



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION VOCABULARY

*Curated by Trellis Consulting LLC. & the National LGBT Health Education Center*

**AGENDER:** Describes a person who identifies as having no gender.

**ALLY:** A person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people.

**ASEXUAL:** Describes a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy.

**AUTHENTICITY:** being consistent in word and deed, having the same fundamental character in different roles, and being comfortable with who you truly are and your past; being true to yourself and who you are.

**BIAS:** a leaning or preference in favor of a particular individual or group not based on facts.

**BISEXUAL:** A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of their own gender and people of other genders.

**CISGENDER:** a person whose gender identity (and often gender expression) matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

**CIVILITY:** civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same.

**CLASS:** class refers to how much wealth you have access to through property, inheritance, family support, investments, or other wealth not directly associated to wage earning.

**COLORBLINDNESS:** the process by which a person attempts to ignore the existence of race or skin color in service of seeing past race and just seeing the person. This deemphasizing of race, however, ignores the real, lived experience of people of color in the US and ignores their experience.



**CULTURAL ARROGANCE:** the belief or actions that one culture is better than another culture (i.e. Americans are better than Australians).

**CULTURAL COMPENTENCY:** the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from cultures and/or belief systems other than one's own, based on various factors; a set of behaviors, policies, and attitudes which form a system or agency which allows cross-cultural groups to effectively work professionally in situations.

**DISABILITY:** a mental or physical difference that limits a person in everyday activities. Increasingly, disability is being discussed as a social construct, meaning that physical and mental norms are arbitrary from which we then determine what is different or what is a disability.

**DISCRIMINATION:** the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex; the practice of treating one person or group of people less fairly or less well than other people or groups; treating someone differently than another similarly situated person without sound business reason.

**DIVERSITY:** acknowledging, understanding, accepting, and valuing differences among people with respect to age, class, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, LGBTQ status, religion, etc. Also includes differences in thought, perspective and experience.

**EQUITY:** the quality of being fair or impartial; fairness; impartiality; something that is fair and just.

**ETHNICITY:** a group of people that identify with one another based on shared culture.

**GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERY (GAS):** Surgeries used to modify one's body to be more congruent with one's gender identity. Also referred to as sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or gender confirming surgery (GCS).

**GENDER EXPRESSION:** the way that someone outwardly displays their gender through style, demeanor, and social behavior.

**GENDER FLUID:** Describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more one gender some days, and another gender other days.

**GENDER IDENTITY:** refers to the internal perception of one's gender; how a person labels themselves. Gender is not what's between your legs; it's what's between your ears. There are countless ways in which people may identify themselves. Gender is a universe and we are all stars.



**GENDERQUEER:** a person's gender identity or gender expression that does not align with the gender binary (male and female).

**GENDER NON-CONFORMING:** Describes a gender expression that differs from a given society's norms for males and females.

**INCLUSION:** creating a culture of respect, value, authenticity and collaboration that supports the full utilization of people's different ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives at all levels.

**INTERSEX:** Group of rare conditions where the reproductive organs and genitals do not develop as expected. Some prefer to use the term disorders (or differences) of sex development. Intersex is also used as an identity term by some community members and advocacy groups.

**INTERSECTIONALITY:** the theory that the overlap of various social identities, as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to the specific type of systemic oppression, bias and discrimination experienced by an individual. A salient quote on intersectionality is Audre Lorde's quote "There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

**LESBIAN:** A sexual orientation that describes a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.

**MICROAGGRESSION:** a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority or other nondominant group that is often unintentional or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype; the act of discriminating against a nondominant group by means of such comments or actions.

**PANGENDER:** Describes a person whose gender identity is comprised of many genders.

**PEOPLE OF COLOR:** include U.S. citizens who do not identify as only white or Caucasian under the current U.S. Census ethnicity categories. This is the preferred and most inclusive term, currently.

**POLYAMOROUS:** Describes a person who has or is open to having more than one romantic or sexual relationship at a time, with the knowledge and consent of all their partners. Sometimes abbreviated as poly.

**PREJUDICE:** an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason; any preconceived opinion or feeling, either favorable or unfavorable; unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, regarding an ethnic, racial, social, or religious group.



**PRIVILEGE:** a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed. The access to resources a person has, consciously or not consciously by virtue of being part of a dominant group in society. It is the freedom from stress, anxiety, fear or harm related to your identity.

**QUESTIONING:** Describes an individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**RACE (versus ETHNICITY):** race is both a false construct that historically and currently conflates skin color and ancestry with behavior and culture. However, though race is a false construct, its existence is a widely held assumption and has real consequences for all people.

**SEX:** a term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical characteristics used to classify individual as male, female, or intersex.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** the type of attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to.

**SOCIAL STIGMA:** Negative stereotypes and social status of a person or group based on perceived characteristics that separate that person or group from other members of a society.

**STEREOTYPE:** a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing; ascribing generalized characteristics or perceptions to an entire group of people irrespective of individual differences.

**SYSTEM OF OPPRESSION:** refers to systems of power in society that advantage certain groups over others, and include ideologies such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. (collectively “the isms”).

**TRANS MAN/TRANSGENDER MAN/FEMALE-TO-MALE (FTM):** A transgender person whose gender identity is male may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will just use the term man.

**TRANS WOMAN/TRANSGENDER WOMAN/MALE-TO-FEMALE (MTF):** A transgender person whose gender identity is female may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will just use the term woman.

**TRANSPHOBIA:** The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of transgender or gender non-conforming people or those who are perceived as such.



**TRANSITION:** For transgender people, this refers to the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one's gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes, such as changing their clothing, name, sex designation, and using medical interventions. Sometimes referred to as gender affirmation process.

**TRANSGENDER:** a person whose gender identity (and sometimes expression) does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans\* is an umbrella term that refers to various different ways that people transgress gender norms.

**TRANSPARENCY:** open and honest communication with all of stakeholders; acting authentically with the goal of achieving the best result for all.

**UNCONSCIOUS BIAS:** refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment, and personal experiences.