**COMMON LGBTQ+ YOUTH IDENTITIES AND VOCABULARY**

Youth today understand the complexity of their sexual orientation and gender identity. It is no surprise that they therefore utilized a multitude of different terms and phrases to describe themselves and others. Below you will find common terms and identities of the youth we work with.

**LGBTQ**+ – shorthand umbrella term used for all folks who have a non-normative sexual orientation and/or gender identities. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer.

* Often times the acronym includes an additional Q for Questioning, I for Intersex, 2 for Two-Spirit, and A for Asexual and/or Allies. In this document the + sign has been added as an effort to be more inclusive.
* Aka GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities and DSG is Diverse Genders and Sexualities though this language is currently only embraced and utilized by researchers and academics.

**Ally** – one who advocates for and supports members of a community other than one they belong to. Reaching across differences to achieve mutual goals.

**Aromantic** – one who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in forming romantic relationships.

**Androgynous** – one who expresses merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

**Asexual** – one who generally does not feel sexual attraction or desire to any group of people. Asexuality is not the same as practicing celibacy.

**Biological/Anatomical Sex** – the physical structure of one’s reproductive organs that is used to assign sex at birth. Biological sex is determined by chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external genitalia.

* There are great variations of these thus why biological sex is now seen as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options.

**Bisexual** – one who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to men and women.

**Cisgender** – one whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society’s gender-based expectations (also known as gender normative).

**Demisexual** – one who does not experience sexual attraction unless they have formed a strong emotional connection with another individual. Often a romantic relationship.

**FTM or MTF** – abbreviation for a female-to-male or male-to-female transgender person.

**Fluid(ity)** – describes a wide and flexible range of gender or sexual identities that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.

**Gay** – one who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to someone of the same gender. This term is also used to refer to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Gender Binary System/Gender Roles** – social constructs of roles, activities and behaviors enforced based on a babies assigned sex at birth that requires everyone to be raised as a boy or girl. Many cultures have three or more genders.

**Gender Expression/Gender Presentation** – external expression of gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

**Gender Identity –** one’s innermost concept of self as male/ female or both/ neither.

**Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)** –one whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, does not align with gender-based expectations (also known as Genderqueer, Gender Fluid, Gender Bender, BiGender, etc.).

**Heterosexual** – one who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to a person of the opposite sex/gender.

**Intersex** – one whose genetic sex (chromosomes) and phenotypic sex (genital appearance) do not match, or are somehow different from the medical "standard" for being classified as male or female. About one in 2,000 babies are born visibly intersexed, while some others are detected later.

**Lesbian** - A person who identifies as a woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to women.

**Pangendered** – one whose gender identity is comprised of all or many gender expressions.

**Pansexual** – A person who is sexually attracted to all or many gender expressions.

**Queer** – An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual orientations and gender identities. Queer includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender, and intersex persons, and the radical sex communities.

* This is an example of a reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur. Older LGBTQ+ folks still find it to be a hurtful slur but youth today have embraced it an inclusive identity that allows them freedom to explore their sexual and gender identities.

**Sexual Orientation** - a person’s romantic, emotional or sexual attraction to another person.

* Sexual orientation and gender identity are separate, distinct parts of one’s identity. A young person may not yet be aware of their sexual orientation, they usually have a strong sense of their gender identity.

**Transgender – an umbrella term for** anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender (abbreviated at trans\*).

* Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation - transgender people may additionally identify with a variety of other sexual orientations as well.

**Two-Spirit** – a contemporary umbrella term that references historical multiple-gender traditions in many Native/First Nations cultures.

* In many tribes being Two-Spirit still carries both great respect and additional commitments and responsibilities to one’s community.

**COMMON SLANG USED BY LGBTQ+ YOUTH**

**Anti-androgens (aka Andros)** - androgen blockers are drugs that block the effects of testosterone in transwomen.

**Bear** - a man or masculine person who has facial/body hair, and a cuddly body.

**Being Read – when a** person is presenting in their chosen gender and someone recognizes they are not of that sex/gender (aka getting clocked and getting read).

