

## **The Rainbow Well 2SLGBTQIA+ Glossary**

*(updated April 11, 2024)*

The following glossary, while far from comprehensive, is designed to provide a beginners understanding of important terms and ideas critical to understanding **2SLGBTQIA+** people, their place in the Church, wider culture, and the world. Words and ideas are always in flux, and so too will this list. Please feel free to contact us with additional words, concerns, or questions about the glossary:

**[www.rainbowell.ca/contact](http://www.rainbowell.ca/contact)**

Throughout this glossary, the standard initialism used is **2SLGBTQIA+**, representing the diverse and inclusive spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. It stands for: **Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual**, with the "+" (**Plus**) signifying the inclusion of other identities not specifically mentioned. We choose to put **2S** first to acknowledge that indigenous expressions of sexual and gender minorities predate (and often stand apart from) the concepts of **LGBTQIA+** as we understand them. It is also done in solidarity to the work of anti-colonialism.

It's also important to note that while we have included terms using the suffix "phobia", such as in words like "transphobia," "homophobia," and "biphobia", we do so with caution. We've included these terms because of their popular usage to describe negative attitudes and discrimination. However it's critical to remember that they are not "phobias" in the clinical sense. Given this, we acknowledge that such use can trivialize the serious mental health dynamics many people face. We encourage you to use caution and discernment if/when you utilize such terms. However, the use of the suffix "phobia" outside of its original meaning does not detract from the legitimacy of the realities being defined.

### **A**

**Ace:** An abbreviation of the word Asexual. Given that not all Asexual people use (or appreciate) the abbreviation, it is primarily a self-ascribed term. See Asexual/Asexuality.

**AFAB:** An initialism meaning Assigned Female at Birth. The terms AFAB and AMAB (Assigned Male at Birth) are used by many (though not all) who are transgender, non-binary, and/or intersex. These terms are generally used as descriptive for context and not as primary identities, as it often contradicts their primary identities.

**Affirming:** A term, most often used in Christian and other religious contexts, that denotes active acceptance, support, and celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and their relationships. This includes full participation in all aspects of the life of the church, including such things marriage, ordination, etc. Extending beyond mere welcoming, it seeks complete integration and value within the faith community and the world.

**Agender:** A person who does not identify with any gender. Their gender identity is not aligned with traditional male or female categories. While some agender people experience a complete absence of gender identity, others view agender as a specific gender identity in and of itself.

**Allosexism:** The systemic discrimination and exclusion impacting asexual people based on the conscious or unconscious assumption that everyone does and should experience sexual attraction.

**Allosexual:** A sexual orientation that describes people who typically experience sexual attraction to others and have an interest in sexual relationships.

**Allyship:** Allyship is the active and ongoing support and solidarity in advocating for and supporting groups facing oppression, which extends beyond one's own community. In the context of 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, it specifically involves confronting and challenging dynamics such as heterosexism, sexism, genderism, allosexism, monosexism, etc. This is achieved through self-reflection and action against these forms of oppression in both personal and public spheres, recognizing that combating these injustices is a crucial part of social justice.

**AMAB:** An initialism meaning Assigned Male at Birth. The terms AMAB and AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth) are used by many (though not all) who are transgender, non-binary, and/or intersex. These terms are generally utilized for providing context rather than as primary identities, as they can contradict the primary identities of the individuals.

**Androgyne:** A gender identity that encompasses both masculine and feminine traits, or exists somewhere in between. An androgynous person identifies as androgyne, often blending or transcending traditional male and female gender norms.

**Aro:** An abbreviation of the word Aromantic. Given that not all Aromantic people use (or appreciate) the abbreviation, it is primarily a self-ascribed term. See Aromantic.

**Aromantic:** A romantic orientation where individuals typically do not experience romantic attraction or desire for romantic relationships. Aromantic people often find fulfillment in friendships and other non-romantic connections. While many aromantics

identify with a sexual orientation like asexual or bisexual, being aromantic does not necessarily mean one is asexual.

**Asexual/Asexuality:** A spectrum of sexual orientations for people who experience little to no sexual attraction, recognizing asexuality as a spectrum with varied experiences. Unlike celibacy, which is a choice to abstain from sexual activity, asexuality is a natural orientation. Some asexual people may engage in sexual activities and can experience different levels of attraction, including romantic, physical, and emotional, which are distinct from sexual attraction and can vary independently.

## **B**

**Bears/Bear Community:** A subgroup within the queer community, typically comprising large, hairy men who lean towards masculine presentation. This group includes cisgender, transgender, or gender variant individuals. The Bear community fosters inclusive spaces promoting self-care, self-love, and camaraderie. It encompasses various identities such as Cubs, Otters, Wolves, Chasers, and Admirers, collectively forming a supportive network.

**Bigender:** A gender identity involving two distinct genders, often involving characteristics of both masculine and feminine roles. This identity may encompass the traditional male and female genders, but can also include non-binary or genderqueer identities. Bigender individuals may experience and express these genders in different ways and at different times.

