



# **Gender Ally**

## **Terms and Definitions**



# Terms and Definitions

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**Activism** – efforts to promote, impede or direct reform with the idea of making improvements in society

**Activism (Social)** – An intentional action with the goal of bringing about *social* change. If you feel strongly about a cause and are working towards a change, you could be considered an **activist**. An **activist** is anyone who is fighting for change in society.

**Advocacy** – activity by individuals or groups to influence decisions within the public realm, e.g. human rights

**Agender** – Agender means 'without gender', and an agender person is someone who does not (necessarily) hold a gender identity. Other common, somewhat similar, terms are gender neutral or genderless.

**Androgynous/Androgyne** – A person identifying and/or expressing gender outside of the gender binary. Other terms used include gender variant, genderqueer, and gender non-conformist

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Asexual** – (also Gray-A, Gray Asexual, Gray Ace) – Asexuality is a sexual orientation characterized by a persistent lack of sexual attraction toward any gender. At least 1% of people are believed to be asexual.

<http://www.whatisasexuality.com/intro>

**Body Shaming** – The action or practice of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size

Oxford Living Dictionaries

\*This often extends to trans bodies.

**Butch/femme** – Terms used in LGBTQ subculture to describe masculine and feminine identities and their associated traits e.g. dress, behaviour, style, self-perception.

**Cisgender** – Identifying with the same gender that one was assigned at birth. A gender identity that society considers to match the biological sex assigned at birth. The prefix cis- means “on this side of” or “not across from.” A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not trans.

**Cissexism** – A system of ideas that work to reinforce a rigid gender and sex binary, to erase Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse people, to promote the supremacy of Cisgender people, and to encourage Transphobia and Transmisogyny. Cissexist ideas are deeply embedded within the very fabric of our society. –Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Booklet 'Supporting Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diverse Survivors'

### Coming In

*“For two- spirit people, who typically live with sustained racism, homophobia and sexism, the process of “coming in” to their identity is likely to be very different from the conventional “coming out” story circulated in mainstream Canadian (GLBT) culture. In these narratives, “coming out” is typically a declaration of an independent identity: an GLBT person musters their courage and, anticipating conflict, announces their sexuality to a friend or family member—at the risk of being met with anger, resistance, violence or flat-out rejection or abandonment. In the narratives of two-spirit people, however, “coming in” is not a declaration or an announcement. Rather, it is an affirmation of interdependent identity: an Aboriginal person who is GLBT comes to understand their relationship to*

*and place and value in their own family, community, culture, history and present-day world. "Coming in" is not a declaration or an announcement; it is simply presenting oneself and being fully present as an Aboriginal person who is GLBT."*

**Wilson, Alex, N'tacimowin inna nah', Our Coming in Stories, Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme, Vol. 26 No. 3-4 (2008)**

**Deadnaming** — Incredibly common in healthcare settings, "deadnaming" is when someone refers to a Trans, Two-Spirit, or Gender Diverse person with the name they were assigned at birth — as opposed to their actual name. -Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Booklet 'Supporting Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diverse Survivors'

**Demisexual** — A sexual orientation in which one feels sexual attraction only after forming an emotional connection

[demisexuality.org](http://demisexuality.org)

**Discrimination** — Discrimination is an action or a decision that treats a person or a group negatively for reasons such as their race, age or disability. These reasons are known as **grounds of discrimination**. Federal employers and service providers, as well as employers and service providers of private companies that are regulated by the federal government, cannot discriminate against individuals for these reasons.

These 11 grounds are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act:

- race
- national or ethnic origin
- colour
- religion
- age
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- family status
- disability
- a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended.

**Dyke** – An historically derogatory term for lesbian. Dyke was reclaimed by some lesbian feminists in the 1970s and used to denote a commitment to a radical/revolutionary (often separatist) political position. Dyke is still considered to be derogatory depending on the context, but beginning in the late 70s, in some circles, 'dyke' was and still is the preferred term over 'lesbian'.

