

The Gay Agenda

*A Modern Queer
History & Handbook*

Ashley Molesso + Chess Needham



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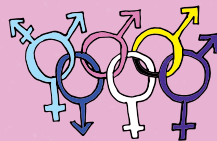
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If you or someone you know is in crisis or in need of a safe space to talk, call one of the LGBTQ+-friendly resources below:

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Crisis Text Line — Text HOME to 741741

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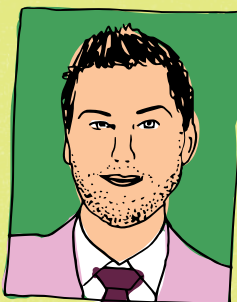
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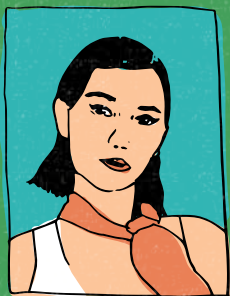
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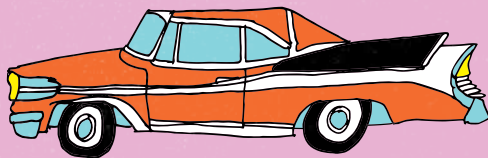
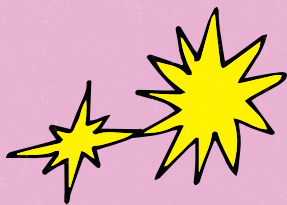


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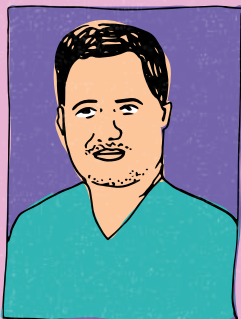
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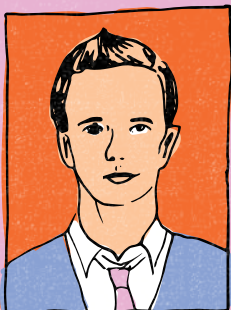
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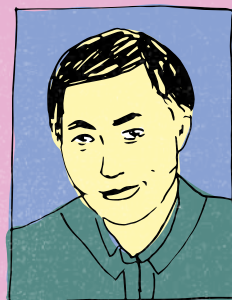
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ACTOR



queer handbook

This next section serves as a sort of handbook or informational section. It contains definitions of words that may describe you or someone you know. It contains information on what it's like to transition if you choose to. Or how to have safe sex. Think of this section as a handbook, with the purpose of navigating your queerness or understanding someone else's.



QUEER DICTIONARY



Simplified for your ultimate enjoyment and comprehension, here are some important terms to help you navigate the queer community the right way! Quite a few of the words we use today have been repurposed by the LGBTQ+ community, as some were once (and sometimes still are) used in a rude and offensive way. Although not everyone embraces "queer" and "dyke" in an affirming way, you should always be respectful of the words someone chooses and DOESN'T choose to use to identify themselves. A huge reason for LGBTQ+ people turning radical and demanding equal treatment was, and still is, reclaiming once hurtful words and making them their own. We have the power.

Ally noun A friend of the LGBTQ+ community! This term typically refers to any straight or non-queer person who supports the LGBTQ+ community, and is often used with friends, activists, and advocates of oppressed groups.

Androgynous adjective Blurring the line between "masculine" and "feminine."

Androgynous style was possibly a contributor to the start of the fall of gender binaries. Think Bowie and Tilda Swinton.

Asexual adjective In simple terms, not feeling the need to have sex, or not feeling sexual desire.

Bi-curious adjective Curious about exploring sexual relationships with people who are not the usual gender they are attracted to.

Binding verb Flattening the chest with cloth or tight clothes to present a male-like

appearance. Chest binding is a way for trans men to curb dysphoria.

Bisexual, Bi adjective Attracted emotionally and sexually to both male and female genders.

Butch noun, adjective A "masculine" lesbian, or an adjective to describe a lesbian who has traditional traits of a male.

Camp, Campy noun, adjective An aesthetic introduced to the queer community as early as the 1900s. Often associated with drag, this vibe could be described as effeminate, exaggerated, theatrical. Think John Waters, RuPaul. Further reading: "Notes on 'Camp,'" by Susan Sontag.

Cisgender adjective Having a gender identity that matches one's assigned sex at birth.

Closet, Closeted noun, adjective A place where secretly queer people hang out, sometimes by choice, sometimes for fear of rejection. Some closeted people don't even realize they're in the closet, either. Often associated with coming out, as in the phrase "coming out of the closet."

Coming out verb When a queer person announces their queerness to the world! Or just to themselves or to anyone they care about. Coming out is essentially acknowledging your queerness. Hey, wait, when do straight people come out?

Drag noun Clothing or style that is generally of the opposite gender and a bit more campy. A more updated term for "cross-dressing," which is outdated and also considered quite offensive these days. Dressing in drag is popular for



entertainment and self-expression.

Drag king *noun* Usually a female-identifying person dressing in men's clothes.

Drag queen *noun* Usually a male-identifying person dressing in women's clothes. Often glittery, exaggerated, and fabulous AF. Work.

Dyke *noun* Slang nickname for "lesbian" that was once used insultingly, but has been adopted by radical lesbians who have tried to turn the term around as a more positive word.