**Binding** – the process of flattening one’s breasts to have a more masculine or flat appearing chest.

* Many teens utilize Ace bandages or duct tape to bind. These are dangerous and can restrict their breathing, break ribs, cause fluid buildup, or other health challenges. There are resources online that offer free binders for youth.

**Bottom Surgery** – surgery on the genitals designed to create a body that corresponds with a person’s preferred gender expression/identity.

**Bottom** - one who is more submissive during sexual interactions.

**Boy mode/girl mode** – one who dresses in clothing that matches their perceived gender/sex for protection or discretion.

**Cruising** – checking someone out or strolling areas known as ‘hook-up’ spots

* Teens also may call this ‘basket shopping’ which is in reference to checking out someone’s genitals through their clothing.

**Coming Out** – the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity and shares with others around them.

**D&D** – an abbreviation for drug and disease free usually utilized online when looking to hook-up with someone.

**Drag Queen** – refers to men who dress as women for the purpose of entertainment.

* A derogatory to refer to all transgender women.

**Gender Confirmation Surgery** – Medical surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity.

* This was formerly known as Sex Reassignment Surgery – see also Vaginoplasty.

**Gold(en) star** – a gay person who has never had sex with someone of the opposite sex/gender.

**In the Closet** – one who will not or cannot disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society (aka down-low).

* Intersex youth may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to choose one or the other sex at birth and then to hide the medical history from the patient.

**Feminine** - concept of what is "naturally" or traditionally female in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality (aka femme, fem acting, lipstick, etc.).

**Gender pronoun** – is a word that takes the place of a noun.

* There are many variations and it is also important to ask someone politely which they prefer. A safe bet is to always use the person’s name until you are clear on what they prefer.
* Many youth today use gender neutral pronouns such as ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘their’.

**Lifestyle** - A term that has been used in the past to refer to one’s sexual orientation. This is an offensive term to many in the LGBTQ+ community, because it suggests that one can choose their sexual orientation.

**Masculine -** concept of what is "naturally" or traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality (aka butch, masc, etc.).

**Outing** – involuntary disclosure of one’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

* This poses long-term safety concerns at home, school, and the community at large for youth.

**On T** - when a transgender man is on the hormone testosterone.

**Packing** – wearing a phallic device on the groin and under clothing for any purposes including the validation or confirmation of one’s masculine gender identity, seduction, and/or sexual readiness.

**Passing** – a term for transgender people being accepted as a member of their self-identified gender/sex identity regardless of birth sex or a LGBT+ individual who can is believed to be or perceived as straight.

* It is generally considered insulting to compliment or comment on someone’s ability to “pass”.

**Passing privilege** - the belief that those who "pass" enjoy greater acceptance in society.

**Poz** – an individual who is HIV positive.

**Post-op (post-operative)** - references an individual who has had some form of Gender Confirming Surgery.

**Pre-op (pre-operative)** - references an individual who has not had any form of Gender Confirming Surgery.

* Many find this term and “post-op” to be offensive since it places too much emphasis on the procedure that some folks do not or cannot obtain. It also creates an illusion that this individual’s identity is not complete until they have an elective surgery to alter their body.

**Top** - one who is said to take a more dominant role during sexual interactions.

**Top Surgery** – refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

**Sexual Preference** – an offensiveterm once used to describe sexual orientation which is now outdated because it insinuated one’s conscious choice.

**Throw shade** -to insult someone often indirectly in a way others know who you are talking about without naming them (aka to read, sub-tweet, etc.)

**Transition** – the time in which a person begins to live as their new gender.

* Transitioning may include changing one’s name, taking hormones, having surgery, or hanging legal documents (I.E. school records, driver’s license, Social Security record, birth certificate) to reflect their new gender.

**Vaginoplasty** - plastic surgery procedure where a vagina is created.