

safeZONE Vocabulary



advocate

1 noun : a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. 2 verb : to actively support or plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance or educate others.

ally

noun : a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

androgyny

(androgynous) – 1 noun : a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; 2 adj. : occasionally used in place of “intersex” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy, generally in the form “androgynous.”

aromantic

adj. : experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions.

asexual

adj. : experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions.

bicurious

adj. : a curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

bigender

adj. : a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with two genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).

binder / binding

noun : an undergarment used to alter or reduce the appearance of one's breasts (worn similarly to how one wears a sports bra). binding – verb : the (sometimes daily) process of wearing a binder. Binding is often used to change the way other's read/perceive one's anatomical sex characteristics, and/or as a form of gender expression.

biological sex

noun : a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.”

bisexual

1 noun & adj. : a person who experiences attraction to some men and women. 2 adj. : a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with “pansexual.”

cisgender

adj. : a gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”

cisnormativity

noun : the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.

closeted

adj. : an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one's safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.” When someone chooses to break this silence they “come out.”

coming out

1 noun : the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one's own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). 2 verb : the process by which one shares one's sexuality or gender identity with others.

deadname

noun : the name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses upon transitioning.

fluid(ity)

adj. : generally with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, bi and straight).

gay

1 adj. : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. 2 adj. : an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.

gender binary

noun : the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

gender expression

noun : the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

gender fluid

adj. : a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

gender identity

noun : the internal perception of an one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender non-conforming

1 adj. : a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man). 2 adj. : a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as “GNC.”

gender normative / gender straight

adj. : someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society's gender-based expectations.

genderqueer

1 adj. : a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. 2 adj. : an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

heteronormativity

noun : the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

heterosexism

noun : behavior that grants preferential treatment to heterosexual people, reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than queerness, and/or makes other sexualities invisible.

heterosexual / straight

adj. : experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.

homophobia

noun : umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ. homophobic – adj. : a word used to describe actions, behaviors, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people.

homosexual

adj. & noun : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

intersex

adj. : term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

lesbian

noun & adj. : women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

outing

verb : involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

pansexual

adj. : a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to "pan."

PGPs

abbr. : preferred gender pronouns. Often used during introductions, becoming more common as a standard practice. Many suggest removing the "preferred," because it indicates flexibility and/or the power for the speaker to decide which pronouns to use for someone else.

polyamory / polyamorous

noun : refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to "poly."

queer

1 adj. : an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. 2 noun : a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term "queer" can often be use interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTQ people").

questioning

verb, adj. : an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

romantic attraction

noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantic intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual attraction

noun : a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation

noun : the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sexual preference

noun : the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with "sexual orientation."

straight

adj. : a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

third gender

noun : for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognize three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

trans

adj. : an umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

transgender

1 adj. : a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. 2 adj. : an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

transition / transitioning

noun, verb : referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of them self (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).

transman; transwoman

noun : a man/woman who was not assigned that gender via sex at birth, and transitioned (socially, medically, and/or legally) from that assignment to their gender identity, signified by the second part of the term (i.e., -man, -woman). Also referred to as men and women (though some/many trans people prefer to keep the prefix "trans-" in their identity label).

transphobia

noun : the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society. Transphobic – adj. : a word used to describe an individual who harbors some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

transsexual

noun, adj. a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

two-spirit

noun : is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both feminine and masculine genders.