



positive space

**Positive Space Training
McMaster University
Participant Handbook**

WELCOME TO MCMASTER UNIVERSITY'S POSITIVE SPACE PROGRAM

McMaster University's Positive Space Program is available to all employees and students. The Program is a university-wide initiative offered through the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services (www.hres.mcmaster.ca) and is available to campus members who are interested in creating welcoming spaces that are free of all oppressive behaviours including harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity.

Goals:

- To raise awareness about the diversity in gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation that exists at McMaster and within the broader LGBTTTTIQQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning) and MOGAI (marginalized orientations, gender identities, and intersex) communities.
- To challenge the invisibility and silence that marginalizes and excludes members of the LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities.
- To provide opportunities for those who are committed to becoming allies to:
 - proclaim their support for LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI persons; and,
 - to demonstrate their commitment to equity and inclusion.
- To make the McMaster University campus a more respectful, welcoming and safe space for all members of the LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities, specifically, and for all students, staff and faculty members and visitors to campus, generally.

Objectives of the Positive Space Workshop:

- To share information and learn more about LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities and our/their diversity;
- To enhance our understanding of the issues and barriers faced by members of LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities;
- To develop skills in order to respond appropriately to concerns raised by LGBTTTTIQQ- and MOGAI-identified individuals; and,
- To identify safer and more inclusive Positive Spaces at McMaster University.

WORKSHOP GUIDELINES (Adapted from GLSEN Safe Space)

- Show respect. You may hear ideas and opinions that you strongly disagree with. As you listen to others, make sure that your words and body language show respect towards the speaker(s). Be supportive of the “place” from which they are speaking.
- Speak your own truth. Speak from your own personal experiences and avoid judging the thoughts or experiences of others. Use I-statements such as “I think” or “in my experience.” Avoid generalizations and “You should...” statements. The goal is not to convince others to change their feelings or opinions.
- Be open to new ideas. Be open to considering new information and new ways of doing things.
- Ask questions. You’re probably not the only person with the same questions and this workshop is the place to ask what’s on your mind. Remember to phrase all your questions in a respectful manner.
- Disclose cautiously. Although we are all asked to respect confidentiality, there is no way of ensuring that the information shared in the workshop will remain in the room. If you choose to share something about yourself, please remember that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If you share information about others, avoid using real names or identifying information.
- Respect commitments. While you are encouraged to take care of your personal needs throughout the workshop, please honour your commitment to be present by turning off cell-phones and other devices and by avoiding unnecessary interruptions.
- Respect time constraints. While you are encouraged to express your opinions or ask any related questions, please respect the fact that the workshop is time-limited. The facilitator(s) may have to wrap-up an important conversation in order to make sure the workshop ends on time.
- Continue the conversation. Not all questions and issues will be resolved during this session. Creating a Positive Space is an ongoing process; therefore, expect and accept non-closure around issues that are raised for discussion.
- Add your own guidelines...

LGBTTTIQQ AND MOGAI: INITIALS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Please keep in mind that language and definitions are complex. They are constantly being challenged and, as a result, they change and evolve. Community members may have different ways of defining themselves and may prefer to use different words to describe themselves and their lived realities.

For a more comprehensive listing of words and definitions, please see the “Glossary of Terms” at the back of this package.

LGBTTTIQQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning. Some of these terms refer to sexual orientation and some of them refer to gender identity. Some don’t fit neatly into either of these categories. This acronym is also often shortened to LGBTQ+.

MOGAI: marginalized orientations, gender identities, and intersex. Sometimes written as MOGII, this acronym is considered by some to be more inclusive of groups who tend to be left out of the LGBTTTIQQ. It is often more accepted by persons who are asexual or grey asexual, and persons who are intersex.

SEX

Sex: Sex is the classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of external genitalia. It also includes a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs and genitals. Sex is also something that some people do.