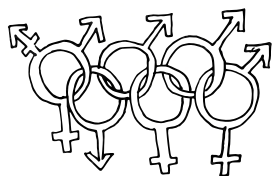
Femme *noun* A lesbian whose appearance is more "feminine" by gender binary standards.

Fluid, Fluidity *adjective* Ever-changing, shifting, not fixed or stable. This can be in reference to one's sexuality, i.e., sexually fluid, meaning their sexual orientation isn't just one way or can be subject to change over time. Genderfluidity is when one is fluid with their gender, whether it be floating to, from, or between male, female, and neither to feel out what is comfortable for them. *See also the Gender Identity section on page 160.*

Gay *noun, adjective* Someone who is attracted to those of the same gender as their own. This word is not really applicable

to the entire LGBTQ+ community but is often used as an umbrella term despite its lack of inclusion of other groups in the spectrum. While

its origin is hard to pinpoint, many speculate that the word "gay," also meaning "happy," was used as a code word for gays to be aware of each other back when it was basically illegal to be gay. It eventually replaced "homosexual," which is now an outdated and somewhat offensive way to describe someone who identifies as gay.



Gender binary *noun* The concept that there are only two genders, male and female, and that if you are born one or the other biologically, you will or should be a masculine male or a feminine female. This concept is closed-minded and so twenty years ago.

Gender dysphoria *noun* The pain and confusion that one experiences when their assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity. For example, someone assigned female at birth who identifies as trans or gender nonconforming may feel dysphoric when a pair of jeans clings tightly to their wide hips.

Gender expression *noun* The external expression of the gender you choose to identify with, based on socially defined behaviors and fashion.

Genderqueer *adjective, noun* Identifying as neither male nor female. This can be used interchangeably with **gender nonconforming**, **gender neutral**, and **gender nonbinary**. Being any of these things doesn't mean that you are trans. Being genderqueer just means that you don't stick to one gender's societal roles and constructs consistently. An example of this might be a woman working as a mechanic, or a man being interested in sewing. In a way, we're all genderqueer based on our diverse interests and hobbies that were once and still sometimes are associated with typical gender binaries!

Heterosexual *adjective, noun* Attracted sexually and emotionally to the opposite sex, primarily associated with male-female relationships. In less scientific terms, this is what a **straight** person is.

Homophobia *noun* Fear of gays and lesbians, fueled by talk that they're sexual deviants and unnatural. "Prejudice" is also an accurate word to describe homophobia.

Homosexual *adjective, noun* Attracted to the same sex as one's own. This outdated term is still used today, mostly to describe the history

of the LGBTQ+ community, but previously was employed in a very disparaging way toward the **gay** community. In the present day, churches often use this word when denouncing the LGBTQ+ community. This word is not recommended and should be removed from your vocabulary completely.

Intersex *noun, adjective*

Someone born with any variations in sex characteristics — which can include chromosomes, hormones, or **genitals** — that do not fit the typical binary notion of male and female.

Lesbian *noun, adjective* Anyone who identifies as a woman who is attracted to others who identify as women.

Nonbinary *adjective* Having a gender identity or sexual orientation that does not fit

into the gender constructs of male or female norms. *See also* Genderqueer.

Out *adjective* Being open about one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to oneself and the public, possibly

even in one's professional life. Or, as we like to say, living your best life!

Outing *verb* Intentionally revealing someone's queerness without their consent. Outing is a very inconsiderate thing to do, so if you're considering outing anyone anytime soon, DON'T. It's not your place!

Pansexual *noun, adjective* Someone who is attracted to people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Partner *noun* A gender-neutral way to describe your significant other, rather than using gender binary terms such as girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband, etc....

Queen *noun* Not to be confused with "drag queen," "queen" was once an offensive term to describe more flamboyant and effeminate

gay men, but is now used more as a term of endearment between gays.

Queer *adjective* Once a slur for **gay** and **lesbian**, "queer" is now being turned around as an all-encompassing umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community. Although not everyone

in the community agrees with adopting this once hurtful word to be a positive descriptor, many younger people have

welcomed the identity of **queer** with open arms. Identifying as **queer** also puts less pressure on committing to a more specific label, such as **lesbian**, **bi**, **trans**, etc....

Questioning *verb* Exploring one's sexuality and/or gender identity. This doesn't just go for straight people experimenting with the same gender — it can apply to all genders and all sexual orientations.

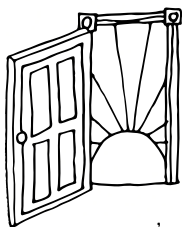
Sexual orientation *noun* The scientifically accurate way to describe someone's sexual and emotional attraction to another gender. An outdated version of this is "sexual preference," which is quite offensive as it insinuates that being **queer** is a choice. One might further argue that acting on it is a choice, but we didn't choose to feel this way.

Straight *adjective* A more casual term for "heterosexual." *See* Heterosexual.

Transgender, **Trans** *adjective* Having a gender identity that does not match completely one's assigned sex at birth.

Transphobia *noun* Fear of transgender people, which 100 percent translates as hatred toward an oppressed people.