**Gay** – A person who is mostly attracted to those of the same gender; often used to refer to men only.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)** – A Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) is an official student club with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) and heterosexual student membership and one or two teachers who serve as faculty advisors. Students in a school with a GSA know that they have at least one or two adults they can talk to about LGBTQ matters. The purpose of a GSA is to provide a much-needed safer space in which LGBTQ students and allies can work together on making their schools more welcoming for all members of school communities, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

[egale.ca](http://egale.ca)

**Gender** – The social construction of concepts such as masculinity and femininity in a specific culture in time. It involves gender assignment (the gender designation of someone at birth), gender roles (the expectations imposed on someone based on their gender), gender attribution (how others perceive someone's gender), and gender identity (how someone defines their own gender). [Gender may be] Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Gender Assigned at Birth** — A series of assumptions usually made by medical practitioners:

1. That gender is binary (even when confronted with intersex babies)
2. The assumption and subsequent pronouncement that an infant's gender will correspond with their physical sex at birth.

## Gender Expression Spectrum

*"The term **gender spectrum** is a way of describing gender without conforming to the gender binary. It denotes gender as a continuum that includes male and female, but without establishing them as absolutes or polar opposites. The view of gender as a spectrum allows for the inclusion of identities besides male and female — specifically, it allows for the inclusion of intersex people, nonbinary gender identities, and nonbinary gender expressions.*

*A person can fall anywhere on the gender spectrum regardless of their orientation, gender expression, or biological sex. For example, a heterosexual, cisgender (or cishet) woman might have a butch, tomboy, or androgynous gender expression. This does not mean that she does not identify herself as heterosexual or a woman, but it does subvert stereotypical ideas of womanhood based in gender binarism and gender essentialism."*

[queerdictionary.blogspot.ca](http://queerdictionary.blogspot.ca)

**Gender Locked Medications / Treatments** — Many insurance or coverage plans will cover different medications depending on whether or not there is an "F" or an "M" on a person's medical record — and many treatment plans and standard tests are determined by this information as well. This can be a serious issue for many Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender

Diverse folks, with medications left uncovered or inappropriate tests being run (or not, such as baseline pregnancy tests).

**Gender Policing** – the imposition or enforcement of normative gender expressions on an individual who is perceived as not adequately performing, through appearance or behavior, the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Gender policing can also happen within the trans community – where someone may be pressured to perform or express a more normative or binary gender during or after transition.

**Genderqueer** – Genderqueer and non-binary people are people who do not fully fit into the socially constructed categories of “man” or “woman” (The idea that “man” or “woman” are the only options is commonly referred to as the “genderbinary”)

**Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Booklet 'Supporting Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Diverse Survivors'**

**Hate Crimes** – The Canadian Human Rights Commission administers the Canadian Human Rights Act. Section 3 of the Act prohibits discrimination based on "race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability and conviction for which a pardon has been granted."

The Criminal Code of Canada says a hate crime is committed to intimidate, harm or terrify not only a person, but an entire group of people to which the victim belongs. The victims are targeted for who they are, not because of anything they have done.

A hate crime is one in which hate is the motive and can involve intimidation, harassment, physical force or threat of physical force against a person, a group or a property.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/what-is-a-hate-crime-1.1011612>

**Heterosexual**—A person who primarily feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the ‘opposite’ gender; also sometimes referred to as ‘straight’

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Heteronormative** — Refers to social roles and social structures that reinforce the idea that heterosexuality is the presumed norm and is superior to other sexual orientations.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Homophobia** (homophobic) — Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional homophobia, interpersonal homophobia, and internalized homophobia. Many forms of homophobia are related to how restrictive binary gender roles are (see ‘oppositional sexism’). An example of this might be a lesbian who is harassed with homophobic language for being perceived to be masculine. Many of the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, including health and income disparities, stem from homophobia and heterosexism.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Hormones (for Transition)** — Hormones are chemical messengers produced by the glands. They are released into the bloodstream, where they direct the activities and development of other cells. Hormones affect the appearance and growth of body fat, breasts, hair, reproductive organs and skin. More on the use of hormones for masculine and feminine transition: <http://www.revelandriot.com/resources/trans-health>

**Intergenerational trauma** — is the transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences across generations. There is evidence of the impact of *intergenerational trauma* on the health and

well-being and on the health and social disparities facing Aboriginal peoples in Canada and other countries. There is also evidence of the further impact of **intergenerational trauma** on the health and well-being of Two-Spirit and LGBTQ people:

*"Existing data on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and Two-Spirit Indigenous people suggests that they experience unique barriers to culturally safe health care, and are at greater risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes than their non-Indigenous LGBTQ peers and their non-LGBTQ Indigenous peers."*

**Indigenous Health Fact Sheet, Rainbow Health Ontario**

**Intersectionality** (or intersectional theory) – is the study of overlapping or intersecting social **identities** and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. The term first coined in 1989 by American civil rights advocate and leading scholar of critical race theory, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw.

