

**Androgyne:** A person identifying and/or expressing gender outside of the gender binary. Historically used by people who identify with both masculine and feminine expressions and identities. A term more frequently used before the emergence of contemporary trans-related language. Contemporary constructs of androgyny often centres folks described as white, thin, masculine and AFAB, but this is misleading and a critique of how society may view androgyny and androgynes. See also: gender non-conforming, genderqueer, gender variant, non-binary. **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,” in reference to the gender binary model. A term used to identify people who are not trans, and the experiences of privilege granted on the basis of being cisgender. **Genderqueer:** A term under the trans umbrella which refers to people who identify outside of the male-female binary. Genderqueer people may experience erasure if they are perceived as cisgender. Genderqueer people who are perceived as genderqueer are often subjected to gender policing. See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Non-Binary; Pangender. **Non-Binary (NB):** A continuum or spectrum of gender identities and

# Queer Terminology from A to Q

2018 Edition



**Queersmart**

by QMUNITY



# Queer Terminology from A to Q

QMUNITY recognizes that our work is done on unceded, traditional and ancestral lands of Coast Salish peoples, in particular the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam Nations. This glossary articulates and affirms the power of language, and recognizes language has been used to shape and inform lived experiences, social norms and laws. While reflecting on the content in this book, let us draw parallels to the same way language, the erasure and oppression of languages, and absence of language has informed and impacted Indigenous people across Canada, and in particular Two-Spirit community members.

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This **Q Glossary** may appear to be simply a list of words, but words have power. Words matter.

Words name and describe. If there are no words that fit, then LGBTQ2S+ identities, experiences and realities remain outside of language, silenced and invisible, unable to be recognized, communicated or shared.

Words can be powerful tools used to empower, include, affirm, acknowledge, identify, validate, understand, respect, dignify, unify, humanize, celebrate, embrace and heal.

But words can also be weapons. We know that the children's rhyme that ends with, "but names can never hurt me," just isn't true. Words can be used with the intent to invalidate, intimidate, belittle, bully, divide, dominate, ostracize, erase, judge and ridicule. Many words have been used against LGBTQ2S+ communities in this way.

Words in this glossary reflect the struggle to create, choose, use and reclaim terminology. The struggle for words that build people up instead of tear them down is at the heart of our movement.

QMUNITY affirms the right of individuals to name, define and describe themselves. Respectful and inclusive language honours this right.

Instead of relying on assumptions or labelling others, start by paying close attention to what someone says about themselves. If appropriate, respectfully ask the person “what language would you like me to use?” Do your best to speak and write that back, to them and about them. Honour this, even when it is not the language you yourself might use.

It is people who give words meaning. We do not make meaning in a vacuum, but in the context of relationships that express power, privilege and oppression. The meaning of queer terminology is fluid. They change within the context of time and space, intentions and circumstances, and affect individuals in different ways.

This glossary was developed and revised by QMUNITY staff, volunteers and community members through dialogue and discussion. We welcome your comments and questions! You can contact **QMUNITY** at [education@qmunity.ca](mailto:education@qmunity.ca)

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**AFAB/AMAB:** Acronyms that serve to disrupt the gender binary model; Assigned Female/Male At Birth serves to remind that gender was arbitrarily assigned based on genitalia at birth.

Alternatives: *FAAB/MAAB (Female/Male Assigned At Birth)* or *CAFAB/CAMAB (Coercively Assigned Female/Male At Birth)*.

**Agender:** A person who does not identify with any gender, or who does not experience gender.

**Ally:** A person who supports and celebrates LGBTQ2S+ identities, interrupts and challenges oppressive remarks and actions of others, and willingly explores heterosexist and ciscentric biases within themselves. Being an ally requires action: telling colleagues that their jokes are inappropriate; advocating for the health, wellness and acceptance of LGBTQ2S+ family members, etc.

**Androgyne:** A person identifying and/or expressing gender outside of the gender binary. Historically used by people who identify with both masculine and feminine expressions and identities. A term more frequently used before the emergence of contemporary trans-related language. Contemporary constructs of androgyny often centres folks described as white, thin, masculine and AFAB, but this is misleading and a critique of how society may view androgyny and androgynes.

