



# **POSITIVE SPACE**

Gender & Sexual Diversity Inclusion Initiative

Terminology & Resources

# TERMINOLOGY

## 2SLGBTQIA+ CONCEPTS AND IDENTITIES

The following definitions are intended to provide a common, foundational understanding of language, concepts and terminology related to topics around 2SLGBTQIA+ identities and experiences. This includes systems of oppression and privilege related to gender and sexual diversity. Though this is by no means an exhaustive list of relevant terms and concepts, it provides a basic introduction to support further learning on these topics.

While reading through the definitions of concepts and identities, keep in mind that gender and sexual orientation are socially constructed and embedded; what we believe here and now is not what everyone thinks in different places or has thought over time. These definitions are not rigid – they are mutable and ever changing, much like the language is, and the communities themselves are.

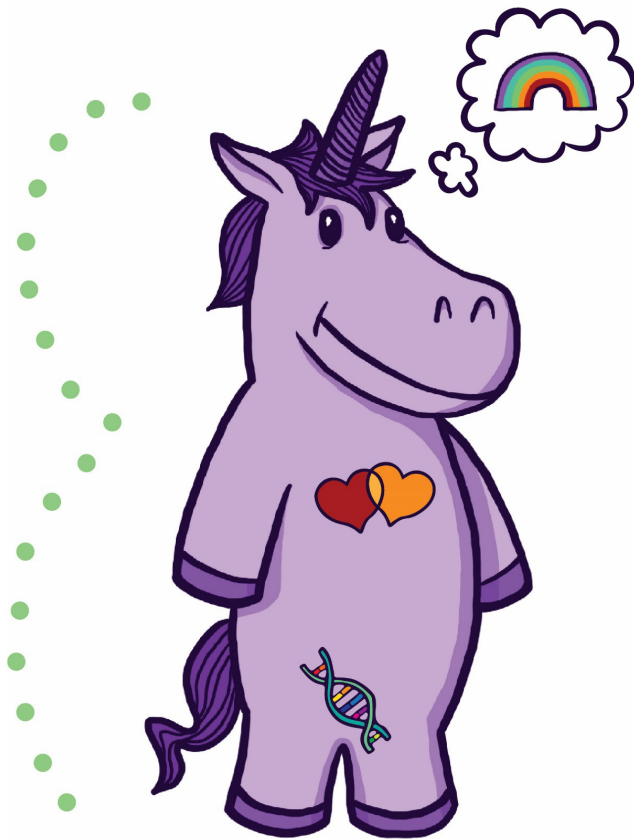
The terms used are ones created and used by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and how an individual chooses to identify is about their own relationship with those words. It is not up to anyone except one's self to choose whether or not to identify with a specific term. When referring to someone else's identity, you should respect the words they've chosen for themselves, even if it doesn't match the glossary.

The concepts and identities are adapted from the following sources:

- TSER - Trans Student Education Resource: [The Gender Unicorn](#)
- Egale: [LGBTQI2S Glossary of Terms](#)
- The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity (CCGSD): [LGBTQ2+ Vocabulary](#) and [Who Are Two-Spirit People](#)
- [Rainbow Resource Centre](#)
- [OHRC Policy on Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)
- Canadian Heritage (LGBTQ2 Secretariat): [LGBTQ2 terminology - Glossary and Common Acronyms](#)

# The Gender Unicorn

Adaptation of graphic developed by  
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Trans Student Educational Resources



**GENDER IDENTITY:** A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender – their internal sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their assigned sex. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.



**GENDER EXPRESSION:** How a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behavior, outward appearance, voice or body language, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics. A person's chosen name and pronouns are also common ways of expressing gender. A person's gender expression is not necessarily associated with their gender identity.



**SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH:** The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on based on characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs, often at birth. We say assigned sex versus biological sex to acknowledge that sex is often a value assigned by medical professionals to newborns based on visual assessment of external anatomy.



**SEXUAL ORIENTATION/ATTRACTION:** A term used to describe a person's emotional, romantic or sexual attraction. It is important to note that sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

## A

**AGENDER:** A person who identifies as either having no gender or a neutral gender identity.

**AROMANTIC:** A person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others.

**ASEXUAL:** A person who experiences little to no sexual or romantic attraction or interest in sexual expression; despite this, they may have sexual and romantic partners.

## B

**BISEXUAL:** A person who is attracted to people of their own gender and people of other genders. An emerging contemporary term related to this is pansexual, or persons who are attracted to another person regardless of their gender.

## C

**CISGENDER:** A person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth.

## G

**GAY:** A person who is attracted to people of the same gender. In its modern sense, the term gay typically refers to men, but in some contexts, it can refer to people of various genders.