GENDER

Cisgender: A relatively unfamiliar word meaning “not transgender.” The prefix, “cis,” is pronounced “sis” and means “on this side of” or “not across.” A person who is born male and identifies as a man, is usually considered to be a cisgender person.

Gender expression: How an individual communicates their concepts of masculinity, femininity, or rejection of these constructs to the world. This can include clothing, body language, tone, word choice and more. In our immediate context individuals are expected to choose to identify as man or woman, but not both or neither.

Gender identity: An individual’s concept of their masculinity or femininity or their concept of self as related to labels such as trans, woman, androgynous, gender queer, man, and others. Gender identity is a deeply felt understanding of self.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Bisexual (Bi)/Pansexual: A term that refers to persons who have sexual attraction and/or desire for persons of similar and different sexes than themselves. Some individuals prefer terms like “pansexual” or “fluid” as they feel that “bi” reinforces the gender binary and excludes persons who do not fit neatly into the categories of “man” or “woman.”

Homosexuality: A term that began as a medical diagnosis in psychiatry to refer to a deviancy whereby people were sexually attracted to and in particular had sexual activity with persons of the same sex. Because of the medical and diagnostic nature of this term, it can be considered offensive by some to be referred to or labelled as homosexual. It is best to avoid using this term when referring to people.

Asexuality: A term used by many individuals who have little to no sexual desire. This is not the same as celibacy, which is a conscious choice not to act on sexual desire.

Grey Asexual/Greysexual: A term used by some persons within asexual communities who may have some sexual desires, but they are weak or infrequent. Persons who identify as grey asexual or greysexual is also used by some individuals who only have some sexual desires after they have established an emotional bond with another.

DEFINITIONS THAT DEFY NEAT CATEGORIES

Intersectionality: A word that refers to the fact that we have multiple aspects to our identity, and to how we feel, think, talk about, and relate to the world. It also refers to how those different aspects of our identity influence how we are perceived and how we experience situations and other people’s behaviour.

For example, someone who identifies as a Black, queer woman who has a disability, may experience homophobia differently than someone who is a White, queer man who does not have a disability. Racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia are not discreet, separate experiences. Our perceptions are complex and this should not be downplayed or ignored when listening to someone talk about their unique experience in the world.

Queer: A word that was once considered a slur but has since been reclaimed by some community members as a source of pride. Some people still view the word as an insult. “Queer” is also used as an umbrella term that may describe any sexuality, gender identity or gender expression that falls outside mainstream “heteronormative” expectations.

Questioning: This term refers to the fact that some individuals are in the process of questioning their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. They may choose to explore the various options available to them as they explore their gender and sexual identification and presentation.

Two-Spirit: An umbrella term used by some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit persons on Turtle Island/North America to describe persons who non-Indigenous people now call LGBTTTTIQQ. Two-Spirit individuals were revered in many Indigenous cultures before colonization. They were believed to be closer to the Creator, in that they housed both masculinity and femininity, and walked with a balance of nurturer and warrior spirits.

The use and understanding of Two-Spirit can vary depending on an individual's teachings and understanding of the term. Some persons use the term interchangeably with other terms for gender or sexual orientation (e.g., Two-Spirit = trans, Two-Spirit = bi or lesbian), while others feel that the term relates to a social role or position, and is separate from gender or sexual identity (e.g., Two-Spirit = warrior/nurturer, Two-Spirit ≠ gay).

There is some disagreement as to whether Two-Spirit can/should be used by or applied to persons who are non-Indigenous, and so the term should be used with care. It can appear to be tokenistic, or as a form of colonization if it is not used keeping in mind the history of racism, invisibilization and erasure of Indigenous concepts of sex, sexual orientation, and gender by European norms.

Intersex: A person who is born with some combination of male and female characteristics as traditionally defined by social norms. Depending on whether the genitals are involved, doctors may recommend surgery to make the child appear more closely in line with either male or female categories. The Intersex Movement seeks to halt medically unnecessary pediatric surgeries and hormone treatments which attempt to “normalize” infants into the dominant “male” and “female” sex system.