*See also: gender non-conforming, genderqueer, gender variant, non-binary*

**Aromantic:** Someone who does not experience romantic attraction to others. Romantic attraction is different from sexual attraction.

Aromanticism can be considered a spectrum, with some aromantic people experiencing desire for varying types of intimacy. This desire may fluctuate over time.

Aromantic people experience high levels of invisibility, trivialization, and pathologization.

Alternatives: *Aro, arom*

**Asexual:** Someone who does not experience sexual attraction for other individuals. Asexuality can be

considered a spectrum, with some asexual people experiencing desire for varying types of physical intimacy. This desire may fluctuate over time. Asexual people experience high levels of invisibility, trivialization, and pathologization.

Alternatives: *Ace.*

## B

**Bi-Erasure:** A culmination of biases, attitudes and language that serves to ignore, remove, or reframe evidence of bisexuality in history, academia, news media, and other primary sources. In its most extreme form, bisexual erasure can include the denial that bisexuality exists. An oft-heard example of bi-erasure is claiming that someone might only be 'going through a phase,' or 'is not yet ready to come out *fully* as gay/lesbian.'

**Biphobia:** Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against bisexuals and bisexual behaviour. Biphobia exerts a powerful, negative force on the lives of bisexual people.

Some examples of biphobia in action are disparaging jokes, verbal abuse or acts of violence targeted at bisexual people, or the dismissal of bisexuality as an inferior, invalid or irrelevant expression of sexuality. Bisexual people often face biphobia and discrimination in both queer and non-queer communities.

**Bisexual/Biromantic:** An individual who is attracted to, and may form relationships with at least two genders. Some bisexual people describe being bi as being attracted to men and women; some bi people consider it being attracted to their own and other genders.

A bi person may feel equally attracted to each gender, or may experience stronger attractions to one gender while still having feelings for another; this ratio of attraction may vary over time.

Bisexuality, like homosexuality and heterosexuality, may be either a period in the process of self-discovery, or a long-term identity.

**Being Read:** Refers to the process where factors such as somebody's body shape, voice, gender expression, etc. are used to make assumptions about that someone's gender identity, sex assigned at birth or sexual orientation.

**Blending:** A term sometimes used to refer to the state of an LGBTQ2S person not being visibly recognizable as LGBTQ2S. People who can blend may experience less queerphobia or transphobia and discrimination.

Some LGBTQ2S people consider 'blending' to be very important for them, while others feel that choosing not to blend is an act of rejecting heterosexism and ciscentrism. One's own privileges may inform one's ability or need to blend. Some people may need to blend or "pass" in order to stay safe in certain environments (eg. a workplace, or family gathering). Blending, or related terms "passing" and "stealth" are contested terms since it may connote a "passing grade" or imply an external pressure to strive towards being read a certain way.

*See also: Being Read.*

**Butch:** A term of significance in queer women's histories. A word that some queer people use to describe gender expression and/or social and relationship roles that are perceived as being masculine.

**Ciscentrism/Cisnormative:** A system of attitudes, bias and discrimination in favour of cisgender people that marginalizes and renders invisible trans people and treats their needs and identities as less important than those of cisgender people, who are considered to exist within social normalcy. *See also: cissexism.*

**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,” in reference to the gender binary model. A term used to identify people who are not trans, and the experiences of privilege granted on the basis of being cisgender.

**Cissexism:** Active forms of discrimination that reinforce the belief that cisgender and cissexual people represent the ‘norm’ and so are superior to trans folk.

This results in a systemic oppression that privileges cisgender and cissexual folk over trans folk. *See also: ciscentrism.*

**Cissexual:** Identifying with the same biological sex that one was assigned at birth. Cissexual is not in common use; most literature will reference cisgender.

**Colonization:** The process and practice of domination, control, and forced subjugation of one people over another. In the context of Turtle Island (specifically Canada), European settlers began the process of the colonization of Indigenous peoples as early as the 1600s and continuing to this day, including through residential schools, violent assimilation tactics such as the 60’s Scoop, policies that prohibited cultural roles and practices (including the attempted erasure of Two-Spirit folk), and limiting or criminalizing access to land and resources.