### **GENDER DIVERSE/GENDER NON-CONFORMING/GENDER VARIANT:**

An umbrella term for gender identities and/or gender expressions that differ from dominant cultural or societal expectations based on assigned sex. Other common terms associated with gender variant are gender diverse and gender non-conforming. Someone who is gender variant may or may not also identify as trans.

**GENDERFLUID:** A person whose gender identity is experienced as not being fixed and that shifts and varies over time and in relation to the context.

**GENDERQUEER:** A person whose gender identity exists outside of the gender binary. A person who identifies a genderqueer may identify as man, women, neither, both, or may reject gender entirely.

## I

**INTERSEX:** Refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. Some people may experience the designation of intersex as stigmatizing given the history of medical practitioners imposing the diagnosis and/or nonconsensual corrective surgeries on infants, children and young adults (some people may not be identified as intersex until puberty).

## L

**LESBIAN:** A woman who is attracted to other women.

## N

**NON-BINARY:** An umbrella term to reflect a variety of gender identities that are not exclusively man or woman. Identity terms which may fall within this category include: genderqueer, agender, bigender, or pangender.

## P

**PANSEXUAL:** A person who experiences attraction to people of diverse sexes and/or genders. The term pansexual reflects a desire to recognize the potential for attraction to sexes and/or genders that exist across a spectrum and to challenge the sex/gender binary.

## Q

**QUEER:** This term has been reclaimed by some 2SLGBTQIA+ communities as a term of pride and affirmation of diversity. It can be used to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to sex, gender, and attraction or by an individual to reflect the

interrelatedness of these aspects of their identity. Not all individuals are comfortable with the reclamation of the word, and it should not be used to describe someone without their consent.

**QUESTIONING:** A person who is uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender. This can be transitory or a lasting identity.

## S

**SEX/GENDER BINARY:** The notion that there are only two possible sexes (male/female) and genders (man/woman), and that they are opposite, distinct and uniform categories. This view also asserts that gender is determined by sex.

## T

**TRANSGENDER (OR TRANS):** A person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions.

**TWO SPIRIT:** An English umbrella term to reflect and restore Indigenous traditions forcefully suppressed by colonization, honoring the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its connection to community and spirituality. As an umbrella term, specific teachings, roles, meanings, and language must come from the community. It is used by some Indigenous People rather than, or in addition to identifying as LGBTQIA+.



## **SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION AND PRIVILEGE RELATED TO GENDER & SEXUAL DIVERSITY**

The historically rooted societal structures that govern the rules of social hierarchies. They are the unjust and harmful exertions of power, authority, and control that construct some types of bodies, identities and experiences as more valuable or superior to others in order to justify forms of domination. These hierarchies are maintained by being built right into the structures, operations, institutions and discourses of a society.

### **B**

**BIPHOBIA:** Fear and/or hatred of bisexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is or is assumed to be bisexual or experiences attraction to multiple sexes and/or genders can be the target of biphobia. Discrimination, erasure, and prejudice against bisexuals are serious problems in straight and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities alike.

### **C**

**CISNORMATIVITY:** A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges cisgender identities and gender norms, and ignores or underrepresents trans identities and/or gender diversity by assuming that all people are cisgender and will express their gender in a way that aligns with perceived gender norms.

**CISSEXISM:** Prejudice and discrimination against trans or gender diverse identities and/or expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable gender identity.

### **H**

**HETERONORMATIVITY:** A cultural and societal bias, often unconscious, that privileges heterosexuality, and ignores or underrepresents diversity in attraction and behavior by assuming all people are heterosexual.

### **HETEROSEXISM:**

Prejudice and discrimination in favor of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable form of attraction.

**HOMOPHOBIA:** Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is non-heterosexual (or assumed to be) can be the target of homophobia.

### **M**

**MISOGYNY:** The hatred of, contempt for or prejudice against women, girls and the feminine, which may be exhibited in multiple ways including social and institutional exclusion and discrimination, as well as physical and sexual violence. Misogyny is maintained and perpetuated by a patriarchal system of oppression in which femininity and women are constructed to be inferior to masculinity and men.

## **P**

**PATRIARCHY:** A sociopolitical and cultural system that values men and masculinity over women and femininity and perpetuates oppressive and limiting gender roles, the gender binary, transphobia and cissexism, sexual assault, the political and economic subordination of women.

## **S**

**SEXISM:** Prejudice and discrimination based on a person's sex and/or gender.

## **T**

**TRANSPHOBIA:** Fear and/or hatred of any transgression of perceived gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence—anyone who is trans and/or gender diverse (or perceived to be) can be the target of transphobia.

While transphobia speaks more directly to the discrimination and violence faced by trans and gender diverse people, or those perceived to be, cissexism is the overarching order of society that enables it. Like other forms of oppression, transphobia may show up in interactions between individuals or groups of people or it can be entrenched in an organization's culture, rules, policies and practices that may look harmless on the surface but in fact exclude and create barriers and an overall hostile climate for some individuals.

