

## Appendix: Glossary of Terms

**Asexual** A sexual orientation for a person who does not feel sexual attraction or experience a desire for sexual contact.

**BGLQT** Abbreviation for bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, questioning, two-spirit, transsexual, and transgender people. You may also see it written as GLBT, LGBT, LGBTQ, depending on the author and the participants in the study or document cited.

**Bisexual** A sexual orientation for a person who is attracted to some members of both sexes to varying degrees. The prefix “bi” indicates the belief that there are only two sexes. See also: omnisexual, pansexual

**Bullying** A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. . .it is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort on another. . .Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally), for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing and calling names. It is a negative action when somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrains another – by physical contact. It is also possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person’s wishes (Olweus, 1993, p. 9).

**Cisgender** This term is borrowed from chemistry and used to describe individuals whose gender identity and expression aligns with social expectations for their sex assigned at birth. It is used to describe people who do not identify as transgender.

**Compulsory heterosexuality** The theory advanced by poet and lesbian feminist Adrienne Rich that asserts that women are coerced by social structures to engage in heterosexual relationships with men. She argues that heterosexuality is a political institution, not just a naturally occurring phenomenon, and is a central feature of patriarchy (Rich, 1978/1993).

**Discourse** Linguistic practices that shape social relations and cultural beliefs. Based in the work of French philosopher, Michel Foucault, it is considered to be the institutionalized way of thinking as established by how and what words are used in certain contexts (see also Jaworski & Coupland, 1999).

**Disorder of Sex Development or DSD** 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. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in between the usual male and female types. See also: intersex (ISNA, n.d.).

**Euroheteropatriarchy** A term advanced by Francisco Valdez that provides a shorthand term for “the interlocking operation of dominant forms racism, ethnocentrism, androcentrism, and heterocentrism – all of which operate in tandem in the United States and beyond it to produce identity hierarchies that subordinate people of color, women, and sexual minorities in different yet similar and familiar ways” (Valdez, 2002, p. 404).

**GLBT** Abbreviation for gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit, transsexual, and transgender people.

**Gay** The preferred term for a person who engages in same-sex relationships and identifies as a member of this community. It is preferred above the term “homosexual” as homosexual has scientific meanings that apply specifically to same-sex behaviors and does not consider a person's identities and relationships. “Gay” can refer to both men and women, although many women prefer the term lesbian.

**Gender** A term used to describe those characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed, in contrast to those that are legally and biologically determined, sex. People are assigned a sex at birth, but learn to act like girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behaviors, attitudes, roles and activities are for them, and how they should relate to other people. These learned attributes are what make up gender identity and expression as well as determine gender roles.

**Gender expression** How one chooses to dress, walk, talk, and accessorize that expresses one's gender identity. Related terms include gender role performance and gender presentation.

**Gender non-conformity** When a person's gender expression varies from that which is traditionally expected for a person of that sex. For example, when a male shows an interest in dance or fashion, or when a female enjoys rough and aggressive sports and activities. Related terms include gender atypical, gender-variant and gender non-normativity.

**Gendered harassment** Any unwanted behavior that polices and reinforces the traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity and heterosexual femininity and includes (hetero)sexual harassment, homophobic harassment, and harassment for gender non-conformity (Meyer, 2006).

**Gender identity** Refers to an individual's innate sense of self as a man, woman, transgender, genderqueer, or other identification. This is often shaped by one's sex

assigned at birth and the gender in which they are raised. It may change over time and may not fit in the traditional dichotomous gender categories of man/woman.

**Genderqueer** A relatively new term used to describe an individual whose gender identity or expression extends beyond the binary of man or woman and actively challenges the heteronormative gender binary system. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may use a wide variety of labels such as androgyne, genderfluid, gender-gifted, gender outlaw, and intergender.

**Harassment** Biased behaviors that have a negative impact on the target or the environment (Land, 2003). They may be intentional or unintentional.

**Harassment for Gender Non-conformity** Any unwanted behavior that targets a person's perceived masculinity or femininity. Also referred to as transphobic harassment.

**Hegemonic masculinity** From a theory advanced by R. Connell, it is the form of masculinity that occupies a dominant and privileged position in a given pattern of gender relations. In Western cultures this often defined by claims to authority (often through aggression, physical strength, dominance, institutional power), and heterosexuality, but is subject to change if social relations shift (Connell, 1995).

**Homophobia** Fear or hatred of those assumed to be BGLQT and anything connected to their culture; when a person fears homosexuality, either in other people or within themselves. Homophobia can be attitudes or behaviors that range from mild discomfort to verbally abusive or physically violent acts.

**Homophobic harassment** See sexual orientation harassment.

**Heteronormativity** A term coined in 1991 by Michael Warner to describe a system of behaviors and social expectations that are built around the belief that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that all relationships and families follow this model (Warner, 1991). See also: Compulsory Heterosexuality, Heterosexism, and Heterosexual Matrix.