Two-Spirit *noun, adjective* An umbrella term used by Native people to describe someone whose body simultaneously houses both a masculine and a feminine spirit. They fall outside the male and female binary, and occupy a third gender.







Lesbians come in all different shapes, sizes, colors, and styles. Gender identity, the way you present yourself when it comes to lesbianism, is super diverse. The spectrum ranges from super femme to butch to androgynous to nonbinary — there is no correct way to be a lesbian; there are, like, a million ways to be a lesbian.

Fun history lesson on a well-known lesbian stereotype: you must have U-Haul on your speed dial, next to your girlfriend AND your ex. The concept of U-Hauling has been around for quite some time. Not familiar with the U-Haul joke? Comic Lea DeLaria is often credited as the source of the joke: “What does a lesbian bring to a second date? A U-Haul.” As early as the 1950s, women in lesbian relationships found it easy to hide their relationships from the public eye in the safety of their own homes. Being gay back then wasn’t as easy as it is today; sometimes moving in together was a safer bet so that at least they could be themselves at home. Even Leslie Feinberg, author of classic recommended reading *Stone Butch Blues*, can vouch for this U-Hauling trait of lesbian couples. Lesbian relationships can go from 0 to 100 really quickly, meaning that you and your new boo are each other’s priorities 100 percent, 24/7.



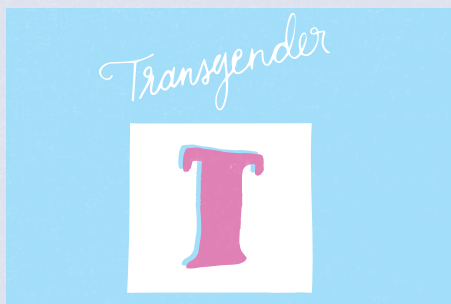
Although nowadays the term “gay” is more often associated specifically with men attracted to men, “gay” back in the day was more of an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community, sort of like how today’s term “queer” is a more simple and all-encompassing word for all groups within the spectrum. Before queers were called gays, they were called homosexuals. As you’ve read in the earlier sections, the term “homosexual” was associated with sexual deviance, in part because of the American Psychiatric Association’s deeming homosexuality a mental illness in 1952. The APA later removed it from its list of mental illnesses, about a decade or so into the transition into the word “gay.” But “homosexual” still had a negative stigma to it, and the “homosexuals” didn’t want to put up with it, as they shouldn’t have to. Another concern about the term “homosexual” was that it characterized gay people only as “sexual” people. During the start of the homophile movement, the gays wanted to separate the “sexual” part from themselves.

“Gay” was used as a code word at first, so that other gays could talk about gay stuff in front of straight people without letting on about their sexual orientation. “Gay” ultimately took quite a while to become a mainstream term, and “homosexual” is still used to describe the LGBTQ+ community on many media platforms and in general conversation among people who are usually homophobes, or just don’t know any better.

"Gay" is still somewhat used as an umbrella term today, though "queer" is more inclusive, as "gay" has shifted more toward referring to men. Gay men are practically a category of their own, though a vast and diverse one. There are flamboyant gays, leather gays, bear gays, the list goes on.



Bisexuality is when someone is attracted to both genders, because we're all a little gay! The concept of bisexuality is often shot down by the queer community, with statements like "pick a side already" or "you can't have both." NOT TRUE. Although bisexual people can essentially flow back and forth between partaking in well-accepted heteronormative relationships and suffering from the annoying homophobic struggles of being in a queer relationship, people who identify as bisexual hold a special quality that not all of us do—the ability to love both guys and gals simultaneously. It's not selfish, it's not weird, it's truly a gift to be able to see past the physical constraints of gender. The same goes for pansexual-identifying people, but you can find more about that in the "pansexual" section. The concept of bisexuality has been around since ancient Greek times, just as gay relationships have been. Bisexuality was formerly grouped with homosexuality as a mental illness. The Kinsey scale, promoted in the 1950s by Alfred Kinsey, really helped the idea of bisexuality come into the mainstream.



"Transgender" has many different meanings. You see, the prefix "trans" means "beyond," "across," or "through." Think of a transatlantic flight: it goes across the Atlantic Ocean. Gender is so complicated, and socially stigmatized, that "transgender" can be used to describe anyone who does not identify fully with their assigned gender at birth. The opposite of "transgender" is "cisgender"—anyone who *does* identify with their assigned gender at birth. Many people hear "transgender" and think it involves a hard transition—that you have to go from male to female, or vice versa. But it's so much more than that. It can include people who are nonbinary, genderqueer, or agender. Some trans people *do* choose to transition from one binary to the other, with or without surgery. Some trans people simply exist in the in-between of gender. After all, gender is a social construct.



"Queer" is practically an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ spectrum—in other words, a really easy way to say you're anything other than cis-hetero. Many people take on this identity, rather than

narrowing it down to a more specific title like lesbian, or pansexual, or even transgender. Literally anyone who identifies with the LGBTQ+ community can use this category because of its vagueness and openness to interpretation. The word "queer" wasn't always liked throughout the community, and even today people debate whether or not it should be used as a descriptor due to its history as a slur. But many millennials, Gen Xers, and baby boomers alike have adopted the term as their own, a prime example of taking something that was once harmful and negative to the community and reclaiming it as something positive.