The term “hermaphrodite” is no longer an appropriate term to apply to people. Many members of intersex communities find the term both archaic and offensive.

OTHER IMPORTANT TERMS

Biphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of people who are attracted to more than one gender. As with homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia, biphobia exists both within and outside of the LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities.

Heteronormativity: Practices and institutions that privilege heterosexuality, straight relationships, and traditional gender roles as “natural.” It implies that people must fall into one of only two distinct sexes.

Heterosexism: The assumption (made by institutions or individuals) that everyone is heterosexual, and/or that heterosexuality is inherently superior to same sex/same gender attraction or bisexuality; any prejudiced attitude, action or practice that subordinates people because of their non-heterosexual identity.

Homophobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of people who do not conform to rigid heteronormative sex roles and sexuality expectations. Homophobia is an offshoot of both sexism and heterosexism.

Lesbophobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of women who identify as, or are perceived to be, lesbian. Like biphobia, homophobia and transphobia, lesbophobia exists within and outside of LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities.

Transphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of people who identify as, or are perceived to be trans and non-gender-conforming. This term may also refer to people who are unable or unwilling to deal with gender ambiguity.

PUTTING UP A POSITIVE SPACE LOGO

Why display a Positive Space logo?

The Positive Space logo indicates your support for LGBTTTTIQQ- and MOGAI-individuals and communities and sends a message that you welcome questions and requests for assistance.

You may not have all the answers, but the logo indicates that you will be supportive, empathetic and helpful around gender and sexual orientation concerns, and that you will refer individuals to appropriate services and resources.

When you put up a Positive Space logo, it means that you will:

- Actively work to create a safer, respectful and confidential support network for LGBTTTTIQQ- and MOGAI-identified individuals at McMaster University;
- Respond to questions or concerns (particularly regarding gender and sexual orientation) in a sensitive and helpful manner to the best of your ability;
- Maintain appropriate boundaries concerning your role as a Positive Space Provider; for instance, Positive Space Providers are not trained as counsellors, but they have sufficient information about community and campus resources to make an appropriate referral;
- Provide resources and referrals to queer-positive counsellors and/or social service providers, as required;
- Educate yourself about oppression, intersectionality, heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia; and,
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

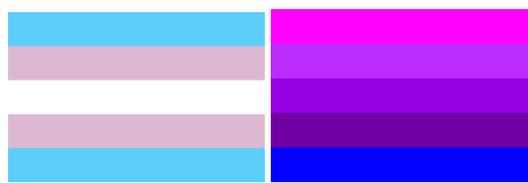
QUEER CULTURAL SYMBOLS

These are only some of the common and not-so-common symbols that some members of the LGBTQ-identified communities identify with. There are many more. As with words, different individuals and groups may have different dislikes or preferences.

TRANS COMMUNITIES



This symbol combines elements from both the male and female symbols. This symbol is becoming more popular on all-gender and gender-neutral washrooms to indicate that trans-identified and non-gender-conforming folks can feel more confident about using these spaces.



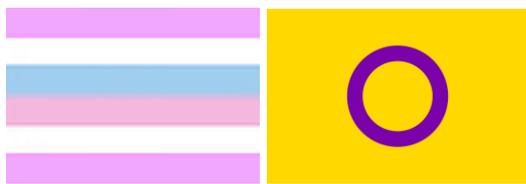
Another community symbol is the Transgender Pride flag designed by Monica Helms (left), and Jennifer Pellinen (right). Helms' flag was first shown at a pride parade in Phoenix, Arizona, USA in 2000. The flag consists of five horizontal stripes, two light blue, two pink, with a white stripe in the centre. Helms described the meaning of the flag as follows: "The light blue is for baby boys, pink is for girls, and the white in the middle is for those who are transitioning, those who feel they have a neutral gender or no gender, and those who are intersex. The pattern is such that no matter which way you fly it, it will always be correct. This symbolizes us trying to find correctness in our own lives".

