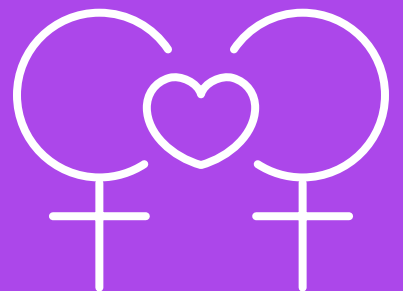
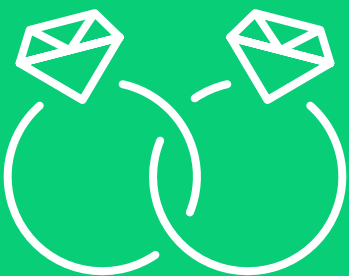




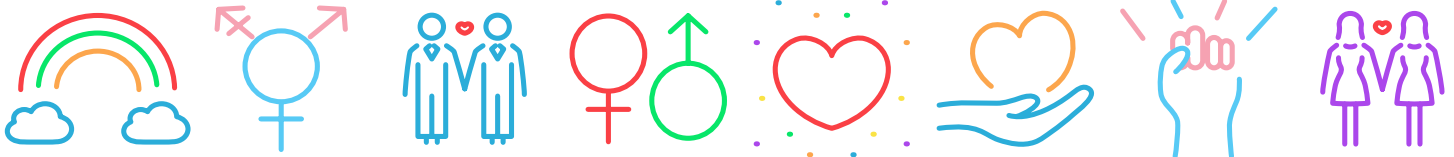
# Come As You Are

BigID's Guide to Promoting an LGBTQ+ Supportive and Open Community



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# LGBTQ+

## Awareness

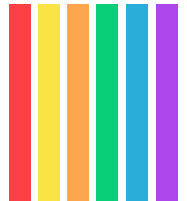
The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) community is extremely diverse, far-reaching, and global. It includes people of all gender identification and sexual orientations, various ethnic backgrounds, different cultures and generations, and more.

Many people within the LGBTQ+ community may face professional or personal barriers or biases — conscious or unconscious — based on their identity, orientation, or LGBTQ+ affiliation.

### Pride in the BigID Workplace

Creating a safe and respectful workplace for LGBTQ+ employees, customers, contractors, and partners is an important leading business practice. It increases employee productivity, satisfaction, retention, and trust — plus company reputation.

One of BigID's core values is to "come as you are." When we all feel recognized for who we are and welcome to bring our authentic selves to work, we can place more energy on doing a fantastic job and nurturing healthy relationships with our colleagues, customers, and communities.



The BigID Pride Employee Resource Group (ERG) has put together this guide to provide our employees with important background on LGBTQ+ facts and figures; widely accepted, appropriate terminology; and ways you can support the LGBTQ+ community — at the office, at home, and in your wider communities.

## Quick terminology guide

Instead of saying...	Opt for...	Because...
Homosexual	LGBTQ+	"Homosexual" has a clinical history and tends to be used in a negative manner
Sexual preference	Sexual orientation	"Preference" and "lifestyle" imply an element of choice
Gay lifestyle	Gay lives / LGBTQ+ lives	There is no such thing as a "gay lifestyle"
Gay marriage	Marriage equality	"Gay marriage" narrows the issue
Gay agenda	LGBT rights / equal rights for LGBT	A unified "gay agenda" and single "gay lifestyle" do not exist
Boyfriend / girlfriend	Partner / significant other	An individual's sexual preference may not match what you assume it to be
Transsexual	Transgender	"Transsexual" is a medical term; transgender is more holistic

### Or, if you don't know what to say, feel free to ask!

Try not to let a fear of misspeaking keep you from learning, helping others learn, spreading awareness, or making your own voice heard.


Also, keep in mind that individual people may have different language preferences, so asking is a great way to make sure you're getting the most informed perspective, being respectful, and always learning.

Have a different experience of these terms and what they mean to you? Get in on the conversation and share your thoughts at [pride@bigid.com](mailto:pride@bigid.com).


## Facts and Stats

Despite major changes in laws and norms surrounding the issue of [same-sex marriage](#) and the rights of [LGBTQ people around the world](#), public opinion on the acceptance of homosexuality in society remains sharply divided by country, region, and economic development.

**United States**




According to the 2010 United States Census, there are **2 million children** being raised by same-sex couples in the US.



More than 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ Americans faced discrimination of some kind in the past year, **including more than 3 in 5 transgender Americans.**

— and the figure is probably higher than reported.



To avoid the experience of discrimination, **more than half of LGBTQ+ Americans** report hiding a personal relationship, and about **one-fifth to one-third** have altered other aspects of their personal or work lives.

**Israel**



**Same-sex marriage is not considered legal** in Israel — a couple would need to leave the country in order to obtain a legal marriage license.