**LGBTQ2** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit. The longer version LGBTTTQQI2SA stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Two-Spirit, and Ally, or Asexual (some include two As).

**Lesbian** – A woman who is primarily romantically and sexually attracted to women. The term originates from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos which was home to Sappho, a poet, teacher, and a woman who loved other women. Although not as common, sometimes the term ‘gay woman’ is used instead.

**Misogyny** – is the hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls. Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including social exclusion, sex discrimination, hostility, androcentrism, patriarchy, male privilege, belittling of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification. Misogyny can occasionally be found within sacred texts of religions and mythologies, and various influential Western philosophers and thinkers have been described as misogynistic.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misogyny>

**Misgendering** – When you call someone by the wrong gender or use the wrong pronoun, you are misgendering them. For example calling a Transgender woman “he” is misgendering.

**Pride** – *Gay pride* or *LGBT pride* is the positive stance against discrimination and violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people to promote their self-affirmation, dignity, equality rights, increase their visibility as a social group, build community, and celebrate sexual diversity and gender variance. Pride, as opposed to shame and social stigma, is the predominant outlook that bolsters most LGBT rights movements throughout the world.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gay\\_pride](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gay_pride)

**Oppression (Social Oppression)** – Social oppression is the socially supported mistreatment and exploitation of a group of individuals. Social oppression is based on power dynamics, and an individual's social location in society. Social location, as defined by Lynn Weber, is "an individual's or a group's social 'place' in the race, class, gender and sexuality hierarchies, as well as in other critical social hierarchies such as age, ethnicity, and nation.

## Othering

*"By "othering", we mean any action by which an individual or group becomes mentally classified in somebody's mind as "not one of us". Rather than always remembering that every person is a complex bundle of emotions, ideas, motivations, reflexes, priorities, and many other subtle aspects, it's sometimes easier to dismiss them as being in some way less human, and less worthy of respect and dignity, than we are."*

<https://therearenoothers.wordpress.com/2011/12/28/othering-101-what-is-othering>

**Pansexual or Omnisexual** — The sexual, romantic or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

**Passing** — A term sometimes used to refer to the state of an LGBT person not being visibly recognizable as LGBT. This term is most commonly used in relation to trans people. People who 'pass' may experience less queer-phobia and discrimination. Some LGBT people consider 'passing' to be very important for them, while others feel that choosing not to pass is an act of rejecting heterosexism, cissexism and ciscentricism. 'Passing' is a contested term since it may connote 'a passing grade' or 'passing something illegitimate off', or it may imply external pressure to strive towards being 'read' a certain way.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

**Patriarchy** — is a term used in sociology and feminism to identify a social system in which males hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In the domain of the family, fathers or father-figures hold authority over women and children. Some patriarchal societies are also

patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>

**PFLAG Canada** (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

*"PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children."*

[pflagcanada.ca](http://pflagcanada.ca)

**Policy** — a course of action adopted and pursued by an organization or institution.

**Queer** — A term becoming more widely used among LGBT communities because of its inclusiveness. 'Queer' can be used to refer to the range of non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people and provides a convenient shorthand for 'LGBT'. It is important to note that this is a reclaimed term that was once and is still used as a hate term and thus some people feel uncomfortable with it. Not all trans\* people see trans\* identities as being part of the term 'queer'.

[Qmunity.ca](http://Qmunity.ca)

Queer is also used to describe non-normative (i.e. anti-heteronormative and anti-homonormative) identities and politics. Academic disciplines such as queer theory and queer studies share a general opposition to binarism, normativity, and a perceived lack of intersectionality within the mainstream LGBTQ2 movement. Queer arts, queer cultural groups, and queer political groups are examples of expressions of queer identities.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queer>

## Queer Liberation

*"Queer Liberation is the struggle for liberation of all people who do not fit into mainstream society's idea of sexuality or gender. From gays and lesbians to trans\* and gender variant people; Queer Liberation supports all those who fight against the oppressive patriarchal heteronormative system.*

*It rejects the false binary of gay/straight or male/female to create a movement that is inclusive of everyone, regardless of how they choose to present themselves. Queer Liberation realises that there is a big difference between your assigned sex, your gender identity, gender expression, gender role and sexual orientation. We are not defined by what is between our legs.*