**Coming Out:** Or 'coming out of the closet,' is the process of becoming aware of one's gender and/or sexuality, accepting it, and telling others about it. This is an ongoing process that may not include everybody in all aspects of one's life. 'Coming out' usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be 'out' in only some situations or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some may never 'come out' to anyone beside themselves.

The significance, importance and validation associated with 'coming out' is criticized as a Westernized concept; cultures and languages around the world may not have a similar term, as issues of intimacy, personal relationships and sexual activity are considered

deeply personal and private, and/or not central to one's identity.

**Crossdresser:** Refers to people who wear clothing traditionally associated with a different gender to that with which they identify. Some cross-dressers identify as trans while others do not. Crossdresser, or crossdressing, was a frequently used term before the evolution of contemporary trans-related language; today, some people may find this term offensive. Some crossdressers prefer to do so privately, while others cross-dress publicly all or part of the time. Cross-dressers may or may not have a gender identity related to the clothing they are wearing. 'Cross-dresser' has generally replaced the term 'transvestite.'

## D

**Dead Name:** Refers to the name that a person (often a trans person) was given at birth, but is no longer actively using.

The heavy connotation of the word dead is intended to stress the inappropriateness and offensiveness of a person's terminated name



(which is typically associated with their birth-assigned gender, and therefore effectively misgenders them). It is not appropriate to ask people about their dead names. Some trans people use the term “birth name.”

**Drag Performers:** Refers to people who dress in a showy or flamboyant way that exaggerates gender stereotypes, often for purposes of performative art

and/or entertainment. Within drag performances, there can be Drag Kings, Queens and Performers. Some people who perform professionally outside of queer communities prefer the term ‘male/female impersonator.’

**Dyke:** A lesbian. This term has been reclaimed by lesbians as a positive and political term, but can still be used as an insult.

## F

**Fag, faggot:** A gay man. This term has been reclaimed by some gay men, but can still be used as an insult.

### **Female-to-Male Spectrum**

**(FTM):** Generally used to refer to anyone assigned female at birth, and who identifies or expresses their gender as masculine all or part of the time.

Some people prefer the term ‘transitioning to male’ (or male, man or trans man), as this does not imply that they were once female-identified.

**Femme:** A term that some queer people use to describe gender expression and/or social and relationship roles that are perceived by many as being feminine.

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

*See also: Lesbian; Queer*

**Gender:** The social construction of concepts such as masculinity and femininity in a specific culture in time. One may identify as being a man, woman, or another gender. 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). Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.

**Gender Affirming:** A broadly applied term to describe any number of actions, behaviours or supports used in validating someone's gender expression or identity. For example, a teacher who refers to a student by the pronouns they

want people to call them is using gender affirming language.

**Gender Affirming Garments:**

Any number of garments and/or physical aides used in affirming someone's gender. Most commonly, gender affirming garments might refer to binders, bras and breast forms, and may also be used to refer to wigs, gaffs, packers (penile prosthetics), and other textiles, garments and/or accessories.

**Gender Attribution / Gender**

**Perception:** The process of making assumptions about another person's gender, based on factors such as choice of dress, voice modulation, body shape, etc. *See also: Being Read.*

**Gender Binary:** The view that there are only two totally distinct, opposite and static genders (masculine and feminine) to identify with and express. While many societies view gender through this lens and consider this binary system to be universal, a

number of cultures recognise more than two genders. Across all societies there are also many folk who experience gender fluidly, identifying with different genders at different times.

*See also: Appendix I, pg. 22*

**Gender Dysphoria:** A term introduced in the DSM 5, gender dysphoria replaces what used to be referred to as gender identity disorder (GID). Gender dysphoria refers to the internalized conflict and distress experienced by an individual whose assigned gender at birth, and the gender with which they identify, are different. Gender identity disorder is considered outdated and offensive (diagnosing a trans person with a disorder, simply for being trans); gender dysphoria is generally viewed as more appropriate, but there are many trans folk and their allies who believe the diagnosis is still problematic.

**Gender Expression:** How one outwardly expresses gender; for example, through name and pronoun choice, style of dress, voice modulation, etc.