Pellinen's flag was created in 2002. It has from top to bottom, stripes in pink, light purple, medium purple, dark purple, and blue. The pink and the blue stripes represent female and male. The three purple stripes represent the diversity of the transgender community and genders other than female and male.



Other transgender symbols include the butterfly (symbolizing transformation or metamorphosis), and a pink/light blue yin & yang symbol.

INTERSEX



The Intersex Pride flags provide a separate form of self-definition for people who are intersex. Many individuals who identify as intersex don't feel they necessarily identify with or should be identified with broader LGBTTTIQQ communities. The yellow and purple of the Australian intersex flag (right) avoids the traditional feminization and masculinization of the pink and blue.

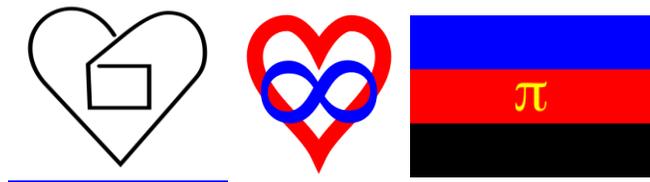
TWO-SPIRIT



www.2spirits.com

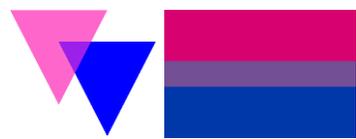
Two-spirit communities have adopted their own flags, based on the six-colour rainbow flag with the symbol of the two-spirit communities in the centre. The image above was developed by the Toronto-based organization 2 Spirited People of the First Nations (2 Spirits). The imagery represents the male and female aspects of spirit, and the connection of two-spirit people to Nature, the Earth, and the Creator. Identity as a two-spirit person is very individual, and not everyone relates to or identifies with this imagery.

POLYAMORY



The polyamory movement has introduced the "love outside the box" symbol for use by polyamorous and non-monogamous and/or LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI individuals.

BI

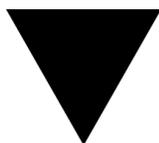


The blue and pink overlapping triangle represents bisexuality and bi-pride. The exact origin of this symbol is unknown. It is popularly thought that the pink triangle may represent sex-gender sexuality while the blue stands for heterosexuality. The two together form the color lavender, a blend of both sexual orientations and a color that has historically been associated with same-gender sexuality. It's also possible that the pink may represent attraction to females, the blue attraction to males and lavender attraction to both. The same colours are used in the Bi Pride Flag (above, right).

LESBIAN



The double women's symbol is a representation of women loving women.



The inverted black triangle is rooted in the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. Although lesbians were not included in the legal prohibition against same-gender sexuality, some women seem to have been imprisoned for "anti-social behaviour" and designated with a black triangle. As the pink triangle has historically been a male symbol, lesbians and feminists have similarly reclaimed the black triangle as a symbol of pride and solidarity.

GAY MAN



The double men's symbol is a representation of men loving men.



The history of the inverted pink triangle begins prior to WWII in Nazi Germany when Hitler put in place a law prohibiting same-gender sexual relations. Many gay men were sent to prison and concentration camps. They were forced to wear the pink triangle, which indicated their reason for incarceration. Gay prisoners were often given the worst tasks, frequently attacked, and often used in “medical” experimentation. Gay liberation groups resurrected the pink triangle in the 1970's as a symbol for the gay and lesbian rights movement. It draws attention to oppression and persecution—then and now.

