



A BRIEF Guide to Language for the LGBTQIAA IFO Annual Conference

Notes: Language is always changing; this is only a start, and all terms are meant to be working definitions.

Self-identification trumps all—if you are talking to or about a particular person, please ask how that person identifies or would like to be referred to. Some words that have been used as slurs have been reclaimed by oppressed communities, that is their right; however, it does not necessarily give people in dominant groups access to use it in uncomplicated ways. (s.e. smith, “Disability Terminology”)

LGBTQIAA Language:

- **Ace:** A sexual orientation label referencing asexuality, in which a person does not experience sexual attraction or desire to partner for the purposes of sexual stimulation.
- **Agender:** Feeling of having no gender
- **Ally:** A verb not an identity: “Actions count; labels don’t.” (Mia McKenzie, “No More Allies”)
- **Bisexual:** “The potential to be attracted – romantically and/or sexually – to people of more than one sex and/or gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree” (Robyn Ochs, “Definition of Bisexuality”).
- **Cisgender:** Someone whose gender aligns with their assigned sex
- **Coming out** is the continual process of recognizing, accepting, and sharing with others one’s sexual and/or gender identity. Coming out is a personal option; it is not something for others to do for you.
- **Gay:** men attracted to men
- **Gender Fluid:** A changing or “fluid” gender identity.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's self-concept of one's gender that may be the same as or different from one's assigned sex at birth (male, female, or intersex). One's gender identity may encompass parts of masculinity, femininity and other non-conforming gender expressions.
- **Intersex:** is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male (Intersex Society of North America).
- **Lesbian:** women attracted to women
- **Non-Binary:** Umbrella term for all genders outside of the gender binary of female/male.
- **Queer:** A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer. There is some intergenerational tension regarding the reclamation of the term, as some LGBT people feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it (UC Berkeley, Gender Equity Resource Center)

- **Sex:** the genetic (and sometimes scientific) determination of male, female, and intersex.
- **Sexuality:** can involve attraction on a physical, emotional, and social level as well as fantasies, sexual behaviors, and self-identity.
- **Transgender:** Someone whose gender identity differs from “the gender they were assigned at birth” (Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*).
- **Two Spirit:** Umbrella term indexing various indigenous gender identities in North America

Individuals and Systems:

- **Institutional/Systemic Oppression:** Systemic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, which are supported and enforced by social institutions.
- **Matrix of oppression, privilege, and resistance:** intersecting forms of oppression based on gender, race, class, nation, ability, sexuality, religion, and so on. These social attributes can be sources of disadvantage or privilege. Negative ascriptions and experiences may be the source of people’s resistance to oppression.
 - **Intersectional analysis:** Examines interlocking social identities and systems
- **Microaggressions:** Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward marginalized people (Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact*. 2010.)
- **Oppression** (heterosexism, ableism, racism, ageism, classism, sexism, etc.)=Prejudice + Power (system/institution)
 - A relationship of domination and subordination in which the dominant group benefits from the systemic abuse, exploitation, and injustice directed at a subordinate group.
- **Privilege:** Peggy McIntosh, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
 - **Unearned entitlements:** things of value everyone should have, like feeling safe, but are unearned privileges to some
 - **Conferred dominance:** gives one group power over another, the acceptance and conflation of the gender/sex binary as male/female, whiteness as dominant, heterosexuality as the norm
 - **Example:** White Privilege: The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to share the norms and values of society that Whites receive, tacitly or explicitly, by virtue of their position in a racist society. There are multiple forms of privilege that can all be analyzed using this lens including cisgender, male, heterosexual, and able-bodied privilege (Adams, Maurianne, et al. (Eds.) *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. Routledge, 2007)
- **Social justice:** “The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure... Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which we live” (Adams, Maurianne, et al. (Eds.) *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. Routledge, 2007).