*Queer Liberation involves itself in the struggle for greater freedom for those who fall outside society's rigid definition of gender or orientation. It often rejects the mainstream gay rights call for equal rights with straight people in marriage, right to join the army, etc. as it sees these privileges to be inherently oppressive and seeks for the liberation rather than assimilation into mainstream society of all people."*

<https://baringteeth.noblogs.org/queer-liberation>

**Rainbow in LGBTQ culture** — The rainbow flag, commonly known as the gay pride flag or LGBT pride flag, is a symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pride and LGBT social movements. Other uses of rainbow flags include a symbol of peace and the colors reflect the diversity of the LGBT community. While it originated in Northern California, the flag is now used worldwide.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow\\_flag\\_\(LGBT\\_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_flag_(LGBT_movement))

**Real Me (The)**— In Lily's story, she refers to her female self as "the real me" that she kept hidden for so long, prior to coming out as a trans woman. This is in contrast to those who (as a form of discrimination) deliberately misgender trans folks by asking for their "real" name or gender identity and are referring to birth names and assigned sex.

**Residential Schools**— What was the Indian residential school system? Quoted from an article at Indigenous Foundations, UBC:

*The term residential schools refers to an extensive school system set up by the Canadian government and administered by churches that had the nominal objective of educating Aboriginal children but also the more damaging and equally explicit objectives of indoctrinating them into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living and assimilating them into mainstream Canadian society. The residential school system operated from the 1880s into the closing decades of the 20th century. The system forcibly separated children from their families for extended periods of time and forbade them to acknowledge their Aboriginal heritage and culture or to speak their own languages. Children were severely punished if these, among other, strict rules were broken. Former students of residential schools have spoken of horrendous abuse at the hands of residential school staff: physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological. Residential schools provided Aboriginal students with an inferior education, often only up to grade five, that focused on training students for manual labour in agriculture, light industry such as woodworking, and domestic work such as laundry work and sewing.*

*Residential schools systematically undermined Aboriginal culture across Canada and disrupted families for generations,*

*severing the ties through which Aboriginal culture is taught and sustained, and contributing to a general loss of language and culture. Because they were removed from their families, many students grew up without experiencing a nurturing family life and without the knowledge and skills to raise their own families. The devastating effects of the residential schools are far-reaching and continue to have significant impact on Aboriginal communities. Because the government's and the churches' intent was to eradicate all aspects of Aboriginal culture in these young people and interrupt its transmission from one generation to the next, the residential school system is commonly considered a form of cultural genocide.*

[http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the\\_residential\\_school\\_system](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_residential_school_system)

**Resilience** — Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

**Romantic Orientation** — Describes an individual's pattern of romantic attraction based on a person's gender(s) regardless of one's sexual orientation. For individuals who experience sexual attraction, their sexual orientation and romantic orientation are often in alignment.

**Self-harming Practices** — also known as *self-injury*, is defined as the intentional, direct injuring of body tissue, done without suicidal intentions. Often self-harming is done as way to cope with emotional pain.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-harm>

## Sexual Orientation Spectrum

*"The Human Sexuality Spectrum is an continuum that accounts for every variation of human sexuality/identity without necessarily labelling or defining all of them. The spectrum provides the idea that sexuality/identity is loosely identifiable by specific means or measurements."*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_sexuality\\_spectrum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sexuality_spectrum)

**Suicidal Ideation** — Suicidal thoughts, also known as suicidal ideation, are thoughts about how to kill oneself, which can range from a detailed plan to a fleeting consideration and does not include the final act of killing oneself.

**Suppress** — To prevent the development, action, or expression of a feeling, impulse, idea, etc.; restrain.

**Transgender** (Trans) — Trans gender, frequently abbreviated to 'trans' is an umbrella term that describes a wide range of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned biological birth sex. Some of the many people who may or may not identify as transgender or trans include people on the male-to-female or female-to-male spectrums, people who identify and/or express their gender outside of the male/female binary, people whose gender identity and/or expression is fluid, people who explore gender for pleasure or performance, and many more. Identifying as transgender or trans is something that can only be decided by an individual for themselves and does not depend on criteria such as surgery or hormone treatment status.

**Trans Inclusion** – When a person or organization uses language and behaviour that demonstrates an empathetic understanding of the experiences of trans people and creates an environment where trans people feel safe and included.

