

## ALL CHILDREN – ALL FAMILIES TRAINING SERIES □ GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Ally:** Any non-LGBT person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people. Also: straight ally or straight supporter

**Biphobia:** Fear of bisexuals, often based on inaccurate stereotypes, including associations with infidelity, promiscuity and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

**Biological Sex:** This can be considered our “packaging” and is determined by our chromosomes (XX for females; XY for males); our hormones (estrogen/progesterone for females, testosterone for males); and our internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for females, penis and testicles for males).

**Bisexual:** An individual who is physically, romantically, emotionally and/or spiritually attracted to men and women, though not necessarily equally or simultaneously. Bisexuals need not have had equal sexual experience with both men and women; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual.

**Butch:** Commonly used to refer to masculinity displayed by a female but can also refer to masculinity a male.

**Closeted:** An adjective used to describe a person who is not open about his or her sexual orientation.

**Coming Out:** The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates his or her sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to self-disclose to others. Coming out is a life-long process—in each new situation a person must decide whether or not to come out. Coming out can be difficult for some because reactions vary from complete acceptance and support to disapproval, rejection and violence.

**Cultural Competence:** The ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Culturally competent organizations should have a defined set of values and principles and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.

**Dyke:** A derogatory term for a lesbian. Some lesbians have reclaimed this word and use it as a positive term, but it is still considered offensive when used by the general population.

**Fag(got):** A derogatory term for a gay man. Some gay men have reclaimed this word and use it as a positive term, but it is still considered offensive when used by the general population.

**Femme:** Exhibiting stereotypical or exaggerated feminine traits, usually referring to a woman, especially a lesbian. Also: lipstick lesbian

**Friend of Dorothy:** A euphemism used for discussing sexual orientation without others knowing its meaning, most commonly used among gay men.

**Gay:** The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attractions are to people of the same sex. Gay is often used to describe men who are attracted to other men, but is also used as a term describing both men and women who are attracted to the same sex.

**Gaydar:** A slang term referring to a person's intuitive ability to assess the sexual orientation of other people.

**Gender Expression:** Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and emphasizing, de-emphasizing, or changing their bodies' characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression is not necessarily an indication of sexual orientation.

**Gender Identity:** Our innermost concept of self along the spectrum of gender. Individuals are conscious of this between the ages of 18 months and 3 years, but our understanding of our gender identity may change during the course of our lives. Most people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex.

**Gender Role:** This is the set of roles and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females).

**Genderqueer:** A word people use to describe their own nonstandard gender identity, or used by those who do not conform to traditional gender norms.

**Heterosexism:** The attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid sexual orientation. Often takes the form of ignoring lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. For example: a feature on numerous Valentine's Day couples that omits same-sex couples.

**Heterosexual:** The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attractions are to people of the opposite sex. Also: straight

**Homophobia:** The fear, hatred of or discomfort with people who love and are sexually attracted to members of the same sex.

**Homosexual:** Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gay people. "Gay" and/or "lesbian" are more commonly accepted terms to describe people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

**Internalized Homophobia:** Self-identification of societal stereotypes by LGBT people, causing them to dislike and resent their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Intersexual:** Born with biological aspects of both sexes to varying degrees. So, in actuality, there are more than two sexes. About 1.7% of the population can be defined this way.

**Lesbian:** The adjective used to describe women whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attractions are to other women.

**LGBT:** An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Also: GLBT

**Lifestyle:** Inaccurate term that many LGBT people find offensive. Avoid using this term because just as there is no one heterosexual or straight lifestyle, there is no one lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender lifestyle.

**Living Openly:** A state in which LGBT people are open with others about being LGBT, how and when they choose to be.

**Outing:** Exposing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity as being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender to others when that person is not open about it; in essence, "outing" someone from the closet.

**Queer:** A term describing all people who are not heterosexual or who do not conform to rigid notions of gender and sexuality. For many LGBT people this word has a negative connotation; however, many young LGBT people are comfortable using it.

**Questioning:** Refers to people who are uncertain as to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Same-Gender Loving:** A term some people prefer to use instead of "gay" or "lesbian" to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.

**Sexual Identity:** This is how we perceive and what we call ourselves. Such labels include "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," "bi," "queer," "questioning," "heterosexual," "straight," and others. Sexual Identity evolves through a developmental process that varies depending on the individual. Our sexual behavior and how we define ourselves (identity) can be chosen, unlike sexual orientation, which is not.

**Sexual Orientation:** An enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or relational attraction to another person. Categories of sexual orientation include gays & lesbians— attracted to some members of the same sex/gender; bisexuals, attracted to some members of more than one sex/gender; and heterosexuals, attracted to some members of another sex/gender. Orientation is generally believed to be affected by both genetic and environmental factors. Though the origins of sexuality are not completely understood, it is generally believed to be established before the age of five.

**Sexual Preference:** A term sometimes used to mean the same thing as “sexual orientation.” Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people find this term to be offensive because it implies that their sexual orientation is a choice.

**Sexuality:** How one experiences and expresses one’s self as a sexual being.

**Transgender:** Refers to those whose gender identity and expression at least sometimes runs contrary to what others in the same culture would normally expect. Transgender is a broad term that can include people who identify as transsexuals, crossdressers, transgender men or “trans men,” transgender women or “trans women,” masculine identified females, feminine identified males, male-to-female (MTF) transgender people, female-to-male (FTM) transgender people, people who are intersex, and people who do not identify as either of the two sexes as currently defined. Transgender people can be heterosexual, gay/lesbian, bisexual or non-sexual. When referring to transgender people, use the pronoun they have designated as appropriate, or the one that is consistent with their presentation of themselves.

**Transphobia:** The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to cultural gender norms.

**Transsexual:** A term used to describe people whose gender identity does not conform to their gender assigned at birth and who often seek medical treatment to bring their body and gender identity into alignment.