**Biphobia:** The oppression, discrimination, and hatred directed towards individuals who identify as bisexual, pansexual, and omnisexual. Biphobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings that may manifest in both the LGBTQ+ community and the broader society. It often involves stereotypes, misconceptions, or the outright rejection of these sexual identities. See Monosexism.

**Bisexual/Bi:** A sexual orientation describing individuals who are attracted to more than one gender. This attraction does not have to happen concurrently, in the same way, or to the same degree. Bisexuality involves a capacity for emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction to people of the same and different genders, including non-binary and genderqueer people.

**BlaQ/BlaQueer:** This term is used to describe individuals of Black or African descent, including those from the African diaspora, who embrace their 2SLGBTQIA+ identity as an integral part of their Blackness, and vice versa. BlaQ/BlaQueer recognizes the unique intersection of racial and queer identities, highlighting the intertwined nature of

race, culture, and 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences. This identity emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting the complex dimensions of being both Black and queer.

**Body Image:** This encompasses how a person feels, acts, and thinks about their body, influenced by factors such as communities, families, cultures, media, and personal perceptions. In the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, these attitudes are particularly impactful, intertwining with aspects of gender identity, sexual orientation, and societal norms to shape individual and collective experiences of self-image and body acceptance.

**Body Policing:** The act of correcting or controlling someone's physical body, often related to gender expression or size. This behavior, whether direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional, imposes societal norms and standards on an individual's appearance or actions.

**Butch:** A term typically used within the queer community, particularly by lesbians and some trans people, to describe a gender expression that is notably masculine. "Butch" goes beyond mere presentation, with some viewing it as an independent gender identity, embodying a specific set of cultural and social roles within the context of queerness and gender.

## C

**Cisgender:** This term refers to individuals whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. The prefix "cis-" means "on this side of," indicating alignment rather than opposition or crossing over. Recognizing someone as cisgender highlights the societal privileges often afforded to those who are not transgender, as their gender identity aligns with societal expectations and norms related to their birth sex.

**Cishet:** A portmanteau of "cisgender" and "heterosexual." It is used to describe individuals whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth (cisgender) and who are attracted to people of the opposite gender (heterosexual).

**Cisnormativity:** The pervasive assumption that everyone's gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth and that gender itself is strictly binary, encompassing only male and female. This disregards/invalidates non-binary, transgender, and gender-nonconforming identities and expressions. This concept shapes cultural norms, personal interactions, and institutional structures, often marginalizing those who do not conform to these binary gender expectations. See Heteronormativity.

**Cissexism/Genderism:** A system of discrimination that upholds the belief in only two genders, strictly linked to the sex assigned at birth. This system discriminates against and marginalizes people whose gender identity or expression deviates from cisgender norms. In cissexism, cisgender individuals hold societal privilege, while transgender and gender non-conforming people face systemic oppression. This bias is evident in various aspects of society, from language and social interactions to legal and healthcare systems.

**Coming Out:** This term describes the act of openly expressing and/or sharing one's sexual orientation or gender identity with others. The experience is highly individual, with no set right or wrong approach. "Coming out" also applies to disclosing other sensitive personal information. Opting not to publicly reveal one's LGBTQ+ identity is often described as being "in the closet" or "closeted." However, the choice to be out should be left to each individual without pressure or expectation.

**Conversion Therapy:** Practices aimed to change an individual's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to conform to heterosexual and cisgender norms. Widely considered pseudoscience, it often involved harmful medical and psychological techniques. It is generally condemned for being known to cause significant psychological harm while being almost entirely ineffective. Regarded as unethical and a violation of human rights, conversion therapy has been banned in numerous regions, particularly for minors. Historically linked to certain religious beliefs, some groups have advocated for it as a means of "healing from sexual brokenness" or addressing "struggles with same-sex attraction." The consensus in the medical and psychological fields is that homosexuality, bisexuality, and gender variance are natural aspects of human sexuality. Alternative terms for this practice include Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE), Gender Identity Change Efforts (GICE), and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE).

**Crossdressing:** The practice of wearing clothing traditionally associated with a gender different from one's own. This can be done for various reasons, including self-expression, performance, comfort, or entertainment. It's important to note that crossdressing does not necessarily indicate an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. For some, it is simply a form of expression or fashion preference without any deeper implications about their identity. The term has replaced "Transvestite" to avoid outdated and often pejorative connotations.

**D**

**Deadname/Deadnaming:** This refers to the birth name of a transgender or nonbinary individual which they no longer use, often because it contradicts their true gender. The act of using this former name, known as deadnaming, can happen intentionally or unintentionally. Deadnaming is generally seen as disrespectful and harmful. The term contrasts with a person's lived name, which is the name they currently identify with and use. See also Lived Name.

**Demisexual:** A sexual orientation characterized by experiencing sexual attraction only after forming a strong emotional bond with someone. Demisexual individuals typically feel sexual attraction less frequently than the general population, and some may have minimal interest in sexual activity. As such, demisexuality is considered part of the asexual spectrum, highlighting the need for a deep emotional connection for sexual attraction to develop.