GAY/QUEER



The rainbow has become synonymous with gay and queer culture and identity. Some feel that the image has become mainstream and they may reject the symbol as cliché or not representative of their personal identity. It is often used as a way to identify spaces that are gay/queer-friendly. The inverted triangle (left) relates back to the usage of black and pink triangles as symbols of persecution in Nazi concentration camps. The rainbow flag is often used by businesses to identify their inclusion of, affinity for, support of gay and queer communities. The original pride flag (right) included the colours pink and turquoise, though these colours were dropped as it added expense to reproducing the flag in printing. When originally designed by Gilbert Baker for the 1978 San Francisco Gay Freedom Celebration, each colour had a meaning:

Pink: sexuality
 Red: life
 Orange: healing
 Yellow: sun
 Green: nature

Turquoise: art
 Blue: harmony
 Purple: soul

It is recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers as a symbol of lesbian and gay pride. The rainbow colours themselves now appear on all types of objects, including necklaces, bracelets, bumper stickers, t-shirts and coffee mugs to name a few

ALLY



The Queer Student Community Centre (QSCC) Ally Program is an outreach initiative that aims to educate, create awareness, and build sustainable relationships amongst members of the McMaster community. The QSCC is a “for-students-by-students” service (under the MSU banner) that aims to challenge problematic social attitudes and norms, patriarchy and sexism, heterosexism, homo/trans/bi/lesbophobia and the like, at the systemic level. It is a myth to think that the kinds of discrimination that the QSCC aims to erase are no longer concerns on campus or in society at large. <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/services-directory/9-queer-students-community-centre-qsc/ally-program>

An ally button is worn by individuals who works to end oppression in all areas of their life; in particular, an ally works to end systems of oppression within which they are given unearned privilege. A white person who works to end racism, a lesbian woman who works to end discrimination against transgender persons or a straight man who combats homophobia are acting as allies. Someone who identifies as an ally wears one of a vast array of ally buttons depending on the group with whom they are working in solidarity. The ally button displayed here is distributed by the McMaster Student Union’s Queer Student Community Centre located on the 2nd floor of the Student Centre (MUSC).

BEYOND TOLERANCE: CONTINUUM OF ATTITUDES

Adapted from the Riddle Scale, developed in 1973-1974 by Dorothy Riddle for the American Psychological Association (“Homosexuality” was removed from the DSM in 1973 by the American Psychiatric Association).

Repulsion: Gender non-conformity and non-heterosexuality is seen as a “crime against nature.” Gender and sexually diverse persons are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, behavior therapy, electroshock therapy, etc.

Pity: Chauvinism. Being cisgender and /or heterosexual is to be preferred. Any possibility of “normalizing” gender, and sexual orientation should be reinforced. People who seem to be “born that way” should be pitied.

Tolerance: Gender questioning and/or non-heterosexuality is just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people “grow out of.” Thus, persons who are trans, gender non-conforming, or non-straight are less mature and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. These people should be “put-up-with.”

Acceptance: Still implies there is something to accept. Characterized by such statements as “You’re not a lesbian to me, you’re a person,” or “What you do in bed is your own business,” or “That’s fine with me as long as you don’t flaunt it!” This assumes you have the authority to “permit” someone else’s behaviour or identity related to gender and/or sexuality.

Support: The basic civil rights position. Work to safeguard the rights of persons with marginalized orientations and gender identities. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the transphobic, biphobic, lesbophobic, and homophobic climates and the unfairness experienced by LGBTTTTIQQ persons.

Admiration: Acknowledges that being trans, gender non-conforming, and/or non-heterosexual in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their negative attitudes, values, and behaviours.

Appreciation: Values the diversity of people and see all genders and sexual orientations. This includes folks who are willing to actively combat oppressive attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others.

Nurturance: Believes that gender and sexual diversity are indispensable in our society. They view people with marginalized orientations and gender identities with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be allies and advocates.

BEYOND TOLERANCE: CHECKING BIASES

This is an individual reflection exercise for your own benefit. This information is for your eyes only. Please answer honestly. While you are thinking about these issues, ask yourself why some things make you more uncomfortable than others.