The questioning period in a person's life doesn't necessarily mean that they are "going through a phase," or "just confused," as closed-minded people like to put it, but rather it represents a moment when you are not quite sure what you want or who you are when it comes to your sexuality or gender identity. Questioning is completely, 100 percent normal. Almost everyone in the LGBTQ+ community faces this time in their lives. Questioning doesn't have to mean physically experimenting, either; it can simply mean consideration and acknowledgment of life and romance different from what you are used to. It is common that the questioning period happens during college years, a fresh start in a new life on your own, with new rules, or lack thereof, or after a move to somewhere new. Some questioning folks may not have even considered that they could be queer until much later in their lives. If you aren't really exposed to the culture

of the queer community, it may not even occur to you until way down the line that maybe you aren't straight, or even cis for that matter. Questioning is a time for exploration, finding yourself, and learning about other people in the process. It is life changing for some, having that great realization that there is more to life than you thought, more than what you were taught growing up or just assumed because of your surroundings. It's totally a magical time.



Someone who is born intersex has sexual anatomy that does not typically match either female or male—this could mean that they were born with genital ambiguity or chromosomal differences. Intersexuality used to be known as hermaphroditism. One huge issue that intersex people face is that most states, aside from a few that now offer a third gender option, require a family or doctor to indicate "male" or "female" on a birth certificate. However, someone with ambiguous sexual anatomy may not fit into either of these boxes. Many families choose to hormonally or surgically "correct" the anomaly to align their baby's gender with a socially acceptable "male" or "female" identity, which may be premature. Someone who was born intersex may have had the wrong sex "chosen" for them at birth. Ideally, no medical intervention should be made on an intersex person, especially at birth, so that they can make the choice for themselves as they grow older.

Pansexual



If “pansexual” sounds a lot like “bisexual,” that’s because it’s similar! One key difference, though, is that “pansexual” emphasizes *any* gender identity, while the term “bisexual” is still tied to the *gender* binary (that is, I like either boys *or* girls, without acknowledging any other identity). This is important, though! The term pansexual encompasses *any* gender identity, of which there are many.

Two-Spirit



“Two-Spirit” is a term used by Native Americans to describe someone who fits in both masculine and feminine *gender* roles. Before European colonization, Native Americans celebrated Two-Spirit people and a wide variety of *genders* and sexualities. While Two-Spirit Natives always existed, the term was coined in 1990 at a Native American/First Nations LGBTQ+ conference as a way to distinctly separate LGBTQ+ Native Americans from non-Native LGBTQ+ folks.

Asexual



Despite the lack of desire for sexual activity, people who are asexual may still experience romantic feelings toward *any* gender identity. They are not necessarily aromantic. While it sounds black and white, an asexual person may still *get* married to *any* gender, may have sex with *any* gender, may fall in love with *any* gender, and so on. *Or* they may not! In many cases, an asexual person can fall in love without or with varying sexual attraction.

Androgynous



Typically, androgyny has to do with *gender* presentation, or the outward expression of expected *gender* roles. This is complicated, because “presenting” as female or male has so much to do with *gender* norms, which are so problematic.

PRIDE FLAGS

The most prominent pride flag today is the simplified variation of Gilbert Baker's rainbow flag, with stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The flag was designed in response to the growing awareness of LGBTQ+ folks in the 1970s, as queers everywhere were in need of a symbolic representation of their community. However, the rainbow flag is not the only pride flag in the mix: there are several other flags out there, all designed for more specific groups of people that fall under the LGBTQ+ category. Think of it like this: You know how there is the American flag that represents the country as a whole, and then each state has its own flag, like California's trendy bear flag, and so on. Well, imagine that the rainbow pride flag is the American flag of the queer community, and all of its subcategories, like transgender, asexual, leather, nonbinary, lesbian, etc., are all the states with their own sub-flags. It is not a competition and in no way a means to divide the community, but it is a way to accommodate more specific communities under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Each flag has its own array of colors, symbols, and meanings, making them really unique. Flag propositions by all types of members of the LGBTQ+ community are contributed frequently, so we wouldn't be surprised if there were several new flags added to the mix in the next year!



RAINBOW PRIDE FLAG, by Gilbert Baker, 1978:

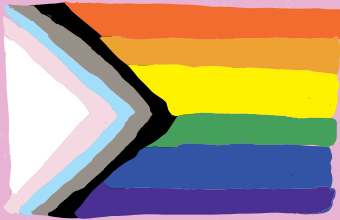
Pink for sexuality, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for nature, turquoise for art, blue for harmony, violet for the soul.



TRADITIONAL GAY PRIDE FLAG, 1979: Pink and turquoise were eventually dropped from the flag due to fabric shortages of the colors.



PHILADELPHIA PRIDE FLAG, 2017: Created for the campaign More Color More Pride to recognize non-white LGBTQ+ members by adding a black and brown stripe above the traditional rainbow stripes. Many people were against this edit to the flag, as they argued that the original rainbow flag never had anything to do with race. Sounds like someone's jealous there's no designated white history month.



PROGRESS PRIDE FLAG, by Daniel Quasar, 2018: A response to the Philadelphia Pride Flag, with the trans flag included in it, aiming to highlight the progress made with all groups within the LGBTQ+ community.