**Drag (Drag King/Drag Queen/Other):** Drag involves the theatrical performance and expression of gender, often through dressing in clothing associated with a different gender than one's own. Drag queens perform with distinctly feminine attire, while drag kings adopt a distinctly masculine style. It's a form of gender expression, separate from an individual's gender identity, and does not necessarily indicate one's gender identity. Those who engage in drag can have any sexual orientation, including but not limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, or other orientations.

**Dyke:** A term used by some lesbians and queer women as a self-identifier, signifying strength and empowerment. While it has been reclaimed positively by certain members of the LGBTQ+ community, it remains offensive to others and should only be used by those who self-identify with it, respecting its complex history and varied acceptance.

## E

**Enby:** A term derived from the abbreviation 'NB,' representing Non-Binary. As not all Non-Binary people use the term, only people who self-identify as a Enby should use this term. See Non-Binary

**Ex-Gay:** This label is used by individuals who once identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual but now consider themselves heterosexual. Often associated with movements that endorse sexual orientation change, typically through religious/spiritual interventions and/or pseudo-psychological “treatment”, the term is controversial. Major health organizations have discredited the practices promoting such change, like conversion therapy, for being both harmful and ineffective. The ex-gay narrative is a subject of significant debate within religious and psychological circles due to its

implications and the ethics surrounding attempts to change sexual orientation. See Conversion Therapy.

## F

**Femme:** A term initially rooted in the lesbian community to denote a feminine lesbian, now more broadly adopted by various 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. It describes gender expressions that challenge and redefine traditional notions of femininity, extending beyond sexual orientation to encompass a wider range of feminine identities within the 2SLGBTQIA+ spectrum.

**Female to Male (FTM):** A term used to describe individuals assigned female at birth who identify or express themselves as masculine, either partially or fully. This label is often associated with the transition towards a male gender identity. However, many now prefer terms like 'transitioning to male,' 'male,' 'man,' or 'trans man,' which more accurately reflect their gender identity without misgendering. While the use of FTM has decreased in common usage, it remains relevant in specific contexts, such as medical discussions.

## G

**Gay:** Refers to men and some non-binary individuals who experience emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction towards men. While "gay" is sometimes applied broadly within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to encompass various forms of same-gender attraction, it's important to be aware that such broad usage can lead to the erasure of distinct identities and experiences within the community.

**Gender:** A social construct that classifies individuals into categories such as man, woman, or other identities. It's important to distinguish gender from the biological sex assigned at birth, as gender is more about social roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men, women, and other gender identities. Gender encompasses a spectrum of identities and is an integral aspect of a person's self-concept and social identity.

**Gender Affirming:** This term refers to various practices, behaviors, medical procedures, and forms of communication that recognize and support an individual's gender identity. For instance, surgeries or medical treatments that modify a person's appearance to better align with their gender identity are known as gender-affirming surgeries. These actions are crucial in validating and respecting a person's gender experience and expression.

**Gender Dysphoria:** A term used to describe the discomfort or distress experienced due to a mismatch between one's sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. It is recognized as a clinical diagnosis, characterizing individuals who feel a profound unease with the sex they were assigned at birth and often seek ways to align their physical and gender identities.

**Gender Euphoria:** This term describes the intense feelings of joy or happiness that occur when a person's gender is acknowledged and respected by others, when their physical appearance aligns with their gender identity, or when they can express themselves in a way that is true to their gender. Emphasizing gender euphoria, rather than gender dysphoria, highlights the positive experiences and affirmations associated with being transgender or having a gender-expansive identity.

**Gender Expansive:** This umbrella term encompasses individuals who extend or challenge their culture's traditional views of gender, including its expression, identities, roles, and norms. It covers not only those who identify as transgender but also anyone whose gender expression or identity diverges from or expands societal conventions of gender. Gender expansive people play a role in widening the understanding and perception of gender in their communities.

**Gender Expression:** The way individuals present themselves, including through dress, presentation of secondary sex characteristics (such as breasts, body hair, voice), and behaviors. Society often categorizes these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous," but individuals may express their gender in a multitude of ways that go beyond these traditional labels. Gender expression reflects personal style and identity, and the terms used to describe it can vary widely among individuals.

**Gender Fluid/Genderfluid:** This term refers to individuals whose gender identity and expression are dynamic, not confined to a single fixed category. They may experience a fluid transition among multiple gender identities, encompassing male, female, non-binary, and genderqueer, among others. This fluidity signifies a spectrum of gender experiences, allowing for a diverse range of expressions and identifications beyond traditional binary norms.

**Gender Identity:** The personal and internal understanding of oneself as belonging to a specific gender, such as woman, man, trans, genderqueer, or another identity. This sense of self may align with or differ from the sex and gender assigned at birth. Gender identity is a deeply held aspect of self-awareness and is distinct from physical sex characteristics and external gender expression.

**Gender Inclusive Language:** A way of speaking and writing that avoids gender bias and embraces a diversity of gender identities and expressions. This approach includes using pronouns that reflect an individual's gender identity, avoiding gender-specific titles unless specified, resisting male-normative default language, and employing terms that include all genders rather than defaulting to binary male/female language.

