

# LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Style Guide

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## LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Style Guide

### Introduction

This guide aims to provide Rider University employees with inclusive and consistent parameters when creating documents, forms, and web content referencing the many facets of LGBTQIA+ culture, people, and spaces. As societies understanding of gender and sexual identity evolves, so does language. It is our goal to be current, clear, and flexible in this realm. It is good practice to follow similar guidelines when writing about LGBTQIA+ topics as with race, ethnicity, and other communities who have been marginalized and disadvantaged. Sensitivity, care, and the ability to name one's own experiences should be centered in writing and speaking. It is impossible to have a comprehensive and up to date document due to the diverse experiences and identities within LGBTQIA+ communities. As such, the contents of this style guide will not be fully agreed upon by everyone in the diverse LGBTQIA+ communities. Dialogue should be welcomed when discussing descriptive language, and when disagreement occurs, those most impacted by the terms or language should have the ability to share their voice and control the language. Even with the best intentions of writing and speaking in an inclusive manner, harm may unintentionally occur. Use those moments to learn, heal, and grow stronger together as a community.

### Terminology

#### **LGBTQIA+**

An umbrella term for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual which is a community term for those who have been marginalized based on their sexuality orientation and/or gender identity or expression. In some cases, the "Q" may also stand for "questioning," though this is less common in recent years. The "+" aims to include others in this umbrella that may not be listed. Some references expand the acronym to include "2S" for "two-spirit" (i.e., LGBTQIA2S) – a term used most often in indigenous communities. The term LGBTQIA+ should be used over LGBT or a narrower term such as "gay community" because it is more inclusive. This term should be revisited semi-regularly, perhaps bi-annually. The organization should decide what will be used and be consistent while also being as specific as appropriate.

As with all language use about marginalized communities, specificity is important. If speaking about transgender communities, name "transgender." If speaking only about sexual orientation, name "queer, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and pansexual."

## ***Sexual Orientation***

The scientifically accurate term for a person's enduring physical, romantic and/ or emotional attraction to another person. Sexual orientations can include heterosexual (straight), lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, and other orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to inaccurately suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and "curable"<sup>1</sup>. People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people have sexual orientations too, and they may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, etc. For example, a transgender woman who is attracted exclusively to women may describe herself as a lesbian; if she were exclusively attracted to men, she may describe herself a straight woman, and if she were attracted to more than one gender she may identify as bisexual or pansexual.

## ***Asexual***

An adjective used to describe a person who does not experience sexual attraction (e.g., asexual person). Sometimes shortened to "ace." Asexual is an umbrella term that can also include people who are demisexual, meaning a person who does experience some sexual attraction, but only in certain situations, for example, after they have formed a strong emotional or romantic connection with a partner. (For more information, visit [asexuality.org](http://asexuality.org)). Abbreviated as "A" in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

## ***Bisexual, Bi, Bi+***

An adjective used to describe a person who has the potential to be physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree. The bi in bisexual refers to genders the same as and different from one's own gender. Do not write or imply that bi means being attracted to men and women<sup>2</sup>, this is not an accurate understanding of the word or identity. Do not use a hyphen in the word bisexual.

People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences or be in specific kinds of relationships to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Some people use the words bisexual and bi to describe the community. Others may use bi+ which is intended to be inclusive of those who call themselves bisexual, pansexual, fluid, queer and other words which describe people who have the potential to be attracted to more than one gender. Similar to questioning (see below), people might say they are bicurious if they are exploring whether or not they are attracted to people of the same gender as well as people of other genders. (See [In Focus: Bisexual People](#) for more information.) Abbreviated as "B" in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

## ***Gay***

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<sup>1</sup> This concept relates to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) classifying homosexuality as a mental disorder. Though homosexuality is no longer included in the DSM as a mental disorder as of 2013, the idea of homosexuality (and all marginalized sexual orientations and transgender/non-binary identities as well) as a "curable" disease persists. These ideas create hostile environments for LGBTQIA+ people (e.g., conversion therapy) and can lead to personal and interpersonal violence.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to being offensive to bi communities, this may also be interpreted as exclusive to transgender and nonbinary people and others who do not fit into the "man/woman" binary. Nonbinary identities are also acknowledged through the New Jersey government with an X sex marker (in addition to M and F) being an option for state identification.

An adjective used to describe a person whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., gay man, gay people). Sometimes lesbian (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people<sup>3</sup>. Ask people how they describe themselves before labeling their sexual orientations. Abbreviated as “G” in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

### *Heterosexual*

An adjective used to describe a person whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attraction is to people of a sex different than their own. Also commonly known as straight.

### *Homosexual*

(See Terms to Avoid) Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive. The Associated Press, The New York Times, and The Washington Post restrict usage of the term. It has often been used by medical and religious communities to diagnose and condemn<sup>4</sup>.