GENDERFLUID FLAG, by JJ Poole, 2012: An all-gender-encompassing flag. Pink for femininity; purple for androgyny, or femininity and masculinity combined; blue for masculinity; white for nonbinary or neutral; and black for any gender identity that does not fall under traditional descriptions.



GENDERQUEER FLAG, by Marilyn Roxie, 2011: Lavender for androgyny, or femininity and masculinity combined; white for nonbinary or neutral; green, the inverse of lavender, for third gender, or any other gender. Similar and simplified version of the Genderfluid Flag.



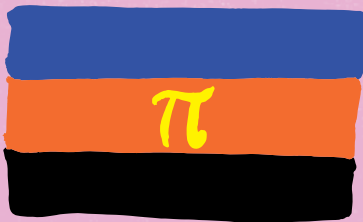
POLYSEXUAL FLAG, by Samlin, Tumblr user, 2012: Pink for attraction to female-identifying people, green for nonbinary and neutral-identifying people, and blue for male-identifying people.



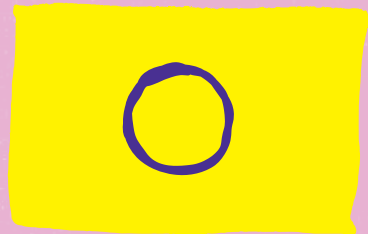
FEMME/LIPSTICK LESBIAN FLAG, by anonymous lesbian blogger, **2010**: Designed as a flag for femme-identifying lesbians and not lesbians as a whole, although some lesbians who do not identify as femme or lipstick have complained that this flag isn't inclusive.



LESBIAN PRIDE FLAG, by Sean Campbell, **1999**: Lavender for its synonymousness with the LGBTQ+ community, black triangle to represent the triangle symbol used to identify queers in Nazi times, and a labrys to represent matriarchal power.



POLYAMORY FLAG, by Jim Evans, **1995**: The pi symbol is used as a discreet code for "polyamory," with the idea that they both start with the letter "p." Also, Evans said that the pi symbol was one of the few available characters on computers at the time of the flag's conception.



INTERSEX FLAG, by Morgan Carpenter of Intersex International Australia, **2013**: Features the nongendered colors of yellow and purple; the circle symbolizes the wholeness, completeness, and potentiality of intersex people.



PANSEXUAL FLAG, **2010**: Pink symbolizes attraction to female-identifying people, yellow symbolizes attraction to nonbinary and neutral-identifying people, and blue symbolizes attraction to male-identifying people.



ASEXUAL FLAG, by Asexual Visibility and Education Network, **2010**: Black for asexuality, gray for the "gray" area between sexual and asexual, white for non-asexual partners and allies, and purple for community.



AROMANTIC FLAG, by cameronwhimsy, Tumblr user, **2014**: Dark green for aromanticism, light green for aromantic spectrum, white for platonic and aesthetic attraction, gray for grayromantic and demiromantic people, and black for the sexuality spectrum.



NONBINARY FLAG, by Kye Rowan, **2014**: Designed for nonbinary people who do not really identify with traditional gender roles. Yellow for people's genders that exist outside the binary; white for people with many or all genders; purple for androgyny, or a mix of female and male gender; and black for people who do not identify with any gender, or being agender.



BISEXUAL FLAG, by Michael Page, **1998**: Pink for attraction to female-identifying people, purple for attraction to both female-identifying and male-identifying people, blue for attraction to male-identifying people.



AGENDER FLAG, by Salem X, **2014**: Black and white for absence of gender, gray for semigenderless, and green for nonbinary, as green is the inverse of purple, which is heavily saturated with ties to gender identity.



STRAIGHT ALLY FLAG, late **2000s**: Rainbow for LGBTQ+ community, black and white for heterosexual and cisgender people, "A" shape to represent the word "ally," designed as a symbol for allies of the LGBTQ+ community.



TRANSGENDER FLAG, by Monica Helms, **1999**: Blue for boys, pink for girls, and white for the in between, neutral, or nonbinary. Because of its symmetrical orientation, no matter which way the flag is hung, it is always correct, a connection that Helms says is reflective of transitioning in general: no matter which path you are on, you are never wrong. It was first flown at a pride parade in Phoenix, Arizona, in **2000**.



COMING OUT

Coming out is acknowledging your queer differences from the heteronormative way of life, and it's very different for everyone. Some people know from early childhood about their sexuality and identity and it comes naturally, while others struggle with acceptance of themselves and of other people. There are even some people who don't realize they are not heterosexual or don't identify as their biological gender until much later in life! For example, Ash didn't realize that she was queer until she was nineteen years old, and Chess, on the other hand, knew since childhood (but didn't come out until much later)! Every single person's story is different. Whether you are someone who is

awaiting the right moment to come out (spoiler: just like all the crazy things in life, there is never really a "perfect" time) to a friend or a parent, or even if you're a curious bystander who's wondering "What's the big deal about coming out?," here are some guidelines for when it's time for the big reveal.