How one expresses gender might not necessarily reflect one's actual gender identity.

**Gender Identity:** One's internal and psychological sense of oneself as man, woman, both, in between, neither, or another understanding of gender. People who question their gender identity may feel unsure of their gender or believe they are not of the same gender they were assigned at birth.

**Gender Non-Conforming (GNC):** A term under the trans umbrella which refers to people who do not conform to society's expectations for their gender roles or gender expression. GNC is frequently used to label other people, especially those who may not yet have the language to describe themselves (eg. young children who are not conforming to society's expectations of their assigned gender).

*See also: Agender; Genderqueer; Non-Binary; Pangender.*

**Gender Policing:** The imposition or enforcement of normative gender expressions/roles on an individual who is perceived as not adequately performing, through appearance or behaviour, the gender that they are perceived to be. Gender policing occurs through ridicule, trivialization, laws and policies, exclusion, harassment, or violence. It may also occur through social messages that privilege cisgender expression and heteronormative gender roles.

*See also: Misogyny; Transmisogyny.*

**Gender Roles:** The socially constructed and culturally specific behaviours such as communication styles, careers, family roles, and more,

imposed on people based on their biological sex assigned at birth. It is important to note that gender interpretations and expectations vary widely among cultures and often change over time. Some cultures have more than two genders, and consequently more than two gender roles.

**Genderqueer:** A term under the trans umbrella which refers to people who identify outside of the male-female binary. Genderqueer people may experience erasure if they are perceived as cisgender. Genderqueer people who are perceived as genderqueer are often subjected to gender policing.

*See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Non-Binary; Pangender.*

## H

**Heteroflexible and**

**Homoflexible:** A term used by some to identify that they are primarily attracted to one gender but open to possible attractions or relationships with people of other genders.

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

**Heterosexism:** A system of attitudes, bias, and discrimination in favor of opposite-gender sexuality and relationships. This includes the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to queerness. Heterosexism also refers to organizational discrimination against non-heterosexuals or against behaviours not stereotypically heterosexual. One example of this might be a girl who is told that when she grows up she will have a husband and not presented with any other options to consider.

**Heterosexual/Heteroromantic:**

A person who primarily feels attracted to people of the 'opposite' gender; frequently referred to as 'straight.'

**Homonormativity:** A system of behaviours, attitudes and biases that privilege certain experiences or identities within the LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Homonormativity explains how certain aspects of the queer community can perpetuate or replicate

assumptions, values, and behaviours that hurt and marginalize many folks within the LGBTQ2S+ communities, including through sexism, racism and misogyny. An example of homonormativity is the assumption or pressure for LGBTQ2S+ people to be in a marriage (an institution normalized and revered by heteronormative culture).

**Homophobia:** Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional, interpersonal, and internalized homophobia. Many forms of homophobia are related to how restrictive binary gender roles are (i.e. a lesbian who is harassed with homophobic language for being perceived to be masculine). Many of the problems faced by LGBTQ2S people, including health and income disparities, stem from homophobia and heterosexism.

*See also: biphobia, lesbophobia, transphobia and queerphobia.*

**Homosexual/Homoromantic:**

A person who is mostly attracted to people of their own gender. Because homosexual has been widely used negatively and/or in a

cold and clinical way, most LGBTQ+ people prefer the terms 'lesbian,' 'gay,' or 'queer.' LGBTQ+ people prefer the terms 'lesbian,' 'gay,' or 'queer.'

**Inclusive Language:** The use of gender non-specific language (i.e. 'partner' instead of 'husband', or 'they' instead of 'she') to avoid assumptions around gender identity and sexual orientation, and to enhance the accessibility of information and services. Educational, social service, and health professionals are especially encouraged to use inclusive language until advised otherwise by the person they are talking to or about.

**Internalized Homophobia:**

The experience of shame, guilt, or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of sexual attraction for a person of the same gender.

**Intersectionality:** A theory coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to draw attention

to how different systems of oppressive structures and types of discrimination interact and manifest in the lives of minorities; for example, a queer black woman may experience oppression on the basis of her sexuality, gender, and race – and a unique experience of oppression based on how those identities intersect in her life.

