



**LGBTQ+
BASICS**

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THE BASICS SERIES

AN INTRODUCTION TO LGBTQ+ AT SPRINGER NATURE

This document is the first in a series of LGBTQ+ basics documents created for people who would like to support their colleagues and become better allies but do not necessarily identify as LGBTQ+. Educating yourself is the first active step you can take as an ally. Taking the time to read about the different identities that fall under the LGBTQ+ banner means a lot to the LGBTQ+ people around you and equips you with the language to treat people with courtesy.

We understand that language that is common within the LGBTQ+ community might not be familiar to everyone so we felt that it was important to start from the very basics of what it means to be LGBTQ+.

You can think of this as a beginner's guide and use it as a reference when discussing LGBTQ+ related topics.

This is an evolving project and more in-depth documents will follow, which will aim at educating and providing more information to all our colleagues. We would like this series to be interactive and as useful to you as possible so please get in touch with any questions or suggestions for future topics.



WHO IS SN PRIDE FOR?

SN Pride is an employee network bringing together members and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community. All our colleagues, whether they identify as LGBTQ+ or allies, are welcome to join and participate in all initiatives. Through the global network and the local chapters, we aim to create an environment where everyone feels respected and safe. As a network, we also work to promote education and awareness on LGBTQ+ issues and provide support for LGBTQ+ colleagues.

THE ACRONYM

MANY LETTERS, ONE COMMUNITY

You may have heard the term LGBT, which refers to sexual orientation and gender identities (see definitions included in this document) and stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender. The LGBT acronym has been adopted into mainstream culture as an umbrella term for topics relating to sexuality and gender.

The acronym has evolved to be inclusive of the many other terms people use and identify with, resulting in many variants that can be confusing. One of the most inclusive acronyms is LGBTQQIAAP, which covers 10 of the most common terms. Below is a list of the terms appearing in this acronym, but remember this is not exhaustive!

LGBTQQIAAP

L - Lesbian

The term refers to women who are physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other women. Some people use gay and lesbian interchangeably, some others promote the use of the term lesbian over gay to increase the visibility of lesbians. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

G - Gay

Broadly speaking, the term refers to a person who is physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to a person of the same gender. More specifically, the term is used to describe men who are physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other men, although some women and non-binary people may also define themselves as gay.

B - Bi

This is an umbrella term that refers to people who are physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to more than one gender. This term was originally based on a binary view of gender, however it has evolved to refer to attraction to all genders.

T - Transgender

The term refers to people whose experience of their own gender is not aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Q - Queer

Originally used in a derogatory way, the term queer has been reclaimed by some members of the LGBTQ+ community and is used as an umbrella term for people who identify as LGBTQ+. It is also often used by those who do not identify with binarism such as man and woman, or homosexual and heterosexual or do not want to label themselves. Some people may still find the term offensive when not used by people within the LGBTQ+ community, but it is widely accepted that using the term queer is also a political statement. If in doubt, use LGBTQ+ as a descriptor instead.

Q - Questioning

The term refers to a person who is still exploring their sexuality or gender identity.

I - Intersex

The term refers to people who may have biological characteristics of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit what biologically constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female, or non-binary.

A - Asexual

Often shortened to 'ace', the term refers to people who experience a variation in levels of romantic and/or sexual attraction, including a lack of attraction.

A - Ally

The term refers to people who identify as straight and actively support the LGBTQ+ community.

P - Pan

The term refers to people physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to people of any gender. The term is often used interchangeably with the term bi but it is intended as a broader term going beyond the gender binary that is sometimes associated with the terms bisexual, heterosexual, and homosexual.



+ Plus

The plus sign is used to include all terms that are not listed in the acronym and is mostly used with shorter versions, like LGBT+, LGBTI+, and LGBTQ+.

SN PRIDE'S CHOSEN ACRONYM: LGBTQ+

As a network, we are using LGBTQ+ as an inclusive term to encompass all of the different identities included in longer acronyms.

SEXUALITY, SEX, AND GENDER

THREE RELATED, BUT DISTINCT TERMS

The terms gender, sex, and sexuality are often confused and incorrectly used interchangeably. While these concepts are inevitably intertwined, they have very distinct meanings.

Sexuality describes who one is physically and romantically attracted to. Heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and pansexuality are some of the terms used to describe sexuality.

Sex is a biological concept and it is based on specific biological characteristics such as chromosomes and genitalia. Sex is typically assigned as either male or female, but intersex people are born with any of the several variations in sex characteristics.

Gender, instead, is understood as being socially defined, and has often been based on the ideas of masculinity and femininity.

This binary approach to gender, which mirrors traditional understandings of sex, is not reflective of the reality. The word gender is now used to describe someone's personal, societal, and cultural perceptions of their identity. The term non-binary is used to include those genders that do not conform to the man-woman binary.