Simply put, coming out is essentially declaring that you are different from seemingly everyone around you. Unfortunately, the way that a majority of society perceives the LGBTQ+ community can make coming out a difficult and negative experience. Coming out *should* be as easy as telling everyone that you like pizza more than sushi, or that you prefer blue to green. But it's not that easy when it comes to

who you love and what gender you identify with, although as each day passes, more and more people are finding the courage to live life outside the closet and are contributing to the normalization of living openly. Have you ever wondered why straight people don't come out? It's because we live in a world where good old-fashioned straight couples are the norm. But someday, hopefully, in the words of Harvey Milk, all closet doors will be destroyed, and the pain and uneasiness of coming out will no longer be an issue for the LGBTQ+ community.

Why Is It Called "Coming Out" or "Coming Out of the Closet"?

There is not an exact clear time when the phrase "coming out of the closet" or "in the closet" was first used, but it seems likely to have been sometime after the 1960s. The closet part is said to be a riff on having skeletons in the closet. In other words, keeping a shameful secret!

Coming Out Dos and Don'ts

What's the most important thing when someone you know comes out? Support, support, support. If there's one thing we've all experienced in the trials and tribulations of life, it's feeling alone, like you're the only one, no matter what the situation might be. We've all been there, and do you remember how it feels? IT FEELS BAD. So when someone you know comes out, instead of condemning them based on your beliefs or telling them they are wrong or disturbed, or even the classic "Where did I go wrong raising you?," do the OPPOSITE of bad things and give them SUPPORT.



DON'T:

- tell them they're confused
- tell them it's just a phase
- ask them where you went wrong raising them
- disown them
- kick them out of the house
- sign them up for conversion therapy

DO:

- respect new pronouns or new chosen name
- join a support group if you don't know how to handle this news
- hang out with other LGBTQ+ parents and allies
- be supportive where you can
- ask questions
- try to have a mind-set open to learning and listening

Questions That Are Okay and Not Okay to Ask

First of all, we hope that this book as a whole will answer many of your questions about the LGBTQ+ community, the inner workings of it, and what makes it such a great, amazing, diverse rainbow of people! With that being said, there are always going to be questions that we miss, questions that we get wrong, and questions that are left unanswered. Here are a few examples of questions that LGBTQ+ people get asked often!

Which one of you is the man in the relationship? Let's get one thing straight: this question is offensive and closed-minded because it's the twenty-first century and you can love whoever the f*ck you want. The combination of one cisgender hetero woman and one cisgender hetero man is not the only way to have a valid romantic relationship. Although this is often asked of lesbian couples, or even nonbinary couples, this question is based on the simple idea that a "correct" couple

should be a man and a woman. Yes, some people may have more butch or androgynous qualities while some are very femme, but this in no way means that either is the "man" in the relationship if neither identify exclusively as male. It's simple math, everyone! If there are no male-identifiers in the relationship, then neither is the man in the relationship.

Where did I go wrong raising you? This question is hurtful and implies that the person coming out is bad. The question alone is punishment; the mere shame and resentment that radiates off it is harmful to anyone's delicate being. There is nothing wrong with being gay, trans, nonbinary, or anything other than straight, and it is not a choice by any means. Some may argue that *acting on it* is a choice, and in a sense it is, but it's not a reason to condemn someone if you don't "believe in gay." If you think that the way you raised your child made them gay, you're wrong. If anything, all of those beautiful souls out there who are forced to choose to be someone they're not because of the heteronormative and gender binaries that are pushed onto them by either unaccepting or unknowing parents are the ones who have been raised wrong. The only thing that matters from this point on is continuing to love your child unconditionally and supporting them no matter what their sexual orientation or gender identity is.

When did you know? If you are genuinely interested in the person who is coming out, this is a great question to ask.

How can I support you? This question helps whoever came out to you feel like they have a trusted ally in you, and like they can rely on you when times are tough. They may or may not have an immediate response on how they'd like to be supported, or how they need you, but it's helpful to know that someone is there when the occasion arises.

The Bad Parts About Coming Out

Not everyone gets to have a smooth coming-out story. Some are better than others, some are absolutely traumatizing, some people are lucky to have a supporting family and have no problems at all. Unfortunately, there are thousands of LGBTQ+ youth that are thrown out of their homes or abused, or who run away because of the rejection of their queerness. Almost half of the homeless youth population identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community! Rejection of one's sexual orientation or gender identity by loved ones can be absolutely debilitating, and a lot of the time results in homelessness and even suicide. The most important thing that you can do for someone coming out is

to respect their decision, even if it is someone of a younger age. You don't agree that *you're* the one in the wrong for not wanting to support and love this person unconditionally, no matter how they need to live their life? Maybe you're the one that needs to make some changes.



Do You Have to Come Out?

Coming out is not mandatory by any means. Lots of people have relationships or romantic affairs with people of the same gender, but do not consider themselves queer or bisexual. Some people are happy not sharing their personal lives with the public, or just aren't in a situation where they are ready to. Coming out is a personal choice, and there is a lot to consider when you come out. It sucks that we are still living in a world where being queer has a negative stigma, but the more people who come out, the more that stigma washes away. But don't ever feel pressured to come out, especially if you're not ready! Find-

ing yourself and understanding your own personal quirks and qualities sometimes take time.

