

## **LGBTQ Terminology**

**Source:** *Egale Canada Human Rights Trust – [www.egale.ca](http://www.egale.ca)*

**LGBTQ:** An acronym for “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer and Questioning” people.

**Lesbian (adj or n):** A female-identified person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to female-identified people.

**Gay (adj):** A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to someone of the same sex and/or gender—gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals, or refer to male-identified individuals only.

**Bisexual (adj):** A person who is attracted emotionally and sexually to both male-identified and female-identified people.

**Transgender (adj):** A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex—often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people (just like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc.

**Transsexual (adj):** A person whose sex assigned at birth does not correspond with their gender identity. A transsexual woman needs to live and experience life as a woman and a transsexual man needs to live and experience life as a man. Many identify as transgender, rather than transsexual, because they are uncomfortable with the psychiatric connections to the term ‘transsexual’. Some transsexual people may physically alter their body (e.g., sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy) and gender expression to correspond with their gender identity.

**Trans (adj):** A term commonly used to refer to transgender, transsexual and/or gender variant identities and experiences. While it is often used as an umbrella term, some people identify just as trans.

**Two Spirit (or 2-spirit) (adj):** Some Aboriginal people choose to identify as Two Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer. Prior to European colonization, Two Spirit people were respected members of their communities and were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives. Two Spirit persons were often the visionaries, healers and medicine people in their communities. The term Two Spirit affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity—including gender, sexuality, community, culture and spirituality. It is an English term used to stand in for the many Aboriginal language words for Two Spirit.

**Queer (adj):** Historically, a derogatory term for homosexuality, used to insult LGBT people. Although still used as a slur by some, the term has been reclaimed by some members of LGBT communities, particularly youth. In its reclaimed form it can be used as a symbol of pride and affirmation of difference and diversity, or as a means of challenging rigid identity categories.

**Questioning (adj or v):** A person who is unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Sexual Orientation:** A person's capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender.

**Gender Identity:** A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender—their internal sense of being a man, woman, or another gender entirely. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.