



LGBTQIA+ Guide

Steps to Inclusivity

Everyone is Equal

The best way to create an equitable environment for everyone is to hold yourself and everyone else to the same standard. Every person is free to live their life and be not be treated any better or worse than anyone else. In other words, **everyone is equal**. When someone comes to work, they should enter a place where they can bring their whole self and not leave anything behind. The same is true for school, the doctor's office, while shopping, and with family and friends; people can be who they are.



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This guide contains important information about the LGBTQIA+ community, including descriptive terms, history, and some facts about the barriers that the LGBTQIA+ community face every day. There are also some resources so you can learn more and create an **equitable environment for everyone**.



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Step One: Learn About Major Events (1950-1985)^{1,2}

- **1924** – The Society for Human Rights is founded by Henry Gerber in Chicago. It is the first documented gay rights organization in the United States.
- **April 1952** – The American Psychiatric Association’s diagnostic manual lists "homosexuality" (the term used at that time) as a "sociopathic personality disturbance."
- **April 1953** – President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs executive order 10450 banning "homosexuals" from working for the federal government, deeming them "a security risk."
- **June 1969** – The Stonewall Inn, located in the Greenwich neighborhood of New York City, is raided by police. Protests and demonstrations begin, and this event is later recognized as the spark for the modern gay civil rights movement in the United States.
- **June 1970** – Community members in New York march through the city for the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots. The Christopher Street Liberation Day is now considered the first gay pride parade.
- **January 1978** – Harvey Milk is inaugurated as San Francisco City Supervisor and is the first openly gay man to be elected to a political office in California. In November, Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone are murdered by Dan White. White served just over five years in prison for voluntary manslaughter.
- **June 1978** – In a collaboration with Harvey Milk to develop a symbol of pride and hope for the LGBTQ community, Gilbert Baker designs the first rainbow flag.
- **June 1981** – A report from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) describes the cases of five young gay men from Los Angeles with deadly and unusual lung infections. This was one of the first cases where AIDS related deaths were reported.
- **1982-1983** – Conversations between President Reagan’s press secretary and reporters showed that the nation’s officials viewed HIV as “gay plague” and paid little attention to the rising deaths in the LBGT community despite calls for action from communities and the CDC.





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Step One: Learn About Major Events (1985-2021)^{1,2}

- **March 1987** – CDC researchers and community efforts result in the first antiretroviral drug (AZT) to slow the progression of HIV and new regulations for clinical trials.
- **November 1993** – President Bill Clinton signs a military policy directive known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” banning gay men and lesbians from serving openly in the military.
- **September 1996** – The Defense of Marriage Act is signed into law, banning federal recognition of same-sex marriage.
- **November 2008** – Voters approve Proposition 8 in California, which makes same-sex marriage illegal.
- **September 2011** – President Barack Obama repeals “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”
- **June 2015** – Obergefell v. Hodges is brought to the Supreme Court where they rule in favor of the legalization of same-sex marriage.
- **June 2017** – District of Columbia residents are permitted to choose a gender-neutral option of their driver’s license.
- **March 2018** – President Donald Trump announces a new policy that bans most trans people from serving in military.
- **June 2020** – The Supreme Court rules that federal law protects LGBTQ workers from discrimination. This landmark ruling extends protections to millions of workers nationwide.
- **January 2021** – President Joe Biden signs an executive order repealing the ban on trans Americans joining the military.
- **March 2021** – Dr. Rachel Levine, assistant secretary for health in the Department of Health and Human Services, becomes the first openly trans federal official to be confirmed by the Senate.
- **June 2021** – The State Department announces it will be updating its procedures to allow applicants to self-select their gender for passports.





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Step Two: Review the LGBTQIA+ Disparity Data

Health care, unfortunately, is not always equitable for LGBTQIA+ individuals. Some providers may have inherent bias or stigma, do not understand how to provide the proper care, diagnose or treat certain conditions, or, in some cases, refuse to see LGBTQIA+ patients. This also forces some LGBTQIA+ individuals to not disclose health issues, seek ineffective treatment, or avoid health care altogether.

- **21-30 percent** of trans individuals and **9 percent** of LGB individuals **reported avoiding emergency care services** due to their concerns that **their identity would have a negative effect on the encounter**.³
- Rates of **SUD and mental illness** among the LGBT population (18 percent) in the US in 2019 were **more than double that of the non-LGB individuals** (7.7percent).⁵
- Compared to their heterosexual and cisgendered counterparts, **LGBTQIA+ individuals are 1.5 times more likely** to experience **depression and anxiety, and 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide**.^{6,7}
- **38 percent** of LGBT adults with severe mental illness **did not receive treatment** in 2019.⁸
- In LGBTQIA+ individuals over 50 years old, co-occurring substance use and mental illness **nearly doubled** between 2016 through 2019.⁵





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Step Two: Review the LGBTQIA+ Disparity Data

A lot has changed over the last few decades, but there is still work to do. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals still feel the need to hide a part of themselves to avoid judgment, harassment, discrimination, and violence. State and federal laws are inconsistent, workplace policies regarding discrimination can be inconsistent or ineffective, and many LGBTQIA+ individuals hide aspects of themselves to avoid intolerant behaviors or actions.

