

IDENTITIES

Orientation & Gender



Women, Gender & Sexuality
Resource Center

Identities

Identity encompasses a broad spectrum of senses of self. Included in this list are gender identities, sexual orientations, and romantic attractions.



Sex is not the same as gender



Sex is not the same as gender, though the words are often used interchangeably. Sex is generally considered biological, while gender is generally considered cultural.

Gender identity relates to our internal sense of masculinity, femininity, or a combination or absence thereof.



Sexual orientation and romantic attraction relate to our physical, emotional, and / or romantic attractions, or lack thereof, to others in relation to how they express and identify their own gender identity.



Two identities are not found here: heterosexual and cisgender. Why?



Because we all are trained to understand them as normal.

Heterosexuality is privileged as normal, receiving societal support in myriad ways, from marriage to proms to greeting cards. In short, it is invisible unless you are not a person who identifies as a heterosexual or straight person.

Likewise, cisgender people are those for whom the sex assigned at birth fits well with their gender identity. Being cisgender means being represented in every area of a society that mirrors your gender identity in cultural representation, rituals, rites of passage, laws, etc

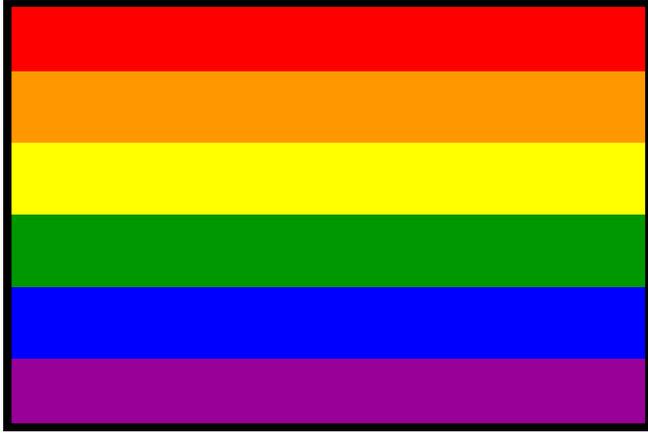




It should be noted that many other identities are also not represented here. The LGBTQIA+ community is extremely diverse, and often these identities serve only as categories to more specific identities; other times, people identify in such a way that does not easily conform to the above identities.



Gay/Lesbian



"Gay" or LGBT sometimes is used as a catch-all term that is meant to include anyone who does not identify as heterosexual or cisgender. However, many people find this classification to be lacking. There are many other identities under the rainbow flag, and they all deserve to be recognized, respected, and celebrated equally.

Unfortunately, this flag is often interpreted as only representing the gay and lesbian community or people who are sexually or romantically attracted to people of the same gender. The rainbow flag is made up of six different colors, which symbolize a different part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Bisexual



Bisexuality is a romantic or sexual attraction toward more than one gender. This identity is often misinterpreted as an attraction to only cisgender men and cisgender women, reflecting a very binary view of gender. However, many bisexual people resist this definition

Bisexuality often reflects the fluidity of gender sexuality. A person who identifies as bisexual may not only be attracted to binary men and women but also everyone between or outside of the binary. The flag has a pink stripe to represent homosexuality, a blue stripe to represent heterosexuality, and a purple stripe in the middle where they mix.

Asexual



Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction to anyone or low or absent interest in sexual activity. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy or abstinence. People who are asexual may feel romantic attraction towards one gender or more genders, and like any identity, asexuality encompasses a spectrum of more specific identities.

The flag has black stripes representing asexuality, a grey stripe representing demisexuality, and white stripe representing sexuality, and a purple stripe representing the community.

Genderqueer / Nonbinary

Genderqueer and nonbinary refer to anyone whose gender identity is not distinctly masculine or feminine. People who identify as genderqueer or nonbinary may choose to express their gender using a combination of feminine and masculine traits, or they may choose to present themselves androgynously. A person's expression may also appear fluid and change.

Genderqueer and non-binary can often be used as catch-all or umbrella terms.



Genderqueer Flag



Non-binary flag

Pansexual

Pansexuality is a romantic or sexual attraction toward people of all gender identities. It is very similar to bisexuality, although people who identify as pansexual may reject bisexuality because they feel it perpetuates a binary view of gender. Those who identify as pansexual may say they tend to focus on personality and other attributes as a primary basis for attraction, instead of gender.