Up until 2018, the health system **banned LGBTQ+ people from donating blood.**



The unemployment rate among the LGBTQ+ community is more than double the Israeli average. Even within the workplace, **68% of LGBTQ+ employees** report that they “think twice” before they are willing come out in their workplace, and most do not even know who to approach if they experience some form of discrimination.

LGBTQ+ couples are not allowed to adopt children. The only way to be a family is to use a surrogate outside of the country. In addition, the government takes a long time to recognize an LGBTQ+ family as a legitimate family — even if they have children that were recognized and adopted outside of Israel.



On May 17, 1990, the World Health Organization (WHO) **removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders**, recognizing homosexuality as a natural variant of human sexuality.



The vast majority of the world's LGBTQ+ population an estimated

**83% of those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual**

keep their orientation hidden from all or most of the people in their lives, according to a 2019 study by the Yale School of Public Health that could have major implications for global public health.

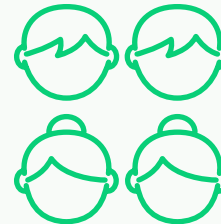


Central and Eastern Europeans, however, are more divided on the topic, with a median of **46%** who say homosexuality should be accepted and **44%** saying it should not be.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Russia, and Ukraine, few say that society should accept homosexuality; only in South Africa (54%) and Israel (47%) do more than a quarter hold this view.

While majorities in **16 of the 34 countries surveyed in a 2019**

Pew Research report said homosexuality should be accepted by society, global divides remain.



For instance, whereas 94% of those surveyed in Sweden say homosexuality should be accepted, only 7% of people in Nigeria say the same.

Across the 34 countries surveyed, a median of **52% agree** that homosexuality should be accepted, with **38% saying** that it should be discouraged.

On a regional basis, acceptance of homosexuality is highest in Western Europe and North America.



While progress has been made in the last several decades, **we have a long way to go**, globally and locally, to reach equality and promote an overall environment of comfort in the workplace and at home.

## Glossary

Many people refrain from talking about sexual orientation and gender identity or expression because it feels taboo — or because they're afraid of saying the wrong thing.

This glossary is meant to make conversations friendlier and more comfortable by providing definitions and context around key terms that will help you promote an LGBTQ+ open community.

Let's start with a broad look at gender identity and sexual orientation — both of which are represented in the LGBTQ+ initialism.

## Gender identity

**Gender identity** refers to one's concept of oneself as male, female, or neither male nor female — potentially gender nonconforming (GNC) or nonbinary (NB). A person's gender identity may or may not align with their assigned sex at birth — and is not the same as sexual orientation.

Gender identity may or may not align with gender roles — or the social behaviors that culture assigns to / associates with each sex — or gender expression, i.e., the way folks express their gender identity (for example, in the form of hairstyles, clothing, jewelry, mannerisms, etc.).

## Sexual orientation

**Sexual orientation** refers to how someone characterizes their sexuality — or the people or groups of people they're physically, romantically, or emotionally attracted to. While gender identity often plays a part in sexual orientation — for example, a self-identified woman who is attracted to other self-identified women may identify as lesbian or gay — gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things and do not have to perfectly align.

**Sexual behavior** (also sexual practice or sexual activity) also may — but does not have to — factor into sexual orientation. Gay, lesbian, or bisexual people do not need to have had specific sexual experiences to adopt an orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

### A note about “preference”

Sexual preference was once a term that was used interchangeably with sexual orientation, but was abandoned due to its implication that LGBTQ+ identification may be a voluntary “choice” — and thereby easily changed, or even “cured.”

## LGBTQ+

An initialism standing for **L**esbian, **G**ay, **B**isexual, **T**ransgender, and **Q**ueer (or sometimes **Q**uestioning). Individuals may adopt one or more of these terms to describe their **gender identity** — as in the case of transgender, queer, or questioning folks — or **sexual orientation** — as in the case of lesbian, gay, or bisexual folks. The **+** at the end of the initialism indicates that this is not an all-inclusive list — and there are numerous ways people choose to identify. We'll go a little bit into **+** identifications after describing the core list in a bit more depth.

### Lesbian

A sexual orientation describing a self-identified woman whose enduring physical, romantic, or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians prefer to identify as gay or gay women.

**L**

### Gay

A sexual orientation describing a person whose enduring physical, romantic, or emotional attraction is to other people of their own gender. While gay is commonly used to describe self-identified men, some lesbians may prefer the term gay.

### Bisexual

A sexual orientation describing a person who may form enduring physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to other people of their own gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual folks may sometimes prefer to identify as pansexual.

**G**

### Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms — including transgender. While some transgender folks take hormones or have surgery to align their bodies with their true gender identity, this is not necessary for someone to identify as transgender.

**B**

### Queer

An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don't apply to them. Some people may use queer, or genderqueer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression.