- In Pennsylvania, **27 percent of LGB individuals have an income under \$24K a year** compared to 18 percent among non-LGBT adults.⁴
- LGBTQIA+ individuals are **at increased risk of harassment and bullying.**^{9,10}
- Bisexual individuals are **more likely to experience intimate partner violence** than any other identity.¹¹
- A study conducted on lifetime sexual assault found that **63 percent of LGBT participants reported they had been sexually assaulted.**¹²



Step Three: Learn the Basic Terms^{13,14,15}

Gender is a set of a society's constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes.

Sex refers to the gender assigned at birth based on physical anatomy.

Sexual orientation is the emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people or no one.

Orientation vs. behavior: While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does **not** define one's sexual orientation.



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Step Four: Learn the Acronym¹⁴

Lesbian - A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other women.

Gay - People who are emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.

Bisexual - People attracted to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or in the same degree. The "bi" in bisexual can refer to attraction to genders similar to and different from one's own.

Transgender - Often shortened to trans. this describes a person's gender identity that does not match their assigned sex at birth. This is the opposite of **cisgender** (also known as cis), an individual whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Queer - Considered by some to be inclusive of the entire community, and by others who find it to be an appropriate term to describe their more fluid identities. This was reclaimed by the community from earlier negative use.

Intersex - Used to refer to people who are biologically between the medically expected definitions of male and female. This can be through variations in hormones, genetics, internal or external genitalia, or any combination of any or all primary and/or secondary sex characteristics.

Asexual and Aromantic - Asexual, sometimes abbreviated as ace, refers to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction. Aromantic, sometimes abbreviated as aro, refers to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction.

“+” – The “+” represents those who are part of the community but may not find that the LGBTQ reflects their identity.





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Step Five: Learn About the “+” and Common Terms¹⁴

Nonbinary – People who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the male/female genders. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with other terms like genderqueer or gender fluid.

Two-Spirit (2S) – A term used within some Native American and Alaska Native communities to refer to a person who identifies as having both a male and a female essence or spirit. This term is used by those communities exclusively due to its cultural significance.

Pansexual – A person whose emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders. They can consider themselves to be “gender fluid.”

Polyamorous – A term used to describe people who have the desire for multiple consenting intimate relationships at the same time.

Kinsey Scale – A measurement that was developed in the 1940s by Alfred Kinsey. It places an individual’s sexual orientation on a linear spectrum from 0 (heterosexual) to 6 (homosexual). The scale includes an “X” option which represents an absence of sexual behavior.

Deadnaming – When an individual, intentionally or not, uses to the name that a trans or gender-expansive individual used at a different time in their life. This should be avoided to prevent additional trauma and stigma.

Survival Sex – Term for sexual activity performed in exchange for goods or services. Since LGBTQIA+ people are more likely to be denied fair housing and employment, some may rely on sex work to ensure they have a safe place to sleep or money for essentials.

Heteronormativity – The assumption that everyone is heterosexual. This includes the often implicitly held idea that heterosexuality is the norm and that other sexualities are different or abnormal.

Cisnormativity – The assumption that everyone is cisgender. Like heteronormativity, it perpetuates the idea that everyone is cisgendered.





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Step Six: Start Using Language Replacement¹⁵

Terms to Avoid	Use Instead	Why?
Homosexual	Gay	This can sound like a medical diagnosis and can communicate a discomfort with LGBTQIA+ people.
A gay	A gay person	Gay is an adjective, and not to be used as a noun.
Husband/wife	Partner or spouse	Removes the heteronormative assumption and includes people outside the binary.
Trans people vs. normal people	Trans people and cis people	Saying normal implies that trans individuals are not normal.
Hermaphrodite	Intersex	Hermaphrodite is a stigmatizing word with a negative history.
Born male/female	Assigned male/female at birth	"Assigned" more accurately depicts the situation of what happens at birth.
Both genders or opposite sex	All genders	Implies there are only two genders or reinforces the idea of antagonism amongst genders.
Ladies and gentlemen	Everyone, folks, yinz	Non-binary language is more inclusive of people of all genders
Mailman, fireman, policeman, etc.	Mail clerk, firefighter, police officer, etc.	These professions include people of all genders, not just "men".
Freshman	First-year	Non-binary language is more inclusive of students of all genders
"It" (if pronouns are unknown)	"They/them" (if pronouns are unknown)	"It" is for objects, not people.
Lifestyle choice/preference	Use the correct gender expression or sexual orientation	Being LGBTQIA+ is not a choice, it is part of an individual's identity.



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Keep Going: Resources and More Information

PFLAG

Founded in 1973, Parents of Friends of Lesbians and Gays offers education and support for LGBTQIA+ individuals, their families, and friends.

<https://pflag.org/onlineacademy>

Stonewall National Monument

The national monument to the fight for equality in 1969 has information and reading lists to help increase understanding of the LGBTQIA+ perspective.

<https://www.nps.gov/ston/index.htm> There is also a virtual tour of the monument:

<https://stonewallforever.org>

The GLBT Historical Society Museum

The museum is in San Francisco's Castro District and includes a massive online archive.

www.glbthistory.org/online-resources

LGBT National Help Center

Crisis support for LGBTQIA+ individuals of all ages. Via phone or online chat.

www.glbthotline.org

The Trevor Project

Crisis support for LGBTQIA+ individuals under 18.

www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help

Trans Lifeline

Crisis line run by trans people for trans people.

<https://translifeline.org/hotline>

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC)

The HRC is an LGBTQIA+ advocacy organization which supports policies and activities to guarantee equal rights for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

www.hrc.org

“It takes no compromising to give people their rights. It takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no survey to remove repressions.”
-Harvey Milk

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