It is important to note that gender identity is a very personal matter. People may have differing perceptions of gender identity terms and may identify with terms for varying reasons. You can read more about the personal experience of SN Pride's members here and here.

A HELPFUL INFOGRAPHIC ON GENDER, SEX AND SEXUALITY:

au.reachout.com/articles/the-difference-between-gender-sex-and-sexuality

CISGENDER AND TRANSGENDER

Often abbreviated to 'cis', the term cisgender refers to people whose experience of their own gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. Often abbreviated to 'trans', transgender is an umbrella term for people whose experience of their own gender is not aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth. People who identify as transgender may choose to undergo surgery and/or take hormones to align their bodily characteristics to those that are socially associated to the gender they identify with.

However, it is important to stress that trans women are women and trans men are men, regardless of the characteristics of their bodies.

NON-BINARY AND GENDER FLUIDITY

A common mistake is to think that the transgender community only includes people who were assigned male at birth but identify as women, or who were assigned female at birth but identify as men.

While in everyday language this is what the term often refers to, non-binary people are part of the transgender community. Non-binary is an umbrella term used to include genders that do not sit comfortably within the gender binary and is often adopted by people who align to neither, both, or a combination of the concepts of man and woman. Sometimes people use the term trans* when referring to the transgender community to ensure obvious inclusion of non-binary people.

People also use the term genderqueer. This is an umbrella term referring to people who do not subscribe to conventional gender norms and, while it's not as inclusive as the term non-binary, people who identify as genderqueer often identify as non-binary as well.

Genderqueer is not to be confused with genderfluid, which is another term used by people who do not abide by the view of gender as a fixed concept and whose gender experience is fluid and fluctuates between two or more genders.

GENDER AND PRONOUNS

When we refer to someone but don't use their name, we use a pronoun (e.g. he, she, his, hers, they) and that pronoun is usually based on the perception we have of that person's gender. Gender pronouns are a sensitive issue for many in the LGBTQ+ community who identify as transgender or non-binary.

When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above). If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask!

Make an effort to get pronouns right once you know them and if you get it wrong apologise but don't make a big deal about it, just try to get it right the next time.

[Click here](#) to read more about what you can do to raise awareness on this issue.

COMING OUT

Coming out is the voluntary self-disclosure of one's sexuality or gender identity. The phrase is a shortened version of "coming out of the closet". Someone who has come out is sometimes described as being 'out'. It's important to note that coming out is a very personal matter that often involves a journey of self-acceptance and there may be reasons why some people have chosen not to come out. This means that if someone has come out to you, they may not be out to other people, so please respect their privacy and remember that outing someone (disclosing someone else's sexuality or gender identity without their knowledge or consent) is not acceptable, and can be illegal when it comes to trans people.

If you wish to learn more about what coming out means and how it impacts everyday life, you can read more about it in the stories members of SN Pride have shared on [The Source blog](#).



HOW TO BE A GOOD ALLY

ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

An ally is someone who actively supports the LGBTQ+ community in the continuing fight for equality, and challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Straight allies are cisgender straight people who do not identify as LGBTQ+; however, allies within the LGBTQ+ community are also important as they stand up for the rights of the full spectrum of people under the LGBTQ+ umbrella.

Here you can find a list of small steps everyone can take to become a better ally in everyday life:



BE MINDFUL

- Try to avoid words and expressions that might be considered gender-specific or could exclude particular groups of people. For example, when addressing a group of people, avoid 'ladies and gentlemen' or 'guys'. Try to use gender-neutral alternatives instead
 - for example choose 'partner' over 'wife' or 'husband' when you don't know the gender of someone's romantic partner.
- Certain words still carry negative connotations for some people, especially when used by people outside the LGBTQ+ community. If unsure, try to avoid controversial terms or ask why something may not be appropriate.



RESPECT

- Do not assume someone's sexuality or gender identity, or that of their partner.
- Once you know someone's pronouns, use them and be respectful of their gender identity. If you hear others getting someone's pronouns wrong, correct them but do this sensitively – this is about being a good ally, not about shaming someone.
- If someone has come out to you, it doesn't mean they are ready to share that with everyone.



UNDERSTAND

- Read and learn about the LGBTQ+ community, its history and its struggles both in your home country and across the globe, and understand the continuing obstacles to equality that people within the LGBTQ+ community face.
- If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask but be considerate and do it sensitively.



DO YOUR PART

- Be vocal in advocating for LGBTQ+ people, and challenge prejudice, discrimination, and anti-LGBTQ+ language in work and in your personal life.
- Support policies that encourage equality and diversity. Follow the [Diversity & Inclusion group](#) on Hive.
- Get involved in LGBTQ+ organisations. [SN Pride](#) is open to both members and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community at Springer Nature.
- Reach out to members of your local chapter of SN Pride or the global group if you have questions.



GLOSSARY

For more information on commonly used terms read the [Stonewall glossary](#).



**THANK
YOU**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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