the meet and greet at first rehearsal), have everyone introduce themselves with their personal pronouns in addition to their names. Even something as simple as listing your pronouns in your email signature and on social media profiles can go a long way!
- **Learn and Practice New Pronouns:** As many non-binary or gender-neutral pronouns can be new for people, it is a good idea to practice using them. There are many [resources online](#) and in the community. There's even an [app for learning and practicing new pronouns!](#)
- **Normalize 'They' and Other Gender-Neutral Pronouns:** If you have not had the chance to ask someone about their pronouns or are not comfortable doing so, use they/them/their as your default pronouns for anyone whose pronouns of which you are unsure.

What if I make a mistake?

Mistakes happen! Everyone makes them. It's what we do when we make a mistake that is most important. Here are some strategies for what to do when you've made a mistake or witnessed someone make a mistake with someone's pronouns.

When you make a mistake:

If you use the wrong pronouns for someone in a conversation and you immediately recognize it, correct yourself, apologize, and move on in the conversation. It's important here not to make the situation about yourself, your intention, or make excuses about the mistake. The best way to demonstrate that you care about this individual and are supportive of them is to correct the error and move forward.

Example: "Oh she's a great friend. I'm sorry, I meant they are a great friend. They always send me funny videos to cheer me up."

Avoid dragging out the apology and making the other person comfort you for your mistake. We all make mistakes, and even if you feel terrible about it, it isn't about you.

When others make a mistake:

If someone isn't present when their pronouns are misused, it is our job to hold others accountable to using the correct pronouns. When in a conversation with someone else who makes a mistake, there are a couple of ways to navigate the conversation. Before correcting the individual who made the mistake, consider whether the person who has been misgendered has shared about their pronouns in all areas of their life. Some people may only use

certain pronouns in various aspects of their lives (e.g., using 'they/them' at work but 'he/him' at home). Some people make this choice for their own personal safety, or because they simply don't feel comfortable being "out" in certain contexts. If you are not sure if the person in question has shared their pronouns with the person you are speaking to, ask them first before trying the following correction strategies.

One strategy is to just respond to the individual who has made the mistake using the correct pronouns.

Example: Someone says, "Oh she's a great friend." Your response can be, "You're right, they are a great friend."

In this instance, you're just repeating what was said with the correct pronoun. In many cases, if that person is aware of the pronouns, they will correct themselves as well.

If the person who made the mistake is not aware and the individual who has been misgendered has shared their pronouns in all areas of their life, then best practice here is to gently correct the person who made the mistake.

Example: Someone says, "Oh she's a great friend." Your response can be, "You're right, they are a great friend. Also, just so you know, Sam uses 'they/them/theirs' pronouns."

Being gentle in the response is appropriate in these instances since we are operating under the assumption that this person did not know about the pronouns before the conversation.

Misgendering and Deadnaming

Misgendering is when someone uses the wrong pronoun for another person. When someone uses the wrong pronoun for someone else, it is a hurtful experience whether it is intentional or unintentional. It is hurtful because it communicates that the person's gender and experiences are not valid or respected. When someone is misgendered over and over, it can cause significant emotional pain.

Similarly, deadnaming is when the wrong name (usually an old name) is used for someone. This is often seen for individuals using the birth name of a transgender or non-binary person. When this is done intentionally, it communicates that the person's gender and experiences are not valid or respected.

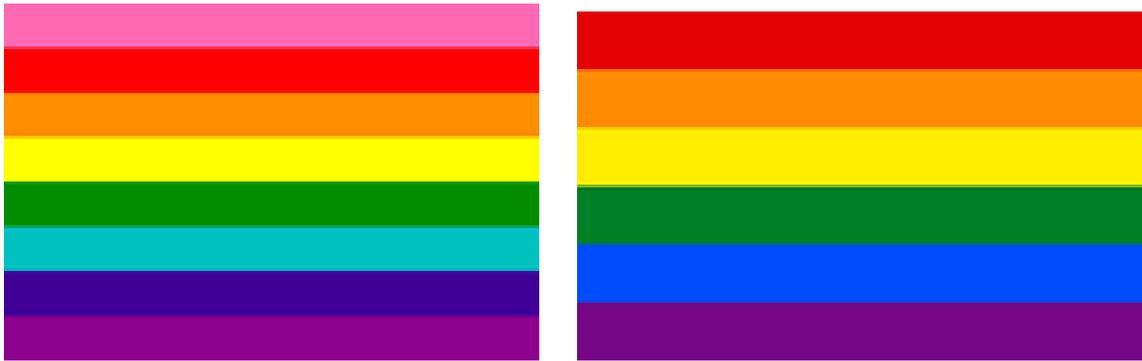
Questions NOT to ask a Trans* Person

Curiosity is human nature and perhaps you want to learn more about transgender individuals. Doing your own research first and not relying on a trans* person to answer your questions is the best way to start. Keep in mind that you don't need to know what someone's "real name" is or if they've had "the surgery". Here for a [guide](#) to what questions may or may not be appropriate.

Pride Flags

Pride Flags – There are many different Pride flags, each slightly different. Because the flags represent different queer communities, rather than official organizations, they're dynamic and flexible, and new ones can pop up as older ones fall out of use. Here is an overview of the ones that, at least for now, seem to get the most use.