Outing People: Hard No

What is outing someone and why is it wrong? Outing someone is revealing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent. Outing someone is not something that anyone should ever do. If they're not out yet, that's their choice. It is not your job to make public the secrets of someone else's life, no matter what the subject. When you out someone who isn't ready, it could destroy their relationships, their professional life, and their trust in you (obviously). There's a reason they haven't shared with the world yet, so respect that. It's not your secret to share.



When Is the Right Time to Come Out?

Surprise! There will never be a right time to come out. Coming out can be the hardest thing or the easiest thing, depending on your situation. You just have to decide if you want to come out in the first place and if you feel ready. If you are afraid of coming out due to fear of rejection, just know that you are not alone. So many LGBTQ+ people have dealt, will deal, and are currently dealing with rejection on a daily basis, so always remember: you're not the only one. Befriending other queers in the community is always a good idea so you can count on having a support system in place if things go horribly wrong. Community is everything.



How Do You Come Out?

Coming out can happen however you want it to (unless someone outs you, which is **TOTALLY RUDE!**). You can tell people one by one, you can gather everyone together and make an announcement, you can send an e-mail, you can write a letter, you can write it on a cake, you can post it on Instagram... the options are truly endless. And when you come out, you don't have to tell **EVERYONE** you know; you can take it slow and only tell people who you think need to or should know. Do what is comfortable for you, because at the end of the day, **YOU** are in control of your life.

Will Coming Out Make Me Happier?

Listen, coming out is not always easy, and there most likely will be tears. We'll tell you from firsthand experience that sometimes it feels like it's not going to get better, in terms of acceptance. Sometimes it will but sometimes it won't. But in general, being liberated feels really great, and in a lot of cases, you will be happier because you won't have to hide who you truly are anymore and can find some people to smooch if you want.

How Do I Come Out as Trans/Genderqueer?

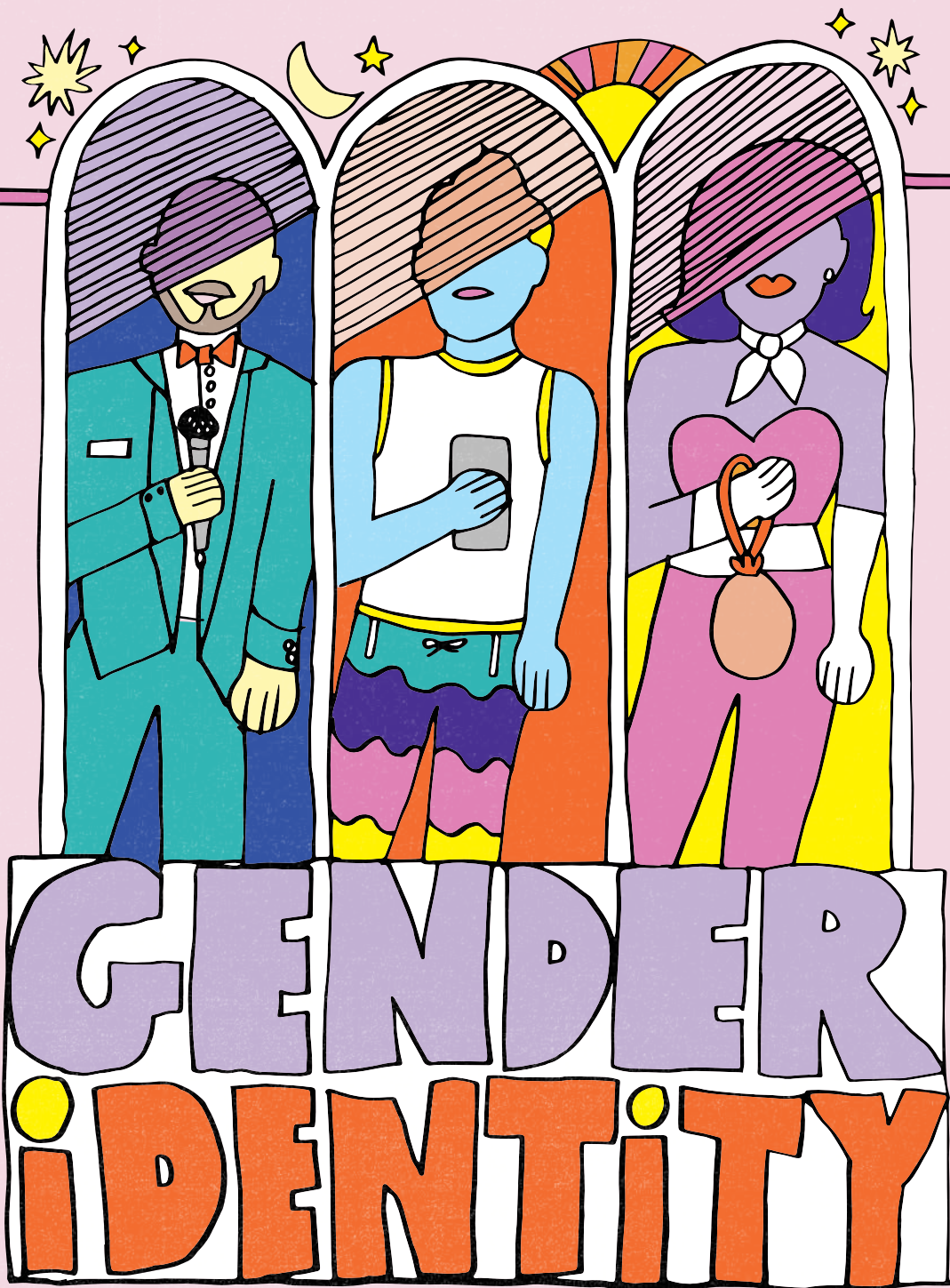
Coming out as a different gender can be really hard because a lot of people don't have the brain capacity to imagine anything outside of traditional heteronormative ways of life. When you come out as trans or genderqueer, you can start with providing your new pronouns and, if you want, your new chosen name.