### *Lesbian*

A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals.” Lesbian can be used as a noun or adjective. Ask people how they describe themselves before labeling their sexual orientation ([GLAAD Media Reference Guide](#)). Abbreviated as “L” in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

### *Pansexual*

An adjective used to describe a person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions to any person, regardless of gender identity. This is one of several terms under the bi+ umbrella. Rarely included specifically in the LGBTQIA+ acronym as the “B” for bisexual encompasses this term.

### *Queer*

An adjective used by some people, usually younger people, whose sexual orientation may not be exclusively heterosexual (e.g., queer person, queer woman). Often, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel do not apply to them. Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe themselves. However, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBTQIA+ community, so use caution when using it outside of describing the way someone self-identifies or in a direct quote. When Q is seen at the end of “LGBTQ,” it typically means queer. In a setting for support, particularly for youth, it may mean questioning. Ask people how they describe themselves before labeling their sexual orientation. Queer is often used as a community term, such as “the Queer Community.” “Queer” often connotes a more political aspect of sexual identity and has been more widely used by communities of color. Abbreviated as “Q” within the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

### *Questioning*

An adjective used by some people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Sometimes abbreviated as “Q” (either in addition to the “Q” for Queer or not) within the LGBTQIA+ acronym, e.g., LGBTQQIA.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1 for more information on harmful effects of concepts of diverse sexualities and gender identities as “curable”.

## **Gender, Gender Identity, & Sex**

### *Gender Identity*

A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, nonbinary, or some other identity. It is the felt and internal sense of who we are. A person's gender (identity) can correspond to or differ from the sex they were assigned at birth. All people have a gender identity.

### *Cisgender*

Cisgender (pronounced “sis-gender”) or “cis” is a gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person’s assigned sex at birth. It is not a gender itself but speaks to a gendered experience of staying with the gender often associated with the sex assigned at birth (i.e., cis man or cis woman)<sup>5</sup>.

### *Cisnormativity*

Is the assumption that all, or almost all, individuals are [cisgender](#). Although [transgender](#)-identified people comprise a fairly small percentage of the human population, many [trans\\*](#) people and allies consider it to be offensive to presume that everyone is cisgender unless otherwise specified.

### *Deadname*

The name a transgender person previously used often assigned to them at birth (given name). Using a transgender person’s given name can be harmful and re-traumatizing especially after learning one’s chosen name (the name they currently use).

### *Gender affirmation surgery*

Medical transition involves bringing a person's body into alignment with their gender identity and is only one part of transition. One type of medical transition is hormone replacement therapy, prescribed by a doctor. Gender affirmation surgeries (sometimes described as gender confirmation surgery) can be another part of medical transition. Not all transgender people choose to, are physically healthy enough to, or can afford to undergo surgeries. Replaces the outdated and offensive phrase "sex reassignment surgery." Do not refer to someone as being "pre-op" or "post-op."

### *Gender expression*

How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress, hair, mannerisms, make-up, etc. Society and individuals that make up the U.S. society often characterize these expressions as "masculine," “feminine,” or “androgynous.” Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s)<sup>6</sup>.

### *Gender Fluid*

A gender identity that does not fit into a binary and is not fixed. People who identify as gender fluid identify and may express their gender in a variety of ways and it could shift by the day, weeks, years, or time in their lives. Rarely included specifically in the LGBTQIA+ acronym as the “T” for transgender encompasses this term.

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<sup>5</sup> The Latin root “cis” means “on this side” whereas “trans” means “on the other side” or “beyond”.

<sup>6</sup> See 2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT People (Rankin, et al., 2010) for more information about the diversity of how individuals describe their gender identities and gender expressions. Also: [Trans\\* in college: Transgender students’ strategies for navigating campus life and institutional politics of inclusion](#), (Nicolazzo, 2017).

### *Gender non-conforming (GNC)*

Refers to people who do not follow society's ideas or stereotypes about how they should appear or act based on the gender correlated with their sex assigned at birth. Not all GNC folks are trans but can be.

### *Intersex*

An adjective used to describe a person with one or more innate sex characteristics, including genitals, internal reproductive organs, and chromosomes, that fall outside of traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Do not confuse having an intersex trait with being transgender. Intersex people are often assigned a sex at birth — either male or female — and that decision by medical providers and parents<sup>7</sup> may not match the gender identity of the child. (see [In Focus: Intersex People](#) for more information.) Abbreviated as “I” in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

### *Nonbinary*

Nonbinary is an adjective used by people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary gender categories of man and woman. Many nonbinary people also call themselves transgender and consider themselves part of the transgender community, while some do not. Nonbinary is