

THE ABCs OF LGBTQ+

Definitions





Introduction

There are a lot of terms used within the LGBTQ+ community. As an HR professional it's essential to understand as many as you can so that you can support your people better.

At The Happiness Index, our mission is [#FreedomToBeHuman](#). A big part of this is being able to bring your whole self to work, whatever that means to you. It's important to remember that not everyone in your organisation will feel safe and comfortable being "out" at work. As a leader, part of your job is to create an atmosphere where anyone can be open and honest about their identity (if they want to be).

This eBook is designed to help you understand some of the terms which might be used if someone in your organisation decides to come out to you. This isn't designed to be your only port of call, so we'll share some further resources where you can read about many of these identities from the perspective of those who use them.



Let's Jump Right in With The ABCs of LGBTQ+

A = Asexual

People who identify as asexual or ace, don't experience sexual attraction at all, or in a very limited way. Some people may also identify as aromantic, which means they also don't experience romantic feelings towards others.

B = Bisexual

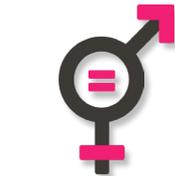
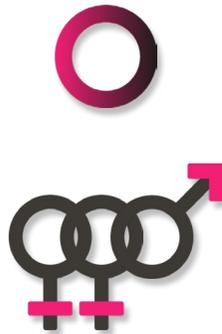
Bisexual people are attracted to more than one gender, although the level or type of attraction may not be equal or similar.

C = Cis-Gender

Someone who is cis-gender identifies with the gender assigned to them at birth. You may also hear people use AFAB (assigned female at birth) or AMAB (assigned male at birth).

D = Dysphoria

This is the medical term used to describe the mental pain of not feeling like you belong in your own body. Many (but not all!) trans people feel dysphoria around their body and wear clothing or undergo surgery to help alleviate it.



E = Enby

This is a term used by non-binary people (more info later!). It comes from the pronunciation of the letters NB and is used by people to describe their gender when they don't fall into the gender binary.

F = Fluid

Gender fluid is a term used by trans people who identify with different genders at different times/circumstances.

G = Gay

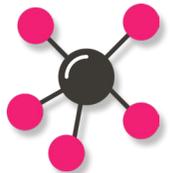
Although formerly a slur, this term has been re-appropriated by the community to mean a homosexual male. Although increasingly more members of the LGBT community are using this as an umbrella term.

H = Hormone Replacement Therapy

Beginning Hormone Replacement Therapy (or HRT) can be an important step in the lives of trans people. However, not all trans people choose to go down this route. NB. HRT is also used to alleviate [symptoms of menopause](#) in people of any gender presentation.

I = Intersex

Intersex is an umbrella term that covers a range of chromosomal and hormonal conditions which cause people to not conform neatly within the prescribed male/female binary. It's estimated that nearly 2% of people are intersex, which is the same number as people with red hair. Gender reassignment surgeries are still regularly performed on intersex babies.



J = Just Ask

Not really a term but more of a clarification - if you're not sure of someone's pronouns or identity you can always ask. Make sure you ask politely and respectfully. Where possible, in a safe space. This protects the person's privacy.



K = Kinsey Scale

The Kinsey Scale was developed in the 1940s and measures from 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to 6 (exclusively homosexual). The scale breaks down the binary when it comes to sexuality, as people may move up and down the scale at any point. This demonstrates the fluidity of sexual orientation.



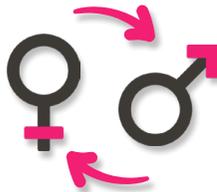
L = Lesbian

Women who are attracted to other women use Lesbian to describe their sexuality, although some may also use Queer, Gay or WLW (Women Loving Women) as well.



M = MTF or FTM

Male to Female or Female to Male are phrases used by some trans people to describe their transition.



N = Non-Binary

People who identify as non-binary don't identify as either male or female. They reject the idea of a gender binary being applied to them. They may use pronouns such as they/them or ze/zir, or a combination of pronouns like he/she.



O = Out

When people tell others about their LGBTQ+ identities, this process is described as coming out. Some people will come out to everyone all at once, or they may come out in stages. As an HR professional you should feel comfortable asking who your colleagues would like to be out to if they come out to you!



P = Pansexual

Similar to bisexual, pansexual means someone who is attracted to people regardless of gender. Often pansexual is used in order to reflect the idea that gender isn't binary.



Q = Queer

This has long been a slur used against the LGBTQ+ community, but increasingly it is being used by people as a term to use instead of LGBTQ+. Some older members of the community still chafe at its use because of its supposed negative connotations.



