



How can you use gender-inclusive language when speaking with community members?

- 1** Ask people about their gender pronouns, meaning if they want others to refer to them as “she,” “he,” “they,” etc. Do your best to use people’s correct pronouns; apologize concisely and correct yourself if you make a mistake.
- 2** In English, you can use the gender-neutral singular “they” instead of “he” or “she” to refer to people when you don’t know how they self-identify. Example: “Do you have a spouse or partner and, if so, what is their name?”
- 3** In Spanish, you can:
 - a** Use alternative words or phrasing that don’t require using gendered words. Examples:
 - “Cónyuge” instead of “esposo” or “esposa”
 - “Menores de edad” instead of “niños” or “niñas”
 - “Colegas” instead of “compañeros” or “compañeras”
 - b** Use gender-inclusive Spanish by replacing the “o” and “a” in gendered words that refer to people with “x.” Pronounce the “x” as “e.” Examples:
 - “Elles” instead of “ellos” or “ellas”
 - “Amigues” instead of “amigos” or “amigas”
 - “Compañeres” instead of “compañeros” or “compañeras”

Glossary of Terms for Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

GENDER IDENTITY

Gender Identity: Refers to a person’s internal sense of self as a woman, man, non-binary, genderqueer, etc.

Cisgender: A term for a person whose gender identity is what society considers to “match” their sex assigned at birth. The Latin prefix cis- means “not across.” For example, a person who was assigned female at birth (meaning that the baby was assumed to be a girl based on physical characteristics) and who self-identifies as a woman is cisgender.

Transgender: A term for a person whose gender identity is different than what society considers to “match” their sex assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned female at birth who self-identifies as a man is transgender.

Genderqueer: A term for people who do not feel they fit within a two-gender or binary gender system.

Non-binary: An inclusive term for people who do not identify as exclusively male or female.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual Orientation: An identity based on who we primarily develop romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions for and connections with. This identity is about who we fall in love with.

Common Sexual Orientations

Asexual: Refers to people who form meaningful connections with others but who don’t experience these feelings as sexual attraction.

Bisexual: Refers to people whose romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions and connections can be with people whose gender identities are similar or different from their own.

Gay: Refers to people (primarily used for men) whose primary romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions and connections are with people whose gender identity is similar to their own.

Lesbian: Refers to women whose primary romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions and connections are with other women.

Pansexual: Refers to people whose romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions and connections can be with people of any gender identity.

Straight or Heterosexual: Refers to people whose primary romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions and connections are with people of a different gender identity than their own.

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Plus. An inclusive term that seeks to include all people who do not identify as heterosexual and cisgender.

Queer: Originally a derogatory label for LGBTQ+ people. The LGBTQ+ community has reclaimed this word as an inclusive and positive way to identify all people who do not identify as heterosexual and cisgender.

Questioning: Refers to a person who is uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and who is actively trying to figure it out.

Glossary adapted from “Social Justice Glossary of Terms” by Just Communities: <https://www.just-communities.org/>