**Intersex:** General term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy, genetic makeup, or hormonal levels that do not seem to fit the 'typical' definitions of male or female. In many parts of the western world, individuals who were born intersex had oppressive, non-consensual and/or unnecessary medical and

surgical interventions, including gender reassignment surgery and aggressive hormonal therapy during childhood. 'Intersex' has replaced the term 'hermaphrodite', which is widely considered to be

out-dated, inaccurate and offensive. An intersex person may or may not identify as part of the trans community, however the terms 'intersex', 'transsexual' and 'trans' are distinct and should not be used interchangeably.

## L

**LGBTQ2S:** Acronym used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Two-Spirit (2S) people. Additional letters, or a + sign, are sometimes added to this acronym (i.e. LGBTQ+, LGBTQI2S, etc.). Making fun of the length of this acronym can have a trivializing or erasing effect on the group that longer acronyms seek to actively include.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is primarily 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.

*See also: Gay; Queer*

**Lesbophobia:** Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against lesbians or lesbian behaviour. This can take place from outside of the queer community, but may also be a product of stereotyping, internalized queerphobia, or misogyny within the queer community. An example of this may be a gay man who believes that all lesbians are aggressive.

**Male-to-Female Spectrum**

**(MTF):** Generally used to refer to anyone assigned male at birth and who identifies or expresses their gender as a female all or part of the time. Some people prefer the term 'transitioning to female' (or female, woman, femme or trans woman), as this does not imply that they were once male-identified.

**Misgender:** To refer to someone (especially a trans person) by using a word, like a pronoun or form of address (i.e. sir, ma'am), that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. The act of misgendering can be done intentionally and with malice, or with ignorance; both are considered harmful. A related term, *ungender*, refers to the mental process by which a person tries to understand someone within a gender construct they don't identify with, most especially after learning about one's trans status.

**Misogyny:** The fear of the power of femininity that leads to the belief or attitude that masculinity, and specifically maleness, is not only desired, but more powerful and naturally dominant over femininity, and specifically femaleness. Misogyny represents itself in: men claiming public spaces (i.e. cat-calling); maleness being understood as the default (i.e. World Cup vs. Women's World Cup); men being overrepresented in media, television and film roles; and overwhelming statistics related to men's violence against women.  
*See also: transmisogyny .*

**Monogamy:** The practice of maintaining one, and only one, romantic and/or sexual relationship, to the exclusion of any other intimate relationship.



## N

**Non-Binary (NB):** A continuum or spectrum of gender identities and expressions, often based on the rejection of the gender binary's assumption that gender is strictly an either/or option of male/men or female/women, based on sex assigned at birth. Non-binary can be both a specific term of identification, and/or an umbrella term.

*See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Genderqueer; Pangender.*

**Non-Monogamy:** An umbrella term to describe a practice of maintaining more than one romantic and/or sexual relationship at the same time. *See also: Monogamy; Open Relationship; Polyamory.*

## O

**Open Relationship:** A relationship in which those involved agree that they may have sexual or romantic relations with others. Open relationships may be understood as consensually non-monogamous, but not all open relationships are polyamorous. *See also: Monogamy; Non-Monogamy; Polyamory.*

**Oppositional Sexism:** The belief that masculinity and femininity are rigid, mutually exclusive, categories.

Also the idea that men should not display any behaviours or characteristics commonly associated with women, and vice versa.

**Outing Someone:** Accidentally or intentionally publicly revealing another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, trans status and/or relationship status without their permission. This can cause social, physical, emotional, or economic danger for the person being 'outed.'

Outing someone can sometimes be done as an act of hate.

## P

**Pangender:** Refers to people who identify and/or express the many shades of gender. *See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Genderqueer; Non-Binary.*

**Panphobia:** The fear and dislike of pansexuality. Panphobia exerts a powerful, negative force on the lives of pansexual people. Some examples of panphobia in action are disparaging jokes, verbal abuse, acts of violence targeted at pansexual people, or the dismissal of pansexuality as an inferior, invalid or irrelevant expression of sexuality. Pansexual people often face panphobia and discrimination in both queer and non-queer discourse. (Note: this word also has a different and separate meaning: an irrational fear of everything.)

