

# VOCABULARY



CFLGBT

# IDENTITIES AND BEHAVIOURS

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## LGBT

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans\*.

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## LESBIAN

A woman<sup>1</sup> may choose to identify as a lesbian based on her feelings of physical, romantic and emotional attraction to other women. When we call a woman a “lesbian,” we are generally referring to the identity she has constructed for herself based on her attraction to other women.

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## GAY

A man may choose to identify as gay based on his feelings of physical, romantic and emotional attraction to other men. When we call a man “gay” we are generally referring to the identity he has constructed for himself based on his attraction to other men. Some women self-identify as ‘gay women’.

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## BISEXUAL

A person may choose to identify as bisexual based on their feelings of physical, romantic and emotional attraction to both men and women. When we refer to people as “bisexual,” we are generally referring to the identity that they have constructed for themselves based on their attraction to both men and women.

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## TRANS\*

An umbrella term encompassing a diversity of identities assumed by people whose gender identity does not correspond to the identity they were assigned at birth. The expression trans\* can include transsexual people, genderqueer people, men and women who have a history of transition, etc.

1 In this document the term 'woman' designates any person that identifies as a woman (whether cis or trans\*). Equally the term 'Man' designates any person that identifies as a man (whether cis or trans\*).



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## **HOMOSEXUAL**

A term describing a sexual, romantic or emotional attraction to or sexual behaviour with a person of the same sex. When we call people “homosexual,” we are generally referring to the identity that they have constructed for themselves based on their attraction to people of the same sex. This term may imply less of a sense of belonging to a gay culture or community and is sometimes deemed too medical.

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## **TRANS\* WOMAN**

Refers to a person that identifies as a woman (or along the feminine spectrum) but was assigned a masculine gender at birth.

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## **TRANS\* MAN**

Refers to a person that identifies as a man (or along the masculine spectrum) but was assigned a feminine gender at birth.

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## **CISGENDER**

In opposition to the word ‘trans\*’ the term ‘cisgendered’ refers to people who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth.

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## **GENDER IDENTITY**

Refers to the intimate and personal experience of feeling like a man or like a woman (or not identifying with either gender, or two genders, or yet another identity) and this, independent of the biological sex determined at birth. All people, regardless of their sexual orientation, have a gender identity.

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## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Refers, in a general way, to a physical, sexual, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards a type of person or body-type. It also refers to a sense of personal and social identity based on this attraction, the behaviour that expresses it and possibly the sense of belonging to a certain community with the same identity. Homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality and queer identity are the most widely recognized sexual orientations. All people—whether cisgendered or trans\*—have a sexual orientation.

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## GENDER ROLES

Refers to the behaviours, activities, preferences and attitudes that are generally attributed to people depending on their gender identity. They can vary according to the time period or culture. For example, in western society today, it is acceptable for women to work outside the home and to wear pants, though is not acceptable in some other cultures and was not the case in our culture 100 years ago. Children's understanding of gender roles becomes apparent, for example, in their choice of toys (dolls versus trucks), recreational activities (dance versus hockey) and clothing (skirts versus pants).

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## GENDER EXPRESSION

Gender expression concerns the way gender identity is conceived and socially expressed by a given individual through characteristics and behaviours observable by others, such as physical appearance, dress code, linguistic codes (e.g. the first name used, pronouns used), gestures, personality and any other attributes linked to gender. Gender expression varies along two distinct spectra: the spectrum of femininity and the spectrum of masculinity.

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## GENDER NON-CONFORMING

An expression that signifies that an individual's gender expression does not conform to that of the majority: a boy that is seen as "too feminine" or a girl that is seen as "too masculine". Individuals can be judged to be gender-non-conforming for a variety of reasons including the sports they play, their interests or hobbies, the way they dress, their musical taste and their circle of friends. People who are gender non-conforming are at risk to be the victims of homophobia or transphobia.



# DISCRIMINATION/ OPPRESSION

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## HOMOPHOBIA

Any attitude that can lead to the rejection of or discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals or any person whose appearance or behaviour doesn't conform to stereotypes of masculinity or femininity.

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## HETERONORMATIVITY

This concept has its basis in the affirmation of normative ideologies around sex, gender, sexual orientation and social roles. Heteronormativity presents these dimensions in a system that postulates the duality of the sexes (masculine/feminine), gender (man/woman), social roles (e.g. mother/father) and sexual orientations (heterosexual/ homosexual) and the alignment of these dimensions (feminine sex, woman, mother, heterosexual; masculine/man/father/heterosexual). Heteronormativity thus puts in place a dominant system where people who are outside of these norms (e.g. non-heterosexuals, gender non-conforming individuals, trans\* and intersex people, etc.) are considered to be inferior.