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=mixed feelings, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

1. I feel comfortable with queer professors talking about their sexual orientation in class.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I would send out invitations to my friends announcing the marriage of my daughter to her girlfriend.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would be supportive of a student's request to organize a queer dance in TwelvEighty.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe that two gay men could be excellent parents to an adopted baby girl.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would be happy if my child was trans.	1	2	3	4	5
6. LGBTTTIQQ and MOGAI cultural expression is appropriate in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I would not feel an immediate need to correct someone if they assumed I was trans.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would not feel ashamed if a member of my family had a sex change.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel comfortable with two gay male students kissing each other in the Student Centre atrium.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When I see or hear about naked men at the Gay Pride Parade every June, I think it is a positive part of the diversity of our community.	1	2	3	4	5
11. If a same sex acquaintance invited me on a date, I wouldn't feel offended.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I would feel comfortable being seen at an LGBTTTIQQ or MOGAI forum.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I would enjoy working closely with a transgender colleague.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think it creates tension in the workplace when bisexual co-workers share information about their personal lives.	1	2	3	4	5
15. If my daughter's teacher was openly lesbian, I would feel happy.	1	2	3	4	5

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities are diverse and there may be differences in the way words are used to describe their experiences and lived realities. Sometimes people may be perceived to “fit” some of these definitions but not identify as such. For example, a person may be attracted to several gender identities but not identify as bisexual or pansexual. Self-identification is more important than “fitting” into the specific definition.

We all have a right to use the language that we think best defines who we are and how we see ourselves. Language is constantly changing. Each word described below carries many connotations. People may embrace or reject the use of these words as labels for political or personal reasons. It is important to have a working knowledge of the different words because language matters. It can include people or make them feel marginalized or excluded.

This glossary is not exhaustive. There are many other terms that community members use to describe themselves.

Ally: Someone who:

- confronts homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexual privilege and other forms of oppression in themselves and in others;
- respectfully shows concern for the well-being of people who identify as LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI;
- believes that heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia are social justice issues.
- is also an ally around other forms of discrimination/oppression; for example, racism, sexism, Islamophobia, ableism, classism, anti-Semitism, ageism, etc.

Asexuality: A term used by many individuals who have little to no sexual desire. This is not the same as celibacy which is a conscious choice not to act on sexual desire.

Biphobia: This word refers to fear, hatred and/or discrimination against people who are attracted to more than one gender. As with homophobia and transphobia, biphobia can be found both within and outside LGBTTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities.

Bisexual: A term that refers to persons who have sexual attraction and/or desire for persons of similar and different sexes than themselves. Some individuals prefer terms like “pansexual” or “fluid” as they feel that “bi” reinforces the gender binary and excludes persons who do not fit neatly into the categories of “man” or “woman.”

Cisgender: Is a relatively unfamiliar word meaning “not transgender.” The prefix, “cis,” is pronounced “sis” and means “on this side of” or “not across.” A person who is born male and identifies as a man, is usually considered to be a cisgender person.

Coming Out: The process during which one recognizes, acknowledges, and/or embraces one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersex person. This term may also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality, gender identity or intersex status with others. This can be a continual life-long process. An individual may be "out" in some situations, or to certain people, but not others. Some individuals may never come out to anyone.

Cross-dresser: A person who sometimes dresses in clothing that is not usually attributed to their gender identity. For example, a person who cross-dresses may be someone who identifies as a man but enjoys occasionally wearing dresses and high heels.

FtM/F2M: This is an abbreviation which represents a "female-to-male" transgender or transsexual person. In most cases, an FtM person is referred to with male pronouns.

Gay: This term was adopted in the 20th Century to describe a male-identified person whose primary emotional, physical and/or sexual attraction is to members of the same sex/gender. Not all men who engage in same-sex sexual intimacy identify as gay.

Gender assignment (at birth): This refers to the gender assigned to an individual at birth based on the person's physical body. Birth sex is typically limited to either male or female and tends to exclude intersex as a legitimate option.