Responding to transphobia most effectively occurs when we understand the intersectionality of attitudes that contribute to different forms of transphobia - often transphobia is intrinsically linked with sexism, racism, misogyny and homophobia.

**TRANSMISOGYNY:** A term coined by writer and activist, Julia Serano (2015), to describe the specific intersection of transphobia with misogyny. Transmisogyny creates a specific and intensified form of oppression often characterized by hatred of and contempt for trans women and/or transfeminine people, not only for defying perceived gender norms, but for expressing femaleness or femininity. Because womanhood and femininity are of lesser value in a system governed by male supremacy, trans women and trans feminine people represent a particular threat. Examining the particular intersection of transphobia and misogyny allows us to recognize and address commonality as well as unique and particular differences across diverse experiences of gender-based violence and discrimination.

# INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING LANGUAGE

Using inclusive and affirming language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Here are some examples of **inclusive language** you can use:

INSTEAD OF	USE
Dear Mrs./Miss/Mr.	Dear (first name, last name)
Husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend	Partner/spouse/significant other
Daughter/son	Child
Mother/father	Parent
Grandmother/grandfather	Grandparent
Sister/brother	Sibling
Ladies and gentlemen	Honored guests/folks/everyone
"There's a <i>woman</i> here to see you."	"There's a <i>visitor/person</i> here to see you."
"We don't know who <i>he/she</i> was."	"We don't know who <i>they</i> were."
"Can I get you <i>ladies</i> something?"	Can I get you <i>folks</i> something?"

Here are some examples of **affirming language** you can use:

INSTEAD OF	USE	WHY?
Transgendered	Transgender Person	Transgender is an adjective, not a verb.
Homosexuals	2SLGBTQIA+	Use the labels and categories that individuals and communities have self-identified.
"They had a sex change"	"They transitioned"	Living as one's true gender is a process, not a point-in-time event. Further, "switching genders" implies that the individual "opted" to change who they are.
"Born female" or "born male"	Assigned female or male at birth	"Assigned" accurately depicts the situation of what happens at birth.
"Both genders" or "opposite sexes"	All genders	"Both" implies there are only two; "opposite" reinforces antagonism amongst genders.

Source: Egale - [Inclusive and Affirming Language Tips](#)





# RESPONDING WITH ALLYSHIP

Want to act in allyship but not sure what to do when you witness hurtful or offensive jokes or behaviour? Here are some ideas on how to respond.

## TIPS FOR RESPONDING:

- Identify the problem. Is it in behaviour, language or attitude?
- Focus on the impact. It's not about what someone "meant" to do, it's about the effects it had on other people.
- Avoid character judgements. It's about behaviour, not about whether or not someone is a "good" or "bad" person.
- Keep cool and calm. Use a non-judgemental tone and facial expression.

## DIRECT RESPONSES:

1. Clarify what you heard.

*"I think I hear you saying that all \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_, is that what you mean?"*

2. Ask for more information.

*"What do you mean?" / "I'm not sure I understand, can you explain?" / "How did you develop that belief?" / "What's so funny?"*

3. Appeal to common values and/or the principles that guide your organization or environment.

*"At our business, we learn to treat others with respect. I think that statement is disrespectful." / "In this organization, we don't talk about people that way."*

4. Refer to your own journey.

*"That was my first reaction too, but then I realized..." / "I used to think the same thing, then I started to question why I thought/felt that way."*

5. Address the behaviour.

*"It is not okay to stereotype people" / "That comment is transphobic, here's why..."*

6. Explain the impact.

*"Your comment is hurtful to myself and others, it leads to discrimination and marginalization."*

## INDIRECT RESPONSES:

1. Use non-verbal signals to indicate that you do not comply with the discrimination. Give a questioning glance, refuse to react or laugh or leave.
2. Redirect the conversation away from discrimination. Change the subject or repeat what you heard without the discriminatory language.
3. If you witness discriminatory harassment in a public setting such as public transport, pretend that you know them so that they don't appear to be alone.

Source: Egale - [Responding with Allyship](#)

# TIPS ON HOW TO PRACTICE ALLYSHIP

Here are some tips on how to practice continuous allyship for 2SLGBTQIA+ people:

## LEARN:

- Listen to the experiences and perspectives of 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
- Respect these experiences and perspectives.
- Acknowledge their validity (even if you don't understand them).
- Seek out information and opportunities to expand your understanding (learn through media, attend events, meet with folks from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and learn about local services and supports).
- Remember your learning is your responsibility – avoid asking 2SLGBTQIA+ people to answer all of your 2SLGBTQIA+ questions (not all 2SLGBTQIA+ people are comfortable acting in an educator role).