**Pansexual/Panromantic:** An individual who is attracted to and may form relationships with any or all genders. *See also: Bisexual/Biromantic.*

**Passing/To Pass:** A term sometimes used to refer to the state of an LGBTQ2S person not being visibly recognizable as LGBTQ2S. People who “pass” may experience less queerphobia or transphobia and discrimination. Some LGBTQ2S 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 ciscentrism. 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.

*See also: Being Read; Blending; Gender Attribution.*

**Patriarchy:** A social system where the bulk of power, authority, and control in society is held by men. This assigns greater importance to male identities and issues than to people of other gender identities.

**Polyamory:** The practice of maintaining more than one romantic and/or sexual relationship simultaneously, and in a consensual manner (all parties are aware of the situation). Not all polyamorous folk will have more than one relationship at the same time. *See also: Monogamy; Non-Monogamy; Open Relationship.*

**Pronouns:** A word used to refer to someone, without using their name(s). It is important to not make

assumptions about the pronouns a person may use about themselves; in the same way you might introduce yourself with your name and then ask for someone else's name, you can do so with pronouns: Eg: "My name is Erika, and I use the pronouns they and them; I don't want to misgender you, can you let me know what your names and pronouns are?"

*See also: Appendix II, pg. 25*

**Privilege:** Refers to the social, economic and political advantages or rights held by people from dominant groups on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, etc. For example, cisgender men often experience privilege that people of other genders do not have.

## Q

**QTIPOC:** An acronym for Queer, Trans, and Intersex People of Colour. Queer people of colour often experience intersecting oppressions on the basis of race, gender, sexual

orientation and other factors, including within queer and trans communities. Some literature may also use QTIBIPOC (Queer, Trans, and Intersex, Black and Indigenous People of Colour) to call

attention to the specific mechanisms and impacts of oppression experienced by Black and/or Indigenous communities.

*See also: Intersectionality.*

**Queer:** A term becoming more widely used among LGBTQ2S+ communities because of its inclusiveness. 'Queer' can be used to refer to the spectrum of non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender people and provides convenient shorthand for 'LGBTQ.' 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,' and it is important to acknowledge the different histories of queer and trans communities.

**Queerphobia:** A term used to include all forms of homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

**Questioning:** A term sometimes used by those in the process of exploring personal ideas of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as choosing not to identify with any other label.

## R

**Rainbow Flag/Colours:** A symbol of queer presence, welcome, and pride which represents the diversity of queer communities.

**Reclaimed Language:** Language that has traditionally been used to hurt and degrade a community but which community members

have reclaimed and used as their own. Reclaimed language can be extremely important as a way of taking the negative power out of a word, claiming space, and empowering oneself. However, reclaimed language is also tricky and, depending on the context and the speaker, can be hurtful and dangerous.

Some examples are 'dyke,' 'fag,' 'homo,' 'queen,' and 'queer.' Although these terms can be used in a positive way by those reclaiming them, it is still offensive to hear them used by others whose intent is to hurt. Although many LGBTQ2S people have reclaimed these terms, there are still others who consider any usage of these terms as offensive, particularly when used by people who do not personally identify with those

terms.

**Relational Words:** Many words that exist to describe relationships are heteronormative, limiting, or inaccurate in the context of queer and trans relationships. Therefore, LGBTQ2S+ communities have adapted language that may more accurately reflect important and intimate relationships, for example, *chosen family* or *partner*.

## S

**Sex:** Refers to the physical and physiological characteristics chosen to assign humans as male, female or intersex. It is determined by characteristics such as sexual and reproductive anatomy and genetic make-up.

**Sexual/Romantic Orientation:** Refers to a person's experiences of sexual and romantic attraction to other people, or to no one. Many people become aware of these feelings during adolescence or even earlier, while some do

not realize or acknowledge their attractions (especially same-gender attractions) until much later in life. Many people experience their orientation(s) fluidly, and feel attraction or degrees of attraction to different genders at different points in their lives. Orientations are defined by feelings of attraction rather than behaviour.