**Transmisogyny** (sometimes trans-misogyny) – The intersection of transphobia and misogyny. Transphobia is defined as "the irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against transgender or transsexual people". Simply put, misogyny is defined as "a hatred of women". Therefore, transmisogyny includes negative attitudes, hate, and discrimination of transgender or transsexual individuals who fall on the feminine side of the gender spectrum.

**Transition** – The process of changing one's gender expression and/or body to reflect their gender identity or sexual identity, with or without the use of medical intervention. Transition may involve a change in physical appearance (hairstyle, clothing), behaviour (mannerisms, voice, gender roles), and/or identification (name, pronoun, legal details). It may be accompanied by changes to the body such as the use of hormones to change secondary sex characteristics (e.g. breasts, facial hair) and may or may not include surgery.

[Qmunity.ca](https://www.qmunity.ca)

## Transition

*"Transition is the term commonly used to include the steps a transgender, agender, or non-binary person takes in order to align aspects of their life to be consistent with their gender identity. This term can be misleading, however, as it implies the person's gender is changing from one gender to another; in actuality the person's gender remains relatively stable. It is others' understanding of that gender that shifts. What people*

*see as a “transition” is actually an alignment in one or more dimensions of the individual’s gender, as they seek congruence across those dimensions. A transition is taking place, but it is often those associated with the person (parents and other family members, support professionals, employers, etc.) who are transitioning in how they see the individual’s gender, and not the person themselves.*

*Thus we prefer the term seeking congruence or congruence measures. A person can seek congruence in any or all of the following ways: social congruence – through changes of social identifiers such as clothing, hairstyle, gender identity, name and/or pronouns; hormonal congruence-through the use of medicines such as hormone “blockers” or cross hormones to promote gender-based body changes; surgical congruence in which an individual’s body is modified through the addition or removal of gender-related physical traits; and legal congruence through changing identification documents such as one’s birth certificate, driver’s license, and passport.”*

[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org), posted by Justin Clark

**Transphobia** – The fear and dislike of, and discrimination against, trans people. Transphobia can take the form of disparaging jokes, rejection, exclusion, denial of services, employment discrimination, name-calling and violence.

**Trans Support Group** – Support groups bring together people facing similar issues, and offer a different dynamic than online support. Support groups offer help from people outside your immediate circle and can make you feel less isolated as you make connections with others facing similar challenges. Benefits of participating in support groups may include:

- Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged
- Gaining a sense of empowerment and control
- Improving your coping skills and sense of adjustment
- Talking openly and honestly about your feelings
- Reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue
- Developing a clearer understanding of what to expect with your situation
- Getting practical advice or information about treatment options
- Comparing notes about resources, such as doctors and alternative options

Canadian Trans Men ([transmen.ca](http://transmen.ca))

**Turtle Island** – North America is traditionally known to the Indigenous nations as Turtle Island.

*"It is typical to refer to our respective nations and peoples as being "in" Canada or "in" the United States and therefore as being deemed subject to the jurisdictions of those two political constructs called "states" in international law. What we seldom express, however, is the more profound point that those two Western European political constructs are on and in Turtle Island, as North America is traditionally known to the Original Nations of Turtle Island."*

Steven Newcomb, *Indian Country Today*, 2011

**Two-Spirit** – Two-Spirit is an English language term used to describe individuals who are Indigenous and are on the gender expression spectrum and/or the sexual orientation spectrum. There are a number of other terms in each Indigenous language to further describe the cultural roles of Two-Spirit people within each Nation's distinct culture.

**Urban Queer Enclaves** – Usually bookstores but can be other public/retail spaces, that carry LGBTQ2 (among other), books, magazines, supplies, tickets, allow posters for events to be put up, or allow/support events to occur in the space etc. A social hub for queer/trans people and information. Most of these were pre-internet and were some of the only venues for this kind of information etc. Camas Book and Infoshop in Victoria (<http://camas.ca>) or Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium in Vancouver (<https://www.littlesisters.ca>)

**Xena: Warrior Princess** – An American fantasy television series filmed on location in New Zealand, produced between 1995 and 2001. The series follows Xena (played by Lucy Lawless), an infamous warrior on a quest to seek redemption for her past sins against the innocent by using her formidable fighting skills to now help those who are unable to defend themselves. The show is known for its lesbian content with secondary characters and the ever-present attraction between the two main characters; Xena and her sidekick Gabrielle.