

# LGBTQI and Other Letters



## A Glossary

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### Sex and Gender

**Sex** is a set of biological characteristics of an organism that in one way or another are connected to procreation (e.g., genetic, hormonal characteristics or those related to genitals). A person's sex is usually assigned shortly after birth by taking into consideration accepted medical criteria. In terms of sex, people can be male, female, or intersex. Due to existing stereotypes and lack of knowledge, there exists a widespread idea that there are only two sexes and that they are "opposites." In fact, there are many more variations that depend on a set of characteristics a person exhibits.

**Intersex** is an umbrella term that refers to a person that was born with such characteristics (including genitalia, gonads, and chromosomes) that do not fit into a binary system of male-or-female sex.

**Gender** is so-called "social sex," that is a set of characteristics, roles, modes of behavior, and other expectations assigned to people by their society and culture according to their assumed sex. The word "assumed" is incorporated into this definition intentionally because, as a rule, we base our conclusion about a person's sex on their

appearance and our stereotypes, so our conclusion may not match the reality. Gender involves social differences are far more pronounced than biological ones: gender is also a continuum. Gender expectations change historically and geographically: things that were considered feminine at first become masculine or vice versa. A prominent example of gender stereotypes is attributing blue and pink colors to people of different sexes. A century ago blue was considered to be a strictly feminine color that symbolized tenderness, and pink was regarded as a color for men as it was believed to emphasize their strength and vitality. An important term that is connected to a definition of gender is binarism.

**Binarism** is a belief that there exist only two sexes, a male one and a female one, and, respectively, two genders. Binary perception of sex and gender is a foundation for a complex and twisted system of stereotypes and social practices that are rooted in a society's culture and legislation. This system gives rise to discrimination and exclusion from society of people who don't fit into dominant stereotypes and norms. Contemporary research on sex and gender proves that a binary approach doesn't represent all the varieties of sex and gender spectra and thus has to be reconsidered.

## Sexual Orientation

**Sexual orientation** is a set of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to people of certain gender (or people of different genders). People can have various types of sexual orientation. Orientation becomes a part of a person's identity and influences their behavior. False assumptions regarding the "normalcy" of only one type of sexual orientation are often the cause of discrimination in society.

**Heterosexuality** is one type of a variety of types of sexual orientation, heterosexuality means that a person is psychoemotionally and sexually attracted only to people of a different sex or gender.

**Asexuality** means an absence of the sexual attraction to other people, however an asexual person can exhibit romantic or emotional attractions.

**Bisexuality** is one type of various types of sexual orientation, bisexuality means that a person is psychoemotionally and sexually attracted to people of masculine and feminine gender and of male and female sex.

**Bisexuals** are people who are psychosexually and emotionally attracted to both men and women.

**Homosexuality** is a type of a variety of types of sexual orientation; homosexuality means that a person is psychoemotionally and sexually attracted to people who are of the same sex or gender as

this person. Use correct terms: **a homosexual, a homosexual person, homosexuality**. A word "homosexualism" is unacceptable because it has negative connotations, stigmatizes homosexual people, and describes a type of sexual orientation as a disease or pathology of some sort (try and say "heterosexualism"— it sounds absurd, doesn't it?).

**Gay (homosexual)** is a homosexual man, that is a man who is psychoemotionally and sexually attracted to men.

**Lesbian** is a homosexual woman, that is a woman that that is psychoemotionally and sexually attracted to women.

**Pansexuality** is a type of a variety of types of sexual orientation; pansexuality means that a person's emotional, erotic, and sexual attractions aren't contingent on another person's sex and gender. Contrary to bisexuality, pansexuality is a broader term and emphasizes not a duality of one's possible attractions but rather an independence of an attraction from sexual or gender characteristics.

**Heteronormativity** is such an approach to human sexuality that postulates heterosexuality as the only "normal" and "natural" orientation and regards all others as "deviations," "pathologies," or "perversions." Now this approach is regarded as erroneous from both medical and sociological viewpoints. Heteronormativity is a foundation for LGBTQI+ discrimination.

**Homophobia** is an umbrella term to refer to different forms of negative reactions to any variety of sexual orientation other than heterosexuality and to different adjacent phenomena. Homophobia is a phenomenon similar to racism, xenophobia, sexism, etc.

## Gender Identity

**Gender identity** is a person's self-recognition and self-positioning as a representative of a certain gender, that is their belonging to a male, female, or another sex in a social context.