The Rainbow or Gay Pride Flag - The history of the original rainbow flag begins in San Francisco 1978. Gilbert Baker is most commonly credited as the original designer of the flag. Others insist it was really designed and created by the activist, artist and actress Lynn Segerblom, also known as Faerie Argyle Rainbow. Baker certainly promoted the flag and made it an international symbol for gay rights, but the person who physically dyed and sewed the fabric of the original flag was Segerblom. Baker says he used eight colors to represent different spiritual and emotional aspects of the psyche. Hot pink stood for sex; red means life; orange means healing; yellow means sunlight; green means nature; turquoise means magic and art; indigo (later changed to royal blue) means serenity; and violet means spirit. Segerblom insists "that rainbows encompass everybody, the whole group, unity. Gilbert assigning meaning to each color is ridiculous." Interestingly, the hot pink was only removed as there was no hot pink fabric available and it was difficult to dye at the time. By 1979 it was altered to the six-color flag still in use.



The Trans Pride Flag – The Trans Pride flag was designed by Monica Helms, an openly transgender American woman, in August 1999. It was first shown at a Phoenix, Arizona LGBT pride celebration the following year. Helms describes the meaning of the transgender flag as follows: "The stripes at the top and bottom are light blue, the traditional color for baby boys. The stripes next to them are pink, the traditional color for baby girls. The stripe in the middle is white, for those who are intersex, transitioning or consider themselves having a neutral or undefined gender. The pattern is such that no matter which way you fly it, it is always correct, signifying us finding correctness in our lives."



[The Philadelphia Pride Flag](#) – The inclusive “More Color, More Pride” flag was created by the Philadelphia Office of LGBT Affairs helmed at the time by Amber Hikes in partnership with local advertising agency Tierney, and it was introduced at a City Hall ceremony in June 2017. Philadelphia's version added black and brown stripes to the top of the Rainbow Flag, to represent LGBT communities of color. Hikes addressed the idea of solidarity, writing that this year “we are at a moment where the intersection of our identities and oppressions are front and center. Our country is finally waking up to the realities of violence, injustice, and inequities that Black people have experienced and died from for the last 400 years in this country — and that awakening is happening during Pride. We are at this moment where so many people now understand the need for an LGBTQ flag that centers Black lives, voices, and leadership.” It was [opposed by some within the LGBTQ+ community](#) only proving its necessity within the racially charged atmosphere of the gay scene in Philly in 2017. Great strides have been taken since then!



[The Progressive Pride Flag](#) – Graphic designer Daniel Quasar created a rainbow flag that includes both black and brown stripes as well as the colors of the transgender flag in 2018. The Portland-based designer felt that the six-striped LGBT flag should be visually separated from the newer stripes due to their difference in meaning, as well as to "shift focus and emphasis to what is important in our current community climate." Quasar says the main section of the flag incorporates the six-stripe flag so as to not take away from the initial meaning, while the additional elements form an arrow shape that points to the right, to represent "forward movement". They are placed along the left edge of the flag to state that "progress still needs to be made." Quasar hopes that his design will place greater emphasis on inclusion and progression. "We need to always keep progress moving forward in all aspects of our community."



BLM Pride flag - Is there a Black Lives Matter Pride flag? Because there's no one authority that controls Pride flags, tons of variations can exist. And in the last few years, that's meant that many protests and parades have seen an increase in Pride flags combined with Black Lives Matter flags. One popular version places a fist in the center of the rainbow stripes, with black and brown stripes making up the fist. Another simply places the words "Black Lives Matter" atop the old-fashioned rainbow. Combining the two movements makes a lot of sense, since both causes align with each other. The modern LGBTQ+ liberation movement was touched off by queer and trans people of color and their struggle continues to this day, with both communities seeking justice, equality, and freedom from oppression. And because many people belong to both communities, they're not two distinct causes but instead overlap. In other words, it's great to honor the fight for civil rights by flying a flag; but even better to honor that fight by taking part and fighting for equality for all. Allyship needs to be intersectional. Black lives matter. Black queer lives matter. Black trans lives matter. Black disabled lives matter. Black homeless lives matter. Indigenous lives matter. To be an ally of one, you must be an ally of all.



News:

[PRIDE 30: CELEBRATING LGBTQ FIRSTS IN POP CULTURE, POLITICS AND BEYOND](#)
From local heroes to international superstars, meet the 30 trailblazers NBC OUT is honoring this Pride Month.

[15 Regional Companies Leading the Charge in Gay Theatre](#) - 2016 article from Playbill

[39 Plays that brought the LGBTQIA+ experience to the stage](#) - 2021 article from Playbill

Podcasts:

<https://player.fm/podcasts/Lgbtq> An extensive list of LGBTQ+ related podcasts

Thank you for reading this month's newsletter! Please stay tuned for newsletters curated by the members of the A/O resources sub-committee! We plan on covering a wide variety of topics but if there's something you want to see covered, please reach out! As we continue these newsletters, you can always refer back to our [Google doc "Main Listing" found here](#). This document will continuously be updated with each newsletter so that you can have a singular place to go when you need a new podcast to listen to or you want to refer back to the recommended books, etc.

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