## PRACTICE:

- Intervene when you witness offensive behaviour or language.
- Use inclusive language to ensure everyone feels welcome and respected.
- Challenge policies, practices, and procedures that exclude for 2SLGBTQIA+ people.
- Apologize regardless of intent. Everyone makes mistakes in an ally role; what matters is how you respond when it gets brought to your attention.
- Make your apology swift and move on, dwelling on your mistake and how you feel makes you the center of attention.
- Be courageous! Don't be afraid to learn, ask for more information and provide support.

## REFLECT:

- Be open to feedback and think critically about how your behaviour or actions might impact other people.
- Reflect on and question the stereotypes and negative assumptions held by yourself and others.
- Avoid assuming how people identify. Listen for, or politely ask, what pronouns people use.
- When talking about 2SLGBTQIA+ topics, assume there are 2SLGBTQIA+ people or people with 2SLGBTQIA+ loved ones in the room. Consider how they might be impacted by the tone, spirit and direction of the conversation.
- Observe the way other folks around you act as allies, even in the smallest ways.
- Remember, everyone's experience of gender and sexuality is different and it's impossible (and unfair) to ask one person to speak on behalf of a whole group.

Source: Egale - [Tips on how to Practice LGBTQI2S Allyship](#)

# RESOURCES

## **Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC): [Policy on Preventing Discrimination Because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)**

Information, resources and best practices related to OHCR's Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity and gender expression.

## **Canadian Heritage – [LGBTQ2 Secretariat](#)**

Information and resources related to the Government of Canada's work to improve equality for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities through the promotion of human rights and the development of inclusive federal policies, programs and laws.

## **Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) – [Support for Trans Employees: A Guide for Employees and Managers](#)**

A Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) working group put together a comprehensive guide to be used as good practice for ensuring an open, diverse and supportive workplace for transgender people. The guide contains helpful information for both employees and managers.

## **[Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity \(CCGSD\)](#)**

Supports and transforms Canadian and indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast in a shared vision of a discrimination-free gender and sexually diverse world.

## **[Egale Canada](#)**

An advocacy organization that aims to advance equality for Canadian 2SLGBTQIA+ people and their families across Canada.

## **[Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion \(CCDI\)](#)**

A national charitable organization with the mandate to help the individuals and organizations they work with be inclusive, and free of prejudice and discrimination – and to generate the awareness, dialogue and action for people to recognize diversity as an asset and not an obstacle.

## **[Queer Events](#)**

A local 2SLGBTQIA+ organization committed to working towards a strong, inclusive & accessible Queer community through education, events, programs and initiatives.

## **[Kind Space](#)**

Provides accessible resources, events, social, and educational programming to celebrate and support people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

## **Capital Pride**

Creates opportunities to celebrate, advocate, educate and connect people, respecting the full diversity of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Canada's capital region.

## **Lanark County Mental Health**

Community-based mental health service responding to Lanark County adults and transitional aged youth (17 years and over) who experience mental health concerns.

## **Lanark County Interval House and Community Support**

Offers emergency and on-going programs to women and children living in or escaping from domestic violence.

## **Pride in Mississippi Mills**

If you have any questions, feel free to send an email to [prideinmm@gmail.com](mailto:prideinmm@gmail.com). You can also see what we're up to on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#).

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT - ADDITIONAL READING**

- [Native Land](#)
- [Government of Canada - First Nation Profiles Interactive Map](#)
- [Caut - Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory](#)
- [Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.](#)
- [First Nations - Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)

We recommend contacting the nation directly for specific information related to their community.

## **CONTINUOUS LEARNING**

### **Data Sources**

- [Community Based Research Centre \(CBRC\) Reports / CBRC's Sex Now Study](#)
- [Trans Pulse Canada Study Results](#)
- [Trans Pulse Project Ontario 2015](#)
- [ILGA 2020 World Map on Sexual Orientation Laws \(Map\)](#)
- [ILGA 2020 State-Sponsored Homophobia Report](#)
- [ILGA 2019 Trans Legal Mapping Report](#)

## Videos & Articles

- **Intersectionality:**
  - [Kimberlé Crenshaw](#) (TED Speaker, includes video)
  - [What is Intersectionality?](#)
- **Pronouns:**
  - [Why Respecting Pronouns is so Important](#)
  - [Pronouns Matter](#)
- [Sex Assigned at Birth and Gender Identity: What is the Difference?](#)
- [Trans 101 - The Basics](#)
- [Two Spirits, One Voice](#)
- Sabah Choudrey - [Brown, Trans, Queer, Muslim and Proud](#)
- Elvin Pedersen-Nielsen - [Educating Kids About Gender Norms](#)
- [Transgender, at War and in Love](#)
- Aiyana Maracle - [Explaining Gender Diversity](#)
- My Genderation - [Young Trans Girl Speaks with an Older Trans Woman](#)
- Ash Hardell - [Calling my Mom to tell her I'm Trans](#)