Gender expression: How an individual communicates their concepts of masculinity, femininity, or rejection of these constructs to the world. This can include clothing, body language, tone, word choice and more. In our immediate context individuals are expected to choose to identify as man or woman, but not both or neither.

Gender equity: The belief and practice that everyone deserves the basic right to respect, safety and equitable access regardless of one's gender identity/expression.

Gender identity: An individual's concept of their masculinity or femininity or their concept of self as related to labels such as trans, woman, androgynous, gender queer, man, and others. Gender identity is a deeply felt understanding of self, and positions an individual in a binary world that enforces a man/woman dichotomy.

Gender Non-Conforming: A person whose gender expression and/or characteristics are - or are perceived to be - different from the gender assigned to a person at birth.

Genderqueer: Rooted in queer theory*, refers to persons who disrupt the man/woman gender framework. This often challenges us to think of gender as being fluid or non-static.

*Queer theory is a relatively new branch of study emerging from feminist theories, gay and lesbian studies, and the works of Judith Butler, Michel Foucault and Eve Sedgwick. Queer theory attempts to deconstruct and confound normative categories of sexuality and gender by presenting experiences that challenge male/female binaries. (Kitzinger & Wilkinson 1994, 452.)

Grey Asexual/Greysexual: A term used by some persons within asexual communities who may have some sexual desires, but they are weak or infrequent. Persons who identify as grey asexual or greysexual is also used by some individuals who only have some sexual desires after they have established an emotional bond with another.

Heteronormativity: Practices and institutions that privilege heterosexuality, straight relationships, and traditional gender roles as “natural.” It implies that people must fall into one of only two distinct sexes.

Heterosexism: The assumption made by institutions or individuals that everyone is heterosexual, and/or that heterosexuality is inherently superior to homosexuality or bisexuality; any prejudiced attitude, action or practice that subordinates people because of their non-heterosexual identity.

Homophobia: This word refers to discrimination against or hatred of people who do not conform to rigid sex roles and sexuality stereotypes. Homophobia is an offshoot of both sexism and heterosexism.

Homosexuality: A term that began as a medical diagnosis in psychiatry to refer to a deviancy whereby people were sexually attracted to and in particular had sexual activity with persons of the same sex. Because of the medical and diagnostic nature of this term, it can be considered offensive by some to be referred to or labelled as homosexual. It is best to avoid using this term when referring to people.

In the closet: This term can be used in reference to a person who identifies as LGBTTTTIQQ or MOGAI but has not disclosed their sex, sexuality, or gender identity to other people.

Internalized homophobia: The acceptance of inaccurate stereotypes and demeaning beliefs. This may lead to feelings of shame, aversion, or self-hatred. Internalized homophobia results from living in a homophobic environment and, as a result, individuals may unconsciously internalize negative messages about themselves.

Intersectionality: A word that refers to the fact that we have multiple aspects to our identity, and to how we feel, think, talk about, and relate to the world. It also refers to how those different aspects of our identity influence how we are perceived and how we experience situations and other people’s behaviour.

For example, someone who identifies as a Black, queer woman who has a disability, may experience homophobia differently than someone who is a White, queer man who does not have a disability. Racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia are not discreet, separate experiences. Our perceptions are complex and this should not be downplayed or ignored when listening to someone talk about their unique experience in the world.

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The term “hermaphrodite” is no longer an appropriate term to apply to people. Many members of intersex communities find the term both archaic and offensive.

Lesbian: This term is used to describe women whose primary emotional, physical, erotic and/or sexual attraction is to members of the same sex/gender. The term is taken from the name of the island, Lesbos - home to the Greek poet, Sappho (circa 630 B.C.).

Lesbophobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of women who identify as, or are perceived to be, lesbian. Like biphobia, homophobia and transphobia, lesbophobia exists within and outside of LGBTTTIQQ and MOGAI communities.

MtF/M2F: This is an abbreviation which represents a “male to female” transgender or transsexual person. In most cases, an MtF person is referred to with female pronouns.