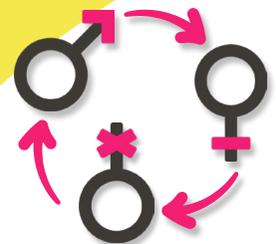
R = Romantic Orientation

As well as sexual orientation, there is also romantic orientation. For many people their romantic attractions mirror their sexual attractions, and historically this has been seen as the norm. For some people this isn't the case.



S = SRS (also known as Gender Affirming Surgery)

Sex Reassignment Surgery or SRS is an umbrella term for procedures to help alleviate gender dysphoria. Including top or bottom surgery, facial feminisation surgery, or liposuction. Not all trans people undergo surgery as part of their transition. Gender Affirming Surgery (GAS) is the more current and accurate term.





T = Transgender

Transgender or simply Trans people are those who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Although there are other terms which have been historically used to describe this identity, many are now seen as slurs by the trans community. We strongly encourage you to use trans or transgender unless you know an individual is comfortable with an alternative term.



U = Undetectable

Since the 1980s we've come a long way from seeing the HIV/AIDS epidemic as being linked exclusively to the gay community. However, it's still true that the LGBTQ+ community bears the brunt of the stigma as well as a lot of the pain. These days with medications like Prep and ART, HIV can be kept at undetectable levels, which means that the amount of the virus in the blood is so low it's undetectable and so cannot be passed on.



V = Volunteer

One of the best ways you can [build psychological safety](#) within your organisation for your LGBTQ+ people is to volunteer your own pronouns and identities to show others it's safe for them to do the same.



W = WLW

WLW stands for Women Loving Women. It was created by communities of colour in the US to move away from the idea that any woman who had emotional, romantic or intimate relationships with other women was a lesbian. This term is growing in usage around the world.



X/Y = Chromosomes

Many people think there are only two combinations of chromosomes XX and XY and therefore only two genetic sexes. This is not true! Not only are there different chromosomal conditions that confound this, but gender and sex are quite different too!



Z = Ze/Zir

This is one of the sets of pronouns non-binary people might use. Ze is typically pronounced "zee" and zir is typically pronounced like "here" with a z before it. It's always acceptable to ask how someone wants their pronouns pronounced.



MORE Resources

This blog post isn't designed to be a one-stop shop. You'll need to do more research to support your people. We've shared a few links where you can start your journey.

- [Stonewall](#)
- [CIPD](#)
- [Trans Eduo](#)
- [The HRC Foundation](#)

The best source of knowledge about your people is... you guessed it YOUR PEOPLE! That's why we recommend listening to them first and foremost. Our Equality of Voice survey is designed to help you understand the diversity within your team and how you can best support them!



Samuel Hurley | Founder | Novos

Being a gender-balanced organisation with a multicultural workforce, we measure 'employee happiness' valuing it more than performance. To ensure inclusivity and continuous improvement of our culture, we run programs to listen to every single member of our team and take everyone's ideas to fuel our collective growth.

[CHECK OUT OUR EQUALITY OF VOICE SURVEY](#)

Measure Your Impact With The Happiness Index



Equality of Voice

Gain an understanding of the diversity, equality and diversity that already exists in your organisation and learn how to support all your people better with our Equality of Voice Survey. [Learn More](#)

Employee Voice

Stay proactive and agile to the needs of your diverse team by using our always-on listening offering - Employee Voice. [Learn More](#)



Onboarding

When hiring a diverse team, understanding their needs from day one is key. Optimise your onboarding process with our series of three dedicated Onboarding Surveys. [Learn More](#)



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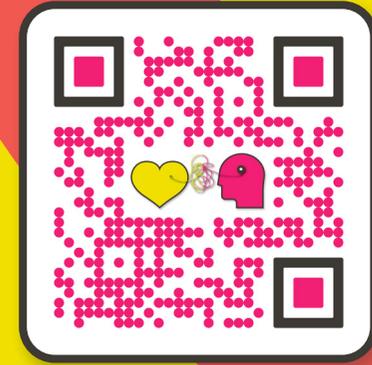
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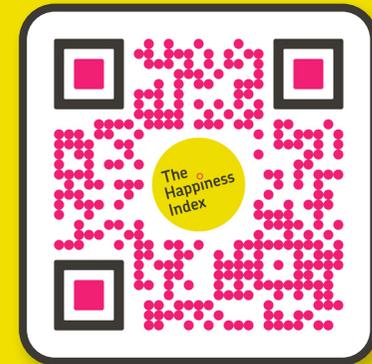
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