

Terms to Avoid	
Admitted Homosexual	Dated term used to describe those who self-identify as gay lesbian, bisexual, or queer in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words “admitted” or “avowed” suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive. Try using the phrase “out gay man/lesbian/queer person” instead.
Gay Agenda	Notions of a so-called “homosexual agenda” are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBTQ extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal opportunity for LGBTQ people as sinister. Try saying “accurate descriptions of the issues” (e.g. “inclusion in existing nondiscrimination laws,” “securing equal employment protections”) instead.
Homosexual	Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please use gay, lesbian, or (when appropriate) bisexual or queer to describe people attracted to members of the same sex.
Lifestyle	Inaccurate term used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people. As there is no one straight lifestyle, there is no one LGBTQ lifestyle. Try saying “LGBTQ people and their lives” instead.
Sexual Preference	The term “sexual preference” is typically used to suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.” Try using the phrase “sexual orientation” instead.
Terms to Use	
Agender	A person who has an internal sense of being neither male nor female nor some combination of male and female; a person whose gender identity is genderless or neutral.
Ally	A person is not LGBTQ, but shows support for LGBTQ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.
Androgynous	Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.
Aromantic	Having little or no romantic feeling towards others; experiencing little or no romantic desire or attraction. Being aromantic does not mean you cannot experience other types of love or develop strong connections to others. It also does not mean you cannot or do not want to be in a relationship or feel sexual attraction.
Asexual	A term describing individuals who do not experience sexual attraction or do not have interest in or desire for sex. Asexuality is different from celibacy, which means abstaining from sex. Asexuality is often viewed as a spectrum – meaning there are varying levels and identities regarding someone’s emotion, spiritual, and romantic attraction. The best way to refer to the asexual community is to use the umbrella term “ace” or “aces” as in the “ace community,” which acknowledges the spectrum.
Binary System	A binary system is something made up of two opposing parts. Gender (man/woman) and sex (male/female) are examples of binary systems.

Terms to Use (continued)	
Biphobia	Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people.
Bisexual	A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity.
Cisgender	A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, if you were told you were “male” at birth and still identify that way, you would be cisgender.
Closeted	Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Better to simply refer to someone as “not out” about being LGBTQ. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one’s job, or other concerns.
Coming Out	The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.
Demisexual	A demisexual person is someone who does not experience sexual attraction to another person unless or until they have formed an emotional connection with that person.
Drag	Drag is a type of entertainment where people dress up and perform, often in highly stylized ways. As part of their performance, many drag queens and kings have separate drag persona in addition to the self they live as every day. This persona will of course look different, but may also have a different name and ask to be referred to by different gender pronoun. This does not mean they are transgender. Drag performers are artists and entertainers, so being in drag is not an integral part of their identity in the same way that gender is.
Gay	A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender.
Gender	An idea created by society that tells us what certain genders are “supposed” to be like, based on a group of emotional, behavioral and cultural characteristics (like how we express our feelings or how we dress).
Gender Dysphoria	Clinically significant distress caused when a person’s assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. According to the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term – which replaces Gender Identity Disorder – “is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults.”
Gender Expression	External appearance of one’s gender identity – usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
Gender Identity	One’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither; how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
Gender Non-Conforming	A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.
Gender-Expansive	Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

Terms to Use (continued)	
Gender-Fluid	A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
Genderqueer	Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as “genderqueer” may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female, or as falling completely outside these categories.
Heterosexual	An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also straight.
Homophobia	Fear of people attracted to the same sex. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBTQ people.
Intersex	An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that cannot be classified as typically male or female.
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women.
LGBTQ+	An acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning. The plus (+) ensures that further identities are included and indicates that nobody is left out.
Living Openly	A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them.
Marriage	In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> that every American has the constitutional right to marry the person they love. When reporting on marriage for same-sex couples, preferred terminology includes marriage equality and marriage for same-sex couples. The terms “gay marriage” and “same-sex marriage” should be avoided, as they can suggest marriage for same-sex couples is somehow different than other marriage.
Non-Binary	An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do.
Out	A person who self-identifies as LGBTQ in their personal, public, and/or professional lives.
Outing	Exposing someone’s lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.
Pansexual	Having physical, emotional, or romantic attraction that is not limited to people of a particular gender identity or sexual orientation; pansexual people are attracted to all kinds of people, regardless of their gender, sex or presentation.
Queer	A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. Often used interchangeably with “LGBTQ.”
Questioning	A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
Same-Gender Loving	A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian gay, or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

Terms to Use (continued)	
Sex Assigned at Birth	The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth."
Sexual Orientation	Describes a person's physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person. Everyone has a sexual orientation.
Sibling	Inclusive term used to replace "brother or sister" when speaking in generalities. This ensures that nonbinary and gender nonconforming individuals are not excluded by binary constructs.
Transgender	An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity does not "match" the sex or gender they were assigned at birth. Many identities fall under the transgender umbrella, which are often designated with an asterisk after the abbreviation, "trans." However, not all genderqueer or non-binary people identify as transgender – and some people who have transitioned to their true gender choose to identify as just a "man" or "woman" instead of transgender. Always be respectful of how someone chooses to identify, and use their preferred identity, names, and pronouns.
Transitioning	The social, legal, and/or medical process a transfer person may go through to make their gender identity fit their gender expression, presentation, or sex. This word means many different things to different people, and a person does not have to experience all or any of these common transitioning elements to identify as their true gender.
Transphobia	The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.
Two-Spirit	"Two spirit" refers to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit; used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.

**Materials from One Orlando Alliance at oneorlandoalliance.org/terminology-dictionary/
 Definitions provided by Human Rights Campaign, The Trevor Project, and GLAAD.**