**SOGI:** An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities; often used in institutional settings

(i.e. health care or education), SOGI, or SOGI Minorities, is used in place of LGBTQ2S+ acronyms. SOGI may be preferred as it decreases the risk of erasure, since the LGBTQ2S+ acronym omits

identities or terms of self-identification. SOGI as an acronym fails to capture the spectrum of romantic orientations, and intersex folk. Alternatives: SGM (Sexuality and Gender Minorities).

## T

**Traditional Sexism:** The belief that male gender identities and masculine gender expressions are superior to female and/or feminine ones. *See also: Misogyny; Transmisogyny.*

**Transfeminine:** Describes someone who identifies as trans, and whose gender and/or expression is feminine.

**Transgender (Trans, Trans\*):** Transgender, frequently abbreviated to 'trans' or 'trans\*' (the asterisk was intended to actively include non-binary and/or non-static gender identities such as genderqueer and genderfluid, but has fallen out of frequent use throughout the 2010s) is an umbrella term for a wide range of experiences and

identities for people whose gender does not match with the gender they were assigned at birth. Identifying as 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. *See also: Agender; Gender Non-Conforming; Genderqueer; Non-Binary; Pangender.*

**Transition:** Refers to the process during which trans people may change their gender expression and/or bodies. There are many ways a person may go about a transition, which can loosely be understood within three areas:

1. *Social Transition* – name and pronoun change, wardrobe or hairstyle, legal ID, etc.;

2. *Medical Transition* – including hormonal therapy;

3. *Surgical Transition* – including gender affirming surgeries.

There is no one ‘right’ or ‘complete’ way for someone to transition; it is rather best understood as a personal journey to support someone’s health and happiness. As allies to people transitioning, one can practice generosity and openness by thinking of a transition as a *transition out of a particular gender, rather than a transition to a pre-determined end-point.*

**Trans Man:** Describes someone who identifies as trans and whose gender identity is male.

**Transmasculine:** Describes someone who identifies as trans and whose gender and/or expression is masculine.

**Transmisogyny:** Transphobia directed at trans women and transfeminine folk that reinforces male power and privilege.  
*See also: Misogyny.*

**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.

**Transsexual:** Many folk feel that the word transsexual has medical overtones or is used inaccurately and so prefer the terms ‘transgender’ or trans.’ A transsexual person may change elements of their body through surgeries or hormonal treatments.

**Transvestite:** A medical term that was historically used to label cross dressing as a mental illness and sexual perversion. This term is outdated, problematic, and generally considered offensive.  
*See also: Crossdresser.*

**Trans Woman:** Describes someone who identifies as trans and whose gender identity is female.

**Two-Spirit (2-Spirit):** A term used by many Indigenous communities on Turtle Island (typically known as Canada & US) to describe people with diverse gender identities, gender expressions, gender roles, and sexual orientations. Two-Spirit people have been and are viewed differently across different Indigenous nations. Two-Spirit people were included and respected in most Indigenous communities, sometimes considered sacred and highly-revered. They often took on important roles as healers, mediators, and warriors.

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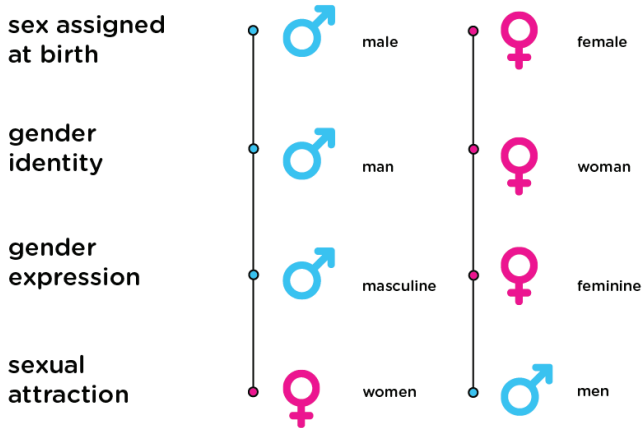
One of the devastating impacts of colonization was the attempted erasure of Two-Spirit people from Indigenous societies, due to the homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic values brought over and enforced by European settlers, which still effect many nations today. Despite this, Two-Spirit people have survived and their presence continues to grow in size and visibility, reclaiming traditional roles in their communities, and strengthening their relationships with their cultures and families. Not all people who are Indigenous and gender/sexually diverse will name themselves as Two-Spirit and this is their self-determination. Two-Spirit is something embodied exclusively by Indigenous people and is not to be taken on by non-Indigenous people.