**Genderism/Cissexism:** A belief system asserting that only two genders exist and that one's gender is inherently linked to their assigned sex. In this construct, cisgender people are often seen as the normative or dominant group, while transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are marginalized or oppressed. This ideology enforces rigid gender norms and overlooks the complexity of gender identity and expression.

**Gender Neutral:** This term applies to anything that does not specify a particular gender. For instance, gender-neutral language deliberately avoids binary male or female terms, making it inclusive of all gender identities. Similarly, gender-neutral restrooms are accessible to individuals of any gender identity or expression, not limited to the traditional male/female binary. This concept is key in promoting inclusivity and recognition of diverse gender experiences.

**Gender Non-Conforming (GNC):** This term describes individuals whose gender expression or behavior diverges from the prevailing norms associated with their assigned sex at birth. It encompasses a variety of expressions that challenge or differ from the conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity. Being gender non-conforming relates to expression and is not necessarily indicative of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It includes those who intentionally defy, blur, or reject binary gender norms in their appearance or behavior.

**Gender Outlaw:** This term is often used to describe individuals who actively challenge, reject, or go beyond traditional gender norms and binaries. Gender outlaws may identify as transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, or with another non-conforming gender identity. They often seek to disrupt conventional gender categories and advocate for more fluid and inclusive understandings of gender. The term can carry a connotation of rebellion and resistance against the rigid structures of gendered expectations in society.

**Gender Queer:** This term describes individuals whose gender identity and/or expression falls outside of, or combines elements of, the dominant societal norms for their assigned sex. Genderqueer people may identify as being beyond traditional gender categories, encompassing a mix or absence of male and female identities. This identity challenges conventional gender distinctions and is part of the broader non-binary spectrum, highlighting the fluidity and diversity of gender.

**Gender Unicorn:** A model commonly used to explain various aspects of one's identity, including sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, physical attraction, and romantic attraction. The Gender Unicorn uses a cartoon unicorn graphic to illustrate that these aspects, except for assigned sex at birth, exist on spectrums, highlighting the fluidity and diversity of gender and sexual orientation. While it serves as a useful educational tool, it is a simplified representation of complex concepts and should be used with an understanding of its limitations.

**Gender Variant:** A term describing individuals who vary from the expected characteristics of the gender assigned to them at birth. Gender variant people express, experience, or identify their gender in ways that diverge from traditional or societal norms of masculinity or femininity. This includes a spectrum of identities such as non-binary, genderqueer, and other non-conforming gender identities, highlighting the varied and fluid nature of gender.

**Gray (or Grey):** Often referred to as Gray-A or Gray-Ace/Aro, this term describes individuals who experience sexual or romantic attraction occasionally, rarely, or under specific conditions. It includes identities like Graysexual and Grayromantic, highlighting the spectrum between sexual/aromantic and asexual/aromantic experiences.

## H

**Heteronormativity:** This term describes societal attitudes and behaviors that presume heterosexuality is the default or "normal" sexual orientation. It implies that people will naturally align with conventional societal expectations for sexual and romantic attraction, often intersecting with cisnormativity to create rigid societal roles. For example, it assumes that someone assigned female at birth will identify as a woman, adopt a feminine gender expression, and be attracted to men, ideally within the context of a monogamous, opposite-sex relationship. Heteronormativity marginalizes LGBTQIA+ experiences by enforcing a limited and binary understanding of gender, sexuality, and relationships. See Cisnormativity.

**Heterosexism:** The assumption that all people are, or should be, heterosexual. It systematically excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer individuals, while providing advantages to heterosexual people. Heterosexism can be a subtle yet pervasive form of oppression, often reinforcing patterns of silence and erasure of non-heterosexual identities and experiences in various aspects of society.

**Heterosexuality:** A sexual orientation where an individual experiences physical attraction to people of a different gender than their own. Characterized by emotional, romantic, and sexual attractions and relationships, it is also commonly known as being "straight." This orientation is one aspect of the wider spectrum of human sexuality, which includes a diverse range of gender identities beyond a binary framework. See: Straight.

**Homophobia:** The oppression, discrimination, and hatred directed toward members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, particularly those who are homosexual or perceived to be. It includes a range of negative attitudes and actions, from disdain to active hostility and violence.

**Homosexual/Homosexuality:** A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. The term is often considered outdated, due to its historical use to pathologize gay and lesbian people. Therefore, it should be used with extreme care and sensitivity, and only if necessary.

I

**Internalized Oppression:** A condition where individuals fear and hate one or more of their own identities due to the absorption of negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about those identities. It involves accepting myths and stereotypes about one's own group, leading to self-hatred and a subconscious endorsement of the oppression they face. This phenomenon is a direct result of systemic discrimination and societal prejudices.

**Intersectionality:** This concept, coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s, refers to how various forms of oppression intersect in the lives of individuals with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality examines the relationships between these identities, recognizing that factors like race, gender, class, and sexuality interconnect and impact experiences of discrimination and privilege. This framework is essential for comprehensively analyzing social problems, developing more effective interventions, and promoting inclusive advocacy within communities. It underscores the complexity of multiple, overlapping oppressions and their cumulative effects on individuals and groups.