PRIDE BUTTONS

Pinbacks started showing up at the end of the nineteenth century for promoting political campaigns, but became a huge trend for the LGBTQ+ community in more recent years. Picked up by activists, they were an easy way to publicly voice opinions, beliefs, and sexual orientation. They became extremely important to the LGBTQ+ community, as they were a simple and effective way to get a message across. Not only do buttons make statements of something you support, they can be a way to let other queers around you know that they are not the only queer in the room. But remember, showing your true colors was not always as accepted as it is today. Wearing pride buttons showed (and still shows) that individuals had the courage to display their true selves.





Below are some of the terms that are most commonly used for gender identity, with thanks to the Hetrick-Martin Institute and the Lurie Children's Hospital for the definitions. Gender identity does not go hand in hand with one's sexual or romantic feelings; it simply expresses a person's deep sense of being male, female, neither, both, or other. Gender is so wrapped up in societal norms that often it can be a complex, painful, and dysphoric part of someone's life.

Gender Gender is the state of presenting "masculine" or "feminine" traits. The problem with gender is that it forces individuals to conform to societal standards. For example, someone may gender a blue toy truck by saying it's a boy's toy, and a girl who is interested in the truck could be made to feel ashamed or "wrong." Similarly, a boy could be made to feel incorrect for liking a pink doll, which society dictates is a girl's toy. Gender is a spectrum, and is often tied into capitalist and social constructs.

Sex Sex refers to the sexual organs that one has at birth. A person's body may have been born with male, female, or intersex genitalia, but that does not necessarily define what gender they identify with or anything else about them.

Cisgender A cisgender person is someone whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth. This does not indicate their gender expression, sexual orientation, anatomy, or perception.

Sex Assigned at Birth The assignment or classification of people as male, female, or intersex assigned at birth based upon physical anatomy. This sex often does not reflect a person's gender expression or sexuality.

Genderfluid A genderfluid person has a changing or "fluid" gender identity.

Trans Woman/Trans Man "Trans woman" often describes someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman, while a "trans

man" is someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a man. They may or may not self-identify as transgender.

Personal Gender Pronoun She/he/they/ze/xo or any pronoun that one prefers when not using their name.

Transgender A transgender person is someone whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Identifying as transgender does not define a person's gender expression, hormonal makeup, or physical anatomy.

Nonbinary An umbrella term for all genders aside from male/female. Not all nonbinary people identify as transgender, and this term is often used to describe the aesthetic and expression of a cisgender or transgender person. Many nonbinary people choose to use a nonbinary pronoun, such as they or xe.

Gender Expression The physical appearance of a person, which may or may not align with their gender identity.

Agender This describes people who do not have a gender or feel that they have a neutral gender.

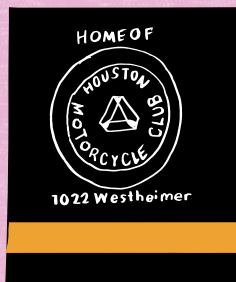
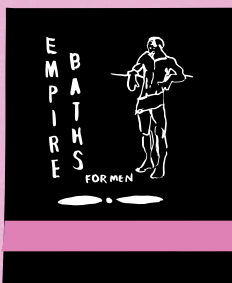
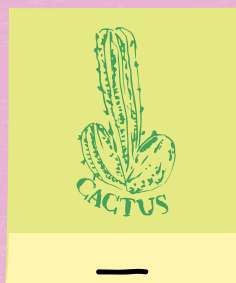
Genderqueer An identity that can be used by people who do not identify within the gender binary and may see themselves as outside or in the middle of the gender binary. Many who identify as genderqueer identify with genderqueer as an aesthetic, and not everyone who identifies as genderqueer is nonbinary or transgender.

Gender-Affirming Surgery Surgical alteration to reflect someone's gender identity. Most people associate this with the trans community, however, only a small minority of trans people choose to or can afford to have gender-affirming surgery.

Sexual Orientation A person's physical, romantic, emotional, or other form of attraction to others.

Queer Matchbooks

Back in the day, smoking indoors was a thing. Naturally, businesses took the opportunity to supply matchbooks to patrons with their info, almost like multifunctional business cards. Not only were the matchbooks for lending someone a light, but they often doubled as a safe place to take down someone special's phone number: as you can probably recall, cell phones weren't around yet! Matchbooks are all we have left of some of the gay bars and establishments of the past. Before the Internet, it was considerably more difficult to find information about gay businesses. Your only means were word of mouth and minimal advertising, especially since being out in the open was a rocky thing back then. Ephemera like matchbooks, menus, pinbacks, flyers, and brochures can tell you so much about a place, even if they're small in size.



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