Outing: Outing is the involuntary disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or intersex status. Outing occurs because of someone else’s decision to disclose a person’s gender identity, sexual orientation and/or intersex status.

Pansexual: A person who is pansexual is sexually attracted to all/or many gender identities, or are attracted to persons regardless of gender.

Passing: In an American, racial context, “passing” refers most frequently to a person who is classified as a member of one racial group (most commonly those of African-American heritage) who chooses to “pass” as white. This word can also be used to refer to a trans person who may “pass” (be stealth) as a member of their chosen gender identity. It can also refer to a lesbian or gay man who “passes” as straight.

Polyamorous: This is a term used to describe a person’s relationship status; specifically, individuals who choose to engage in intimate relationships with more than one person. Each person is aware of the other(s) and it is not considered “cheating.”

Pre-hormonal: May be used to refer to a trans person who has not used hormones to alter their body. Many trans people do not plan to undergo hormone treatments and are happy transitioning without hormones.

Pre-operative (or pre-op): A trans person who plans to undergo but has not undergone sex reassignment surgery (SRS) is pre-op; however, many trans people do not plan to undergo SRS and are happy transitioning without surgery.

Queer: Queer is a word that was once considered a slur but has since been reclaimed by some community members as a source of pride. Some people still view the word as an insult. “Queer” is also used as an umbrella term that may describe any sexuality, gender identity or gender expression that falls outside mainstream “heteronormative” expectations.

Sex: Sex is the classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of external genitalia. It also includes a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs and genitals. Sex is also something that some people do.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual orientation describes our enduring physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person(s). Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same; for instance, transgender people may be asexual, straight, lesbian, gay, pansexual, etc. A man who transitions from male to female and is attracted to other women might identify as a lesbian.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS): SRS is a term used by some people to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s “biological sex.” For example, a transman may have a mastectomy (breast removal) so that he has a flatter chest.

Trans: This is an abbreviation of transgender and/or transsexual and is often used as an umbrella term to refer to broader transgender/transsexual communities.

Transgender: This term is used to describe people whose birth-assigned gender and/or sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match. Transgender people may or may not decide to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual; e.g., a biological male who transitions to female and is attracted to other women might identify as lesbian.

Transition: This term is primarily used to refer to the process that a trans person undergoes when changing their body, mind, or appearance to be more congruent with their gender identity.

Transman: This is an identity label sometimes adopted by FtM/F2M trans people.

Transphobia: The discrimination against or hatred of people who are trans. It can also refer to people who are unable or unwilling to deal with gender ambiguity or gender non-conforming individuals.

Transsexual: This is a term used to describe a person who wishes to or has undergone hormonal and/or surgical procedures in order to appear as a sex other than that assigned to them at birth. Should not be assumed to be interchangeable with transgender, and is really a label that should be chosen by an individual.

Transwoman: This is an identity label sometimes adopted by MtF/M2F trans people.

Two-Spirit: An umbrella term used by some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit persons on Turtle Island/North America to describe persons who non-Indigenous people now call LGBTTTIQQ. Two-Spirit individuals were revered in many Indigenous cultures before colonization. They were believed to be closer to the Creator, in that they housed both masculinity and femininity, and walked with a balance of nurturer and warrior spirits.

The use and understanding of Two-Spirit can vary depending on an individual's teachings and understanding of the term. Some persons use the term interchangeably with other terms for gender or sexual orientation (e.g., Two-Spirit = trans, Two-Spirit = bi or lesbian), while others feel that the term relates to a social role or position, and is separate from gender or sexual identity (e.g., Two-Spirit = warrior/nurturer, Two-Spirit ≠ gay).

There is some disagreement as to whether Two-Spirit can/should be used by or applied to persons who are non-Indigenous, and so the term should be used with care. It can appear to be tokenistic, or as a form of colonization if it is not used keeping in mind the history of racism, invisibilization and erasure of Indigenous concepts of sex, sexual orientation, and gender by European norms.