**Gender expression (representation)** is a way of public self-presentation, a way of expression of one's gender with one's appearance and behavior. One's clothes, gait, talk, haircut, presence or absence of body hair, presence or absence of make-up, etc, all this, consciously or not, are things that we use to express or confirm one's femininity, masculinity, or androgyny. One's name and personal pronouns that a person uses to refer to themselves can also be a means of gender expression. Some elements of our gender expression develop naturally, some are imposed by society. Each person decides for themselves what means of gender expression they will use.

**Cisgender people** are people whose identity, self-consciousness, self-expression, and behavior conform to societal expectations from these people as people of certain sex.

**Transgender people** are people that change or desire to change one's sex or gender because of their gender identity. Be correct: say **transgender, transgender people, trans\* people** (the latter term is plural-only).

**Queer person** is a person whose identity is non-binary or gender-fluid. Queer people intentionally avoid their sexual and gender identity being fixed and defined within a traditional triangle "heterosexual – bisexual – homosexual" and within a traditional binary of "man-woman" respectively. For them, these categories are limiting. However, there also exists a broader meaning of this term. Sometimes queer means belonging to LGBTQI+ community.

**Travesti** is a person that plays a role of a person of another gender, creating a hyperbolically masculine or a hyperbolically feminine image, often with an aim of parody. Drag queens – people with assigned male sex who create a feminine image – and drag kings – people with assigned female sex who create a masculine image – are types of travesty. Travesties can be of any gender identity and sexual orientation.

**Transphobia** is an umbrella term for various types of negative reactions to transgender people and gender fluid people and to different social phenomena connected to them. Transphobia is a phenomenon similar to racism, xenophobia, sexism, etc.

## LGBTQI+ and Human Rights

**LGBT** is an acronym that stands for lesbians, gays, bisexual people, and transgender people. The term “LGBT” emphasizes diversity of manifestations of human sexuality and diversity of gender identities in different cultures and is used to denote the community of gay, bisexual and transgender people.

**LGBTQI+** is a term that is being used more and more often lately. It is a more inclusive acronym that in addition to lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people also includes intersex people and people who identify as queer. A spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations can be very wide; still, each and every person has the right to be themselves, each and every person has human rights.

**Human Rights** are main rights and freedoms inherent to all people from birth regardless of their nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, skin color, religion, language, or any other status.

Human rights include civil and political rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom, respect for privacy, freedom of speech and thought, and prohibition of discrimination; social, cultural, economic rights, including the right to participate in cultural events, the right to food, and the right to education. The state assumes responsibility for providing and defending human rights. Securing human rights isn't an exclusive domestic affair of the state – they are secured by international law and international institutions.

The main system of protection of human rights is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

**Discrimination** is a situation of a violation of human rights, when because of stereotypes or a certain characteristic a group of people receives worse treatment than others. United Nations Human Rights Committee – an independent body of experts that monitors the enforcement of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – stated that in the Covenant the definition of discrimination includes “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, skin color, language, religion, political or other views, national or social origin, economic situation, birth or any other characteristic which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality before the law or the equal protection of the law, or the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Discrimination has different manifestations – it ranges from insults and attacks to refusal to guarantee basic needs (medicine, education, etc) and services and to secure other rights. Victims of discrimination can find themselves in disadvantageous circumstances in employment or find that they have limited access to education, housing, or necessary medical help. Discriminated groups can lack the right to participation in social life and the right to freedom of association. In the sphere of justice, they can endure biased treatment, torture, and ill-treatment.

## LGBTQI+ and Human Rights

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Discrimination appears as a consequence of disrespect to human dignity and of the refusal to acknowledge equal value of all humans. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “all people are born free and equal in their dignity and their rights.” Published in 2007, **The Yogyakarta Principles** on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity state that **discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity** includes “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on sexual orientation or gender identity which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality before the law or the equal protection of the law, or the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

**Gay Pride, LGBTQI+ Pride** is a public demonstration that aims to declare that LGBTQI+ is a part of society that has to enjoy the same rights as others, to advocate tolerance for LGBTQI+ in society and equal access to human rights, irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation. Gay Pride marches take place in more than 50 countries in the world.

## Human Rights that LGBTQI+ people don't have in Ukraine:

- the right to be protected from discrimination
- the right to safety
- the right to not undergo unnecessary medical treatments
- to register a civil union
- the right to inherit a partner's property or to pass on their property to a partner
- parental rights and the right to adopt children
- the right to receive alimony
- the right to make important medical decisions on behalf of a partner in the case of a serious illness
- the right to have documents that match their appearance and gender identity
- the right to make arrangements for a partner's body in case of their death
- the right to donate blood
- the right to not testify against their partner in court

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