**Heterosexism** A bias towards heterosexuality that denigrates and devalues BGL people. Also, the presumption that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality or, prejudice, bias or discrimination based on these things.

**(Hetero)sexual harassment** Any unwanted behavior that has a sexual or gender component and is enacted within the matrix of heterosexual relations. It includes two main types of harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment. Quid pro quo harassment is an explicit offer of an exchange such as, "I will give you a better grade if you do a sexual favor for me." Hostile environment harassment is more common in schools and includes any behavior that acts to create a hostile environment such as graffiti, jokes, comments, gestures, looks, and unwanted touching.

**Heterosexual Matrix** A concept advanced by gender theorist Judith Butler that builds on Adrienne Rich's notion of compulsory heterosexuality. Butler states that

all gender relations are built within the boundaries of the “oppositionally and hierarchically defined . . . compulsory practice of heterosexuality” (Butler, 1990, p. 194).

**Intersex** is a general term used for a variety of cases 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. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in between the usual male and female types. Although this was the preferred term for some time, some advocates now prefer the term Disorder of Sex Development or DSD (ISNA, n.d.).

**Lesbian** The preferred term for a woman who engages in same-sex relationships and identifies as a member of this community. It is preferred above the term “homosexual” as it has scientific meanings that apply specifically to same-sex behaviors and does not consider a person’s identities and relationships.

**Omnisexual** A person who is attracted to some members of any sex to varying degrees. The prefix “omni” from the Latin for all, indicates the belief that there are many sexes.

**Pansexual** A person who is attracted to some members of all sexes to varying degrees. The prefix “pan” from the Greek for all, indicates the belief that there are many sexes.

**Patriarchy** The basic definition of a patriarchy is a society that is governed and controlled by men. Feminist theorists have used this term to explain the current gender system that gives males access to power and social privileges and in turn marginalizes and oppresses people of all other genders. See also: heterosexism, sexism

**Sex** A medico-legal category that is assigned at birth based on certain biological characteristics that vary by region. Such characteristics may include a child’s chromosomes, gonadal tissue, hormone levels, and external genitalia. Sexual dimorphism is often thought to be a scientific reality, whereas individuals who are intersex point to a multiplicity of sexes in the human population. This is different from gender which is socio-cultural as noted above.

**Sexism** The belief or attitude that women are inferior to men, also related to misogyny. This results in oppression and discrimination against women in patriarchal societies.

**Sexual harassment** (see Heterosexual harassment)

**Sexual orientation** This term describes the genders and sexes towards which a person is emotionally, physically, romantically and erotically attracted to such as homosexual, bisexual, omnisexual, heterosexual, and asexual and is informed by innate sexual attraction. In all instances, use this term instead of sexual preference or other misleading terminology. Trans and gender-variant people may identify with

any sexual orientation, and their sexual orientation may or may not change before, during, or after transition.

**Sexual Orientation harassment** Any unwanted behavior that insults or harms gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, or uses anti-GLB insults to insult or harm another person. May be targeted at GLB people or non-GLB people. See also : Homophobic harassment

**Social Construct** This concept emerged from sociology and psychology to describe concepts and terms that exist because a society or culture has collectively decided to agree that it exists. Some examples include money, citizenship, race and gender.

**Transgender** An umbrella term, like “trans” for individuals who blur the lines of traditional gender expression. Usually including transsexual and sometimes also including cross dressers. These individuals may or may not choose to change physical characteristics of their bodies or legally change their sex.

**Transsexual** is a term used to describe a person who lives in a gender that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Many transsexual people opt to undergo physical transformations such as surgery and hormone therapy so that their bodies more closely align with social norms for their gender identities. Although it is categorized as one type of gender identity disorder by the American Psychological Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, many advocates have worked to remove this designation from the DSM in order to reduce the stigma and association with mental illness often attached to individuals who are transsexual.

**Transphobia** The irrational fear and hatred of all individuals who transgress, violate, or blur the dominant gender categories in a given society. Transphobic attitudes can lead to discrimination, violence and oppression against the gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and intersex communities as well as gender non-conforming individuals.

**Transphobic harassment** see Harassment for gender non-conformity

**Two-spirit** is a term used to describe members of First Nations, Native American, and Métis communities who also identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, or transgender. This term is an attempt at translating concepts and terms from various North American aboriginal cultures that had spiritual leaders and community members who were respected and appreciated for their abilities to understand and express qualities of both men and women. Individuals who use this term often use it to embrace their cultural identities as First Nations or Native people as well as their BGLTQ identities.

**Verbal harassment** Persistent and repeated negative behaviors that are unwanted and verbal in nature such as name-calling, insults, sexual jokes, and graffiti. As with other forms of harassment it may be intentional or unintentional.

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