**Intersex:** This umbrella term encompasses a range of natural bodily variations that do not conform to traditional definitions of male or female. Intersex traits can include differences in chromosomes, hormone levels, and reproductive or sexual anatomy, both externally and internally. Historically, many intersex individuals have undergone medical procedures in infancy or early childhood aimed at aligning their sex

characteristics with societal norms, often without their consent. Despite being relatively common, the existence of intersex people has been largely overlooked, limiting public awareness and discussion of intersex issues. It's important to note that "hermaphrodite" is an outdated and offensive term previously used to describe intersex individuals.

## L

**Leather Community:** A community comprising individuals who enjoy wearing leather, often as part of sexual activities, including leather uniforms or cowboy outfits. This interest frequently intersects with other fetish-based practices like sadomasochism, bondage and domination, and rubber. While the leather community is closely associated with and has significant roots in the queer community, it is inclusive and not exclusively "queer-only." Members often express their sexuality and identity through leather attire and BDSM practices, emphasizing values like consent, respect, and safety. The community is known for its distinct culture, social norms, and rituals, contributing to the diversity within the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ movements.

**Lesbian:** A term typically used to describe women and some non-binary individuals who are emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to women. While it commonly refers to someone who identifies as a woman and is primarily attracted to people of the same gender, the identity is also embraced by some non-binary individuals. This inclusion often occurs when they feel a connection to womanhood and have a primary attraction towards women. The term acknowledges a spectrum of experiences within the realm of same-gender attraction.

**Lived Name:** A name, usually a first name, that an individual uses instead of their legal name for various reasons. Trans and non-binary people often adopt a lived name to affirm their gender identity. The term "lived name" has largely replaced "preferred name," as the latter implies optionality and can contribute to deadnaming. Recognizing and using someone's lived name is crucial for respecting their identity and avoiding the harm of deadnaming. See Deadname.

## M

**Marriage Equality:** The legal acknowledgment and right of marriage between people regardless of their genders, offering them equal rights and protections as heterosexual marriages. This aspect of 2SLGBTQIA+ rights advocates for the equal treatment of all individuals in the context of marriage, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. It encompasses the fight against legal and societal discrimination, striving for

the same recognition and benefits for all couples that are afforded to opposite-sex couples.

**Masculine of Center (MOC):** A term used to describe people, including lesbian/queer women and trans individuals, who lean towards the masculine side of the gender spectrum. It encompasses a wide range of identities such as butch, stud, aggressive/AG, dom, macha, tomboi, and trans-masculine. Masculine of Center acknowledges and represents the diversity in how individuals experience and express their masculinity, extending beyond traditional male norms to include various expressions of gender identity. (Term coined by B. Cole of the Brown Boi Project).

**Microaggressions:** Subtle verbal and nonverbal behaviors, often unconscious or unintentional, that convey derogatory or negative messages to people based on their marginalized identity. While seemingly minor, they can significantly impact the well-being and validation of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

**Misgendering:** Misgendering happens when someone uses incorrect pronouns or gender-specific language that doesn't align with an individual's true gender identity. Whether done unintentionally or deliberately, it can be damaging and invalidating, especially for transgender and non-binary people. For these individuals, being correctly identified is a critical part of their identity affirmation. Acknowledging and correcting misgendering, and consistently using a person's chosen pronouns and gender identity, are key steps towards showing respect and fostering inclusivity.

**MLM:** An initialism that refers to men who experience emotional and/or sexual attraction to other men. This term broadly includes gay and bisexual men, as well as those who might not identify with specific labels but are involved in relationships with other men. MLM is used to highlight and discuss the unique experiences and identities of these individuals within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, recognizing the wide spectrum of same-gender attraction among men.

**Monosexism:** The belief and systematic privileging of monosexuality (attraction to only one gender) as normative and/or superior, coupled with the oppression of non-monosexual orientations like bisexuality, pansexuality, or omnisexuality. This concept underlines societal biases that invalidate or overlook multi-gender attractions, reinforcing exclusivity in sexual orientation.

**Monosexual:** Refers to people who experience romantic, sexual, and/or affectional desire for only one gender. The most well-known forms of monosexuality are identifying as straight or gay, where attraction is directed exclusively towards a single gender. This term is used to distinguish these orientations from those that involve attraction to multiple genders, such as bisexuality or pansexuality.

**MSM (Men Who Have Sex with Men):** An abbreviation for men who engage in sexual activities with other men, regardless of whether they identify as gay or not. This term is primarily used in public health contexts to focus on sexual behavior rather than identity.

**Male to Female (MTF):** A term used to describe individuals assigned male at birth who identify or express themselves as feminine, either partially or fully. This label is often associated with the transition towards a female gender identity. However, many now prefer terms like 'transitioning to female,' 'female,' 'woman,' or 'trans woman,' which more accurately reflect their gender identity without misgendering. While the use of MTF has decreased in common usage, it remains relevant in specific contexts, such as medical discussions.