**T**

**A transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.**

**Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQ+ people; however, it is not a universally accepted term within the LGBTQ+ community.**

### Questioning

Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it can also mean questioning. This term describes someone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. This term is also broad and can mean a lot of things.

**Q**

### Plus

The “plus” in LGBTQ+ is particularly important. It reminds us that the initialism is limited and not all-inclusive. “Plus” represents a number of identities and orientations folks may adopt. The order and length of the initialism has changed over the years (LGBTQIA+ is one longer construction, for example, and LGBTQ+ is one shorter one), there are variations among the way some people refer to the initialism itself (GLBT or QUILTBAG), and some of the initials can stand for several definitions.

**+**



Here are just a few of the definitions that are covered by the “plus” in popular culture.

### (I) Intersex

**Intersex** people may be born with any of several variations in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.” The range of sex characteristics may be obvious from birth, or may be ambiguous or go unnoticed — even by the intersex person.

### (A) Asexual (Ace) | Aromantic | Agender | Ally

**Asexual**, or “ace,” people experience little to no sexual attraction.

**Aromantic** people experience little to no romantic attraction.

**Agender** folks do not identify with any particular gender or gender construction.

**Allies** are those who, while often identifying as cisgender or heterosexual, support LGBTQ+ people and causes — including equal civil rights and gender equality, an end to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, and greater education and awareness. Allies also include those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other.

### (P) Pansexual

**Pansexual** people are attracted to people of all gender identities, or to a person’s individual qualities regardless of their gender identity. The term has gained popularity as more folks reject the gender binary implied by bisexual.

#### ... And so on and so forth!

Everyone is different — and that’s no exception when it comes to gender identity and sexual orientation. There are no hard and fast rules around how people identify or express their identity or orientation — any more than there are strict rules around how people express their heritage, religious background, or other aspects that go into shaping their personhood.

Individuals may ascribe more or less to certain definitions of lesbian, gay, or transgender, for example, but it’s important to approach all labels with an open mind and refrain from assuming that the boundaries around any particular category are fixed.

Even with a robust understanding of the categories that comprise LGBTQ+ identities and orientations, individuals may fall outside even some of the broader paradigms.

The key takeaway is that, whatever makes an individual feel comfortable in accepting and expressing who they are is by definition the “right” way for them to identify.

## What other terms should I know?

While this is by no means a comprehensive list, it's a good place to start when it comes to being an ally to your friends in the LGBTQ+ community.

### Some gender identity terms

#### **Cisgender**

A term used to describe people whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

#### **Gender nonconforming**

A word referring to people who express their gender differently than society's expectations. Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

#### **Genderqueer**

Blurring the lines around gender identity and sexual orientation, genderqueer individuals typically reject static categories of gender identity and often (though not always) orientation.

#### **Genderfluid**

A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender, especially over time, and may express a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

### Some sexual orientation terms

#### **Same-gender loving**

A term some prefer to use instead of "gay" or "lesbian" to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

#### **Demisexual**

Someone who generally does not experience sexual attraction unless they have formed a strong emotional, but not necessarily romantic, connection with someone.

#### **Graysexual**

Someone who occasionally experiences sexual attraction but usually does not; it covers a kind of "gray" space between asexuality and sexual identity.

#### **Polyamorous**

The practice of, or desire for, intimate relationships with more than one partner, with the informed consent of all the partners involved. It has been described as "consensual, ethical, and responsible non-monogamy."

## Attitude, affiliation, and expression terms

### Coming out

A lifelong self-acceptance process. LGBTQ+ people first identify this to themselves and then may choose to reveal it to others. Publicly identifying one's identity may or may not be part of the coming out process — it's only for the LGBTQ+ person to decide.

### Living openly

A state in which LGBTQ+ people are out about their sexual orientation or gender identity in their personal, public and/or professional lives.

### Outing

The act of publicly declaring someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, sometimes based on rumor or speculation, without that person's consent.

### Supporter

A person who supports and honors sexual diversity, acts accordingly to challenge homophobic or transphobic remarks and behaviors, and explores and understands these forms of bias with him or herself.

### Gender expression

External manifestation of one's gender identity, usually expressed through masculine, feminine or gender variant behavior, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex.

### Homophobia | Biphobia

The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to members of the same sex or more than one sex.

### Transphobia

The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people whose gender identity or gender expression do not conform to cultural gender norms

## How Do I Support the LGBTQ+ Community at Work?



### Join the BigID Pride ERG

Our BigID PRIDE employee resource group (ERG) is currently small, but growing. We're eager to say hi and learn about you! Attend our next meeting, introduce yourself, share your thoughts and ideas, help us plan events, and have your voice heard.



### Stay Updated

We're always rolling out updates to guidelines, best practices, and events — to keep up with meaningful cultural and global trends and keep everyone engaged!

Contact [pride@bigid.com](mailto:pride@bigid.com) or join [#bigid\\_pride](#) on slack to get involved or for more info.

