

## Gender Liberation Definitions

**Abstinence** – often refers to the practice of choosing not to have intercourse; can also mean choosing not to be at all sexual with others or oneself. Some choose to practice this while they decide what they want or until they feel ready to be sexually active; others do so for spiritual, religious or social reasons.

**Asexual** – A person who has never experienced sexual attraction to others, does not at present, or is not interested in sexual activity.

**Bisexual** – A person who is attracted to or has relationships with both women and men.

**Cisgender** – A person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth/the gender they were raised with. Cisgender people are accorded certain privileges by society that others do not receive.

**Gay** – A man who is attracted to or has relationships with other men; also, a broad term for anybody who is not “straight.”

**Gender** – Socially and culturally constructed definitions of what it means to be a man, a woman, masculine and feminine; in the “mainstream,” this is grounded in a system which assumes that people identify in the same way they were raised, with how they are perceived by others, the same all the time, etc. Examples of how this manifests include how people are expected to dress, what activities they are expected to participate in, acceptable ways to express emotion, etc.

**Gender Identity** – A person’s self-understanding or self-definition of their gender (e.g., trans man, cisgender woman, genderqueer, or infinite others), which may or may not correlate to what society or other people tell them their gender should be. In short, ‘how you name your gender.’

**Gender Non-Conforming**- A term often used to refer to the myriad of individuals who may not identify as transgender, but who still do not conform to traditional gender norms (may include, but is not limited to, bigenders, gender benders, genderqueers, men, women, and transgender individuals). May be used in tandem with other identities, such as queer or lesbian. Considered by some to be preferable to gender variant as it does not establish traditional gender roles as the normative standard from which individuals deviate.

**Gender Presentation** – The external behaviors and characteristics (e.g., dress, mannerisms, social interactions, speech patterns) that a person displays in order to indicate their gender identity. It may change over time and from day-to-day, and may or may not conform to other people’s expectations. In short, ‘how you express your gender.’

**Lesbian** – A woman who is attracted to or has relationships with other women.

**Queer** – This was seen as a derogatory term until – several decades ago – people who it was used against began to reclaim it. Now used as an umbrella term to mean anyone who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, etc. Also, used specifically to identify as someone whose sexuality or gender identity does not

correspond to dominant identities, and who opposes a system that prioritizes straight relationships and gender conformity.

**Questioning** – A person who is in the process of better locating or understanding their sexuality/sexual identity.

**Sex** – This 'scientific' term refers to an array of biological, anatomical and physiological characteristics associated with maleness and femaleness in the body (such as external genitalia, internal sex organs, hormones and chromosomes). It is often asserted that there are two \_\_\_\_\_ among human beings, but in reality many people don't fit the standards and norms of those two categories; at times, scientists have identified 5 or more \_\_\_\_\_ categories among human beings, while some people assert the entire concept as socially constructed.

**Sexuality** – The expression, contemplation or existence of attraction/sexual feelings toward other beings and/or oneself.

**Straight** – A person who is attracted to people of the "opposite" sex or gender (usually conflates the two), e.g., men who are only attracted to women, or women who are only attracted to men.

**Transgender** – A person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth/ the gender they were raised with. Said person does NOT necessarily identify as the 'opposite' gender (see other terms for more info).

Definitions based in part on "Common Trans 'Definitions' and Terms" – compiled by Raphael Carter, Evan Hempel and Joelle Ruby Ryan, and edited by Jack Skelton in 2007.