**Multisexual:** An umbrella term describing attraction to more than one gender. This includes sexual orientations such as bisexual, polysexual, and omnisexual, among others. While some use these terms interchangeably, others find the subtle distinctions between them important. Multisexual acknowledges the spectrum of attractions beyond a single-gender focus, emphasizing the diversity in romantic and sexual attractions.

## N

**Neopronouns:** A set of alternative pronouns outside of traditional gender pronouns like he/she or they. Examples include ze/zir, xe/xem, and ey/em. Neopronouns are used to express gender identities beyond the male/female binary and to foster inclusivity for diverse gender experiences. Their adoption is part of recognizing a broader range of gender identities outside the conventional binary.

**Neutrois:** A non-binary gender identity within the genderqueer and transgender spectrums. Neutrois encompasses diverse experiences of gender, commonly including neutral, null, neither male nor female, or genderless identities. This term highlights the variability and personal nature of gender beyond the binary, with each individual uniquely defining their experience of being Neutrois.

**Nonbinary/Non-binary/Non binary:** A gender identity that goes beyond the male/female binary, embracing a wide range of expressions and ways of being. It can be seen as a resistance to binary gender norms or as the creation of new, unbounded self-conceptions in the world. It often overlaps with other concepts like gender expansive and gender non-conforming, reflecting the individual's unique experience and understanding of their gender. This identity highlights the diversity and fluidity of gender.

## O

**Omnigender:** A gender identity that encompasses all genders, used specifically to challenge the binary concept of gender. Individuals identifying as omnigender experience a connection to a broad spectrum of gender identities simultaneously.

**Omnisexual (Omni):** A sexual orientation characterized by the potential for attraction to people of any gender. For some, omnisexuality emphasizes the capacity for attraction to all genders, with a conscious recognition of each gender's unique influence on their feelings of attraction. See Pansexual.

**Orientation:** An individual's pattern of attraction or non-attraction, encompassing various forms such as romantic, sexual, sensual, aesthetic, intellectual, and/or platonic. People's orientations can be fluid, and a wide range of labels are used to describe these attractions. Orientation is a key aspect of personal identity and acknowledges the diversity and complexity of how individuals experience

## P

**Pansexual (Pan):** A sexual orientation characterized by the potential for attraction to people of any gender or sex. For some, pansexuality underlines the fluidity and inclusiveness of attraction beyond gender boundaries. See Omnisexual.

**Passing:** When someone from a marginalized group is assumed to be part of a dominant group. In the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, it often refers to transgender or gender non-conforming individuals being perceived as cisgender, or gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. individuals as straight. While it may bring temporary safety and acceptance, it is highly conditional and it also implies pressure to conform to dominant societal norms.

**Phobia:** A clinical type of anxiety disorder characterized by an intense, irrational fear of certain objects, situations, or activities. In the 2SLGBTQIA+ context, terms like "transphobia," "homophobia," and "biphobia" are commonly used to describe negative attitudes and discrimination, but are distinct from the clinical definition. The use of 'phobia' in these contexts is metaphorical, indicating prejudice or aversion rather than an actual fear. Due to the risk of diminishing the seriousness of clinical phobias and contributing to ableism, such terms are being used less frequently in this context.

**Plus/+:** Symbolizes the inclusion of identities beyond those explicitly listed in initialisms such as 2SLGBTQIA+. It represents a broad spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities not specifically mentioned. The "+" emphasizes that all these identities, though not individually named, are equally important and integral to the community. This inclusiveness acknowledges the diversity and evolving nature of gender and sexual identity.

**Polyamory (Poly):** A relational practice, orientation and/or ethic of engaging in, or being open to, multiple consensual relationships simultaneously. Falling under the umbrella of ethical non-monogamy, it is distinct from "just being open", instead having a focus on building meaningful relationships with multiple partners. It emphasizes open communication, honesty, and mutual respect among all involved partners, distinguishing it from non-consensual non-monogamy.

**Pangender:** This term describes a gender identity encompassing all genders within the gender spectrum. A pangender person may identify with a wide and inclusive range of gender identities, reflecting the totality of the gender experience beyond the binary concept.

**Polycule:** A polyamorous relational group who are connected through consensual and mutually informed emotional, sexual, and/or romantic relationships. Each polycule, or part within it, has its own unique structures, boundaries, and connections.

**Polygender:** A gender identity where an individual identifies with several different genders simultaneously or over time. This identity recognizes a spectrum of gender experiences beyond the traditional binary, with a person feeling aligned with multiple gender identities, either consistently or variably.

**Polysexual:** An orientation describing attraction to several, but not necessarily all, genders. While similar to bisexuality and pansexuality, polysexuality emphasizes attraction across a diverse but not all-encompassing gender spectrum. This term highlights the variability in an individual's pattern of attraction.

**Positive:** A shortened term used to indicate being HIV positive.

**Privilege:** Unearned advantages based on traits like race, gender, and social class, which vary by context and often intersect. Often unrecognized to those who have it, privilege contributes to systemic inequalities. Heterosexual and cisgender privilege result in societal benefits that are not equally afforded to 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Understanding privilege is key to recognizing and addressing these disparities.