# APPENDIX I

## Gender/ Sexuality Models

### 1) Binary Model



The binary model of gender and sexuality suggests that there are only two static, rigid and immovable genders, as determined by the sex one was assigned at birth. All people are assumed to be heterosexual.

For example, if a person is assigned female at birth, the binary model suggests their gender identity will “align” and be a girl/woman; they will express themselves in feminine terms (dress, interests, mannerisms, hairstyle, voice, etc.); and later in life be attracted to men.

The binary model is deeply embedded in Eurocentric views and cultural understandings of gender and sexuality. It has served to minimize, erase or pathologize being queer, trans, and/or intersex while also silencing other cultures’ understandings of gender, gender roles, expression and sexuality.

## 2) Spectrum Model



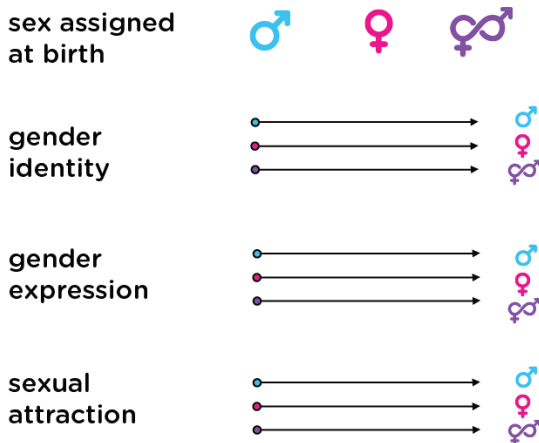
The spectrum model has two primary distinctions from the binary model:

**(i)** Rather than being one or the other (eg. man or woman), there is a spectrum of possibilities in which a person could identify their sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexuality.

**(ii)** Each element of the spectrum model (sex assigned at birth, gender identity, etc.) is independent and autonomous from the other elements. For example, one's gender identity does not define or determine one's sexuality.

While the spectrum model allows for some fluidity between genders/sexualities, and also removes assumptions held in the binary model, the spectrum model still reinforces a male/female, man/woman, masculine/feminine binary by positing these concepts on either end of the spectrum.

### 3) Spectrum Model 2.0



*Adapted from: The Gender Unicorn; [www.transstudent.org](http://www.transstudent.org)*

Spectrum Model 2.0 builds off of the original, allowing for independence and autonomy between the different elements. It is enhanced by recognizing one's femaleness/maleness, masculinity/femininity, etc. exist on their own spectrums.

Importantly, this model also allows for expressions of gender, sex and sexuality outside of or beyond the male/female, man/woman binary reinforced in both the binary and spectrum models.

## APPENDIX II

### Pronouns Chart

Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive	Pronunciation
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	Pronounced as it looks
He	Him	His	His	Himself	Pronounced as it looks
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves	Pronounced as it looks
Ze	Zir	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Pronounced: zee, zere, zere, zeres, zereself

Pronouns provided above are a non-exhaustive list, and meant to help understand grammatical use of some non-binary pronoun examples.

**QMUNITY** is BC's Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Resource Centre. Our services include:

• **Queer Competency Education & Training**

- Training & educational workshops
- Facilitation services
- Consultation services
- Public engagements & community dialogues



For more information please contact  
[education@qmunity.ca](mailto:education@qmunity.ca)

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- gender identity
- stopping bullying



For more information please contact  
[pridespeaks@qmunity.ca](mailto:pridespeaks@qmunity.ca)

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**QMUNITY**



### **Our mission**

To improve queer, trans, and Two-Spirit lives through services, connection and leadership.

### **Our vision**

Vibrant, diverse and celebrated queer, trans, and Two-Spirit communities, where individuals are empowered to live their lives fully, free from discrimination.

**Registered under the Society Act of BC as:**

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