The pansexual flag includes a blue stripe to represent attraction to men, a pink stripe to represent attraction to women, and a yellow stripe to represent attraction beyond the binary.

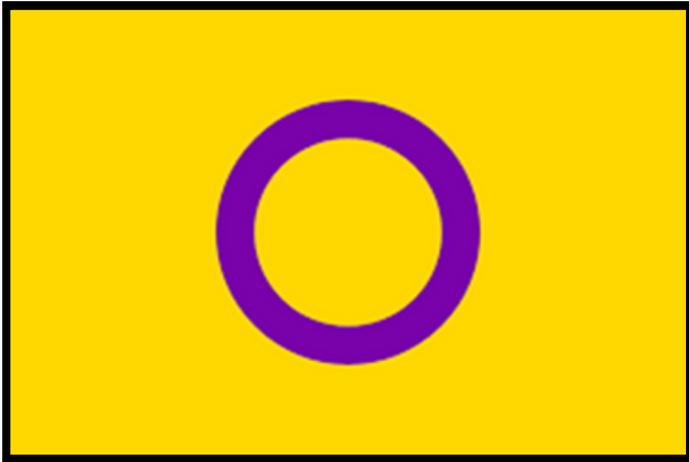
Transgender



Transgender is an umbrella term that includes anyone who is gender nonconforming, or anyone whose gender identity does not match their anatomical sex. Many other identities are included under the term transgender.

The transgender flag includes a light blue stripe to symbolize masculine identities, a pink stripe to symbolize feminine identities, and a white stripe to symbolize the space between or outside of binary genders. The flag is symmetrical so that it can hang in any direction and still be correct.

Intersex



Intersex individuals may have been born with sexual or reproductive anatomy that does not easily conform to a typical definition of female or male. Certain features may be ambiguous, and/or a person may have an outward appearance of one sex but the chromosomal characteristics of different sex. Some of these features appear at birth while others develop later.

The gender identity of an intersex person is not determined by any part of their anatomy or genetic makeup. Some intersex individuals may choose to not identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The intersex flag has two purple stripes that represent the mixture of male and female identities, a pink stripe to represent female identities, a blue stripe to represent male identities, and two white stripes to represent sexuality and transition.

Agender

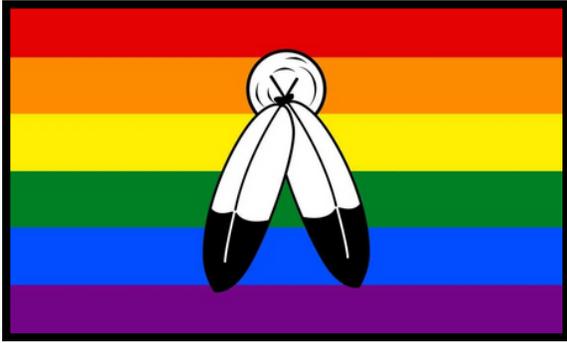
Agender, literally meaning "without gender," refers to a lack of gender identity. People who identify as agender may feel that they are genderless, or they may feel that currently there is not adequate language to describe their gender, in which case they often also identify as part of the non-binary community.

Additionally, some agender people may simply refuse to label their gender. Agender people may also identify as nonbinary, genderqueer, or transgender. Agender people may express themselves through masculine or feminine traits, a combination of them, or androgynously.



The agender flag has seven stripes. The black and white stripes symbolize an absence of gender. Grey stripes represent the fluidity of gender (or lack of gender), and the green stripe represents a nonbinary alternative to traditional blue and pink, which represent binary genders.

Two-spirit/ Nadleehi



Two-Spirit and Nadleehi refer to the commonly shared notion among many Native American tribes that some individuals naturally possess and manifest both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities. American society commonly identifies Two-Spirit and Nadleehi as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or gender nonconforming.

These identities covered by the term Two-Spirit as well as the Nadleehi have historically been regarded as a valued part of the community. A Two-Spirit or Nadleehi person may wear clothing that is traditionally associated with multiple genders or gender different than their assigned birth gender.

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<https://www.rit.edu/student-life/women-gender-and-sexuality-resource-center>



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