**Pronouns:** Words used in place of names that often reflect a person's gender. such as "he/him," "she/her," "they/them," or neopronouns, such as "ze/zir." In the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, using an individual's stated pronouns is essential for recognizing and respecting their gender identity. Correct pronoun usage fosters respect and inclusivity, especially for transgender and non-binary individuals. See Neopronouns.

## Q

**QPOC/QTPOC/QTBIPOC:** Acronyms/initialisms for Queer People of Color (QPOC), Queer Trans People of Color (QTPOC), and Queer Trans Black Indigenous People of Color (QTBIPOC). They are used to highlight the intersectional experiences of individuals within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who also belong to racial or ethnic minority groups. These terms acknowledge the complex, multifaceted systems of oppression these groups face due to their overlapping queer, trans, and racial identities. They play a crucial role in discussions about how intersectionality influences unique experiences of marginalization and discrimination. See Queer.

**Queer:** A term used to describe a wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions that don't fit into normative concepts. While "queer" is embraced by many for its encompassing and flexible nature, it's important to note that not everyone accepts this term due to its historical use as a pejorative. The stigma attached to its past usage means that its acceptance varies among individuals, particularly across different generations.

**Queer Platonic Relationship (QPR)/Queer Platonic Partnership (QPP):**

Relationships that blend elements from platonic, romantic, and sexual relationships while purposefully defying conventional categories. Each QPR or QPP is unique, often characterized by a degree of commitment or intimacy tailored to the individuals involved. These relationships are particularly significant among asexual and aromantic people, who may structure their relationships in non-traditional ways, finding comfort and fulfillment in the flexibility and undefined nature of Queer Platonic Relationships. See Queer.

**Queer Theory:** A field of academic study that challenges and deconstructs traditional notions of gender and sexuality. It examines the social construction of these categories, challenging the binary understanding of gender and sexual orientation. Originating from feminist theory and gay and lesbian studies, Queer Theory intersects with various social categories, including race and class, to explore the complexities of identity and expression within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Questioning:** The process of exploring one's own gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. This involves a period of reflection and self-discovery where individuals consider how different labels or identities might resonate with their experiences. Some use the term to describe their identity within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

## R

**Romantic Orientation:** The pattern of romantic attraction to others, characterized by the expression of love. It can be fluid, with individuals using a variety of labels like heteroromantic, homoromantic, biromantic, or aromantic (in which case it refers to non-attraction/expression) to describe their experiences. See Orientation.

## S

**Same Gender Loving (SGL):** A term used particularly in the Black community to describe individuals attracted to the same gender. It serves as a culturally affirming alternative to terms like 'gay' or 'lesbian.' Coined to highlight the dignity and normalcy of same-gender relationships, SGL emphasizes the need for culturally specific language in expressing sexual orientation within diverse communities.

**Sapphic:** This term describes female-identifying individuals who are attracted to other female-identifying people. It is inclusive of lesbians, bisexuals, omnisexuals, pansexuals, romantic asexuals, and other orientations, as well as nonbinary individuals who feel a connection to womanhood. Sapphic is often used as a broader, more inclusive alternative to "women who like women (WLW)" or lesbian, capturing a wide spectrum of attractions within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Sex Assigned at Birth:** A medical categorization based on the appearance of genitalia either in ultrasound or at birth (often based on cursory and incomplete understanding of sex). Typically labeled as male, female, or intersex, it's important to note that this initial classification may differ from an individual's gender identity. Recognizing that sex is not always binary, as in the case of intersex individuals, is crucial for understanding the distinction between sex assigned at birth and gender identity. This concept is especially relevant in discussions about transgender and non-binary experiences. See also Intersex, AFAB (Assigned Female at Birth), and AMAB (Assigned Male at Birth).

**Sexism:** A set of cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and devalue traits or roles traditionally associated with women. This form of prejudice and discrimination is based on a person's sex or

gender, often manifesting in various ways, including workplace discrimination, gender-based violence, and gender stereotyping. Sexism influences not only individual interactions but also broader societal and institutional structures, perpetuating gender inequalities. Within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, sexism intersects with other forms of discrimination, affecting those with diverse gender identities and expressions.

**Sexuality:** A broad term that includes an individual's biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual practices. It represents how people experience and express themselves sexually and encompasses their sexual feelings, attractions, and behaviors. Sexuality is a complex and personal aspect of identity, varying widely among individuals and integral to understanding the diversity of human experiences.

**Sexual Orientation:** The enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction, or non-attraction, to other people. It is a core aspect of an individual's identity, determining who they are drawn to in these significant ways. Sexual orientation can be fluid, with a range of labels used to describe these patterns of attraction. See also Orientation.

**Side A and Side B:** Terms commonly used to differentiate two different Christian beliefs around same-sex relationships. "Side A" is fully affirming of same-sex romantic/sexual relationships, while "Side B", while affirming the dignity and worth of 2SLGBTQIA+ people, believes that sexual relationships are reserved for "one man and one woman", encouraging celibacy for gay/lesbian Christians. "Side B" Christians generally reject sexual orientation change efforts, such as "conversion therapy".