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## HETEROSEXISM

This concept refers to heterosexuality as the social norm or as superior to other sexual orientations. Consequences of heterosexism include cultural, social, legal and institutional practices that deny, ignore, denigrate or stigmatize all forms of non-heterosexual behaviours, identities and relationships. If heteronormativity dictates the code of conduct and social norms regarding sex, gender and sexual orientation then heterosexism ensures their maintenance through social exclusion, discrimination and the erasure of individuals who contravene these norms.

Heterosexism manifests itself in a variety of ways. It is obvious in the public discourse around notions like the differentiation and complementarity of the sexes (love between a man and woman is more natural, because it leads to procreation) or normative heterosexuality (a normal family has a mother and a father). Heterosexism equally underscores social practices that erase the diversity of sexual orientations and the plurality of genders whether in public representations (school textbooks, forms, TV shows, etc.), or in social relations and institutions (taking for granted that everyone is heterosexual and cisgendered).

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## TRANSPHOBIA

Refers to hatred and prejudice against trans\* people or cisgendered individuals who do not conform to the norms traditionally associated with their gender. Transphobia can manifest itself in diverse forms including verbal violence (mocking and insults), psychological violence (rumours, blackmail, outing), physical violence (aggression, hate crimes, rape or murder), or by discriminatory or intolerant behaviour (discrimination in hiring or housing, or in terms of access to medical care).

# FAMILY DIVERSITY

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## HOMOPARENTAL FAMILY

A “homoparental family” refers to all families where at least one of the parents identifies as gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB). Homoparental families come in all shapes and sizes, for example: same-sex, single-parent, blended, adoptive, foster, multiethnic or interracial families. LGB parents can be cisgendered or trans\*. Families with LGB parents have always existed. However, they are only now beginning to gain visibility in Québec, and this visibility has seen a huge increase since the 1990s. The term “famille homoparentale” [homoparental family] was coined in France in 1997 by the Association des parents et futurs parents gais et lesbiens [Association of Gay and Lesbian Parents and Future Parents] and was first introduced in the *Petit guide bibliographique à l’usage des familles homoparentales* (Gross, 2000) [Pocket Bibliography for Homoparental Families]. This term was still not commonly used in Québec until homoparental families made headlines in 2002 due to a National Assembly debate on the legal recognition of homosexual couples and their families. In Québec, the LGBT Family Coalition is a non-profit community organization with a membership of more than 1400 families with LGBT parents as of 2015.

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## HETEROPARENTAL FAMILY

A “heteroparental family” refers to all families where at least one of the parents identifies as being heterosexual. A child in a blended family (whose parents have separated and are now with new partners) can live half of the time in a homoparental family and the other half of the time in a heteroparental family.

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## TRANSPARENTAL FAMILY

A “transparental family” refers to all families where at least one of the parents identifies as being trans\*. A trans\* person can become a parent before or after having transitioned. Transparental families can be perceived as well as being heteroparental or homoparental. In the case of trans\* parents who consider their families to be homoparental (or whose families are socially perceived as being homoparental), they can face a double minority status. They and their families are susceptible to be discriminated against or victimized on the basis of their trans\* identity or sexual orientation (real or perceived). The story of Thomas Beatie—a trans\* man that carried and gave birth to 3 children between 2008 and 2010 after a temporary stoppage of hormone treatments—engendered a certain amount of visibility or at least reflection about the existence of transparental families. Nevertheless, these families remain mostly invisible in the public sphere.

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## PRE-TRANSITION PARENT(ING)

A ‘pre-transition parent’ refers to a person that became a parent (whether through biological means or otherwise) before identifying as trans\* or before having begun a transition process. Because of the strict links between gender and parenting roles, pre-transition parents generally assume maternal or paternal roles that correspond to the gender they were assigned at birth. After transitioning, parental roles can continue as they were or can be changed.

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## POST-TRANSITION PARENT(ING)

A ‘post-transition parent’ refers to a person that became a parent (whether through biological means or otherwise) after identifying as trans\* or after having begun a transition process. With recent progress in medicine, notably in assisted procreation technologies, people who undergo hormonal therapy or sexual reassignment surgery that affects their fertility (sometimes irremediably) can now have biologically related children if they so desire. For example, trans\* women can have their sperm banked before undergoing a transition to be used at a later date by their partner or a surrogate mother to produce a pregnancy. As well, trans\* men having the capacity to become pregnant can temporarily cease hormone treatments in order to become pregnant.



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