**SOGICE/SOCE/GICE:** Acronyms standing for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE), Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE), and Gender Identity Change Efforts (GICE). See Conversion Therapy

**SOGIE:** An acronym that stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression.

**Spectrum:** In the context of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, it is often used to describe the diverse and varied nature of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It acknowledges that these aspects of identity are not binary or fixed but instead encompass a wide, fluid range of experiences and identities. The concept of a spectrum highlights the idea that people's experiences of their gender and sexuality can vary greatly and do not necessarily fit into neat, predefined categories.

**Stereotype:** A generalized belief or assumption applied uniformly to every member of a particular group, often ignoring individual diversity and complexity. This fixed conception can lead to overlooking traits that don't align with the stereotype,

rationalizing observations to fit preconceived notions, viewing non-conforming individuals as exceptions, and reinforcing stereotypical characteristics. Stereotypes are simplifications of complex human behaviors and identities and can contribute to misunderstanding and prejudice.

**Straight:** A term used to describe individuals who are heterosexual, meaning they experience emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to people of a different gender. As a sexual orientation, being straight is characterized by a pattern of attraction that aligns with traditional societal expectations of opposite-gender relationships. See also Heterosexual.

**Stud:** A term culturally specific to the Black 2SLGBTQIA+ community, often defined as a Black masculine lesbian. It represents an identity label that is uniquely and exclusively used within the Black community, highlighting the intersection of race, gender expression, and sexual orientation. See also Butch.

## T

**Trans:** An abbreviated form of transgender that is often seen as more inclusive for non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

**Trans man:** A person who was assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. It may or may not involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy or surgery, to align the individual's physical appearance with their gender identity. A trans man's identity is based on his internal awareness of self as male, which is independent of biological sex or sexual orientation.

**Transfeminine/Transfem:** A term for people, often AMAB or Intersex, who identify with femininity in some capacity. It encompasses trans women and other trans+ individuals who have a connection to femininity, emphasizing their alignment with aspects of femininity regardless of assigned sex at birth.

**Transmasculine/Transmasc:** A term used to describe individuals, often AFAB or Intersex, who identify with masculinity in some way. It includes trans men and other trans+ individuals who have a connection to masculinity, highlighting their alignment with aspects of masculinity regardless of assigned sex at birth.

**Transphobia:** The deeply ingrained negative attitudes and beliefs towards transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming individuals. These beliefs influence how individuals, institutions, and society as a whole treat people whose identities do not conform to traditional gender norms. Transphobia manifests in discriminatory policies,

harassment, and violence directed at transgender and nonbinary individuals, jeopardizing their rights and safety. See also Cissexsim.

**Trans woman:** A person who was assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may or may not involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy or surgery, to align the individual's physical appearance with their gender identity. A trans woman's identity is based on her internal awareness of self as female, which is independent of biological sex or sexual orientation.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term used to describe individuals whose internal self-awareness of gender differs from the societal or cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. This term includes not only trans women (assigned male at birth) and trans men (assigned female at birth) but also encompasses those who identify with genders beyond the woman/man binary, such as non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, or multiple genders. Being transgender is about one's internal understanding of their gender identity, which may or may not align with their birth-assigned sex. See Trans.

**Transition:** The process in which individuals align their lives with their true gender. Transitioning varies greatly and may include social steps like changing personal pronouns or a lived name, changing physical appearance or style, and, for some, undergoing medical interventions like hormone therapy or surgery. It can also involve updating legal documents. The extent and nature of transitioning are personal and do not determine the validity of one's gender identity. Social transitioning specifically refers to presenting oneself according to their gender identity in various settings.

**Two Spirit:** A term specific to some Indigenous North American communities, describing individuals who fulfill traditional gender-variant roles with unique cultural and spiritual implications. These roles, which can include specialized work, gender variation, spiritual aspects, and relationship dynamics, vary across different cultures. Two Spirit identities encompass more than gender identity and sexual orientation, holding significant and diverse meanings within Indigenous contexts. They are unique to the cultural and spiritual traditions of Indigenous North American peoples and should not be appropriated by those outside those communities.

## W

**Welcoming, Not Affirming:** A phrase often used in religious contexts to describe a stance where 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are received with hospitality and limited inclusivity, yet without affirmation of their sexual or gender identities or allowance to fully engage in the life of the church. See Affirming.

**WLW:** An initialism for women who are attracted to other women, including lesbians, bisexual, and pansexual women, as well as those who may not use specific labels. WLW is used to discuss the diverse experiences and identities of these individuals within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, acknowledging the broad spectrum of same-gender attraction among women and woman-aligned individuals. See also Sapphic.

**Womxn:** An alternative spelling of "women" that includes an "x" to distance from the "men" in the traditional spelling. This form symbolizes empowerment and inclusivity, particularly for trans women and women of color, emphasizing a diverse and expansive concept of womanhood.

[www.rainbowwell.ca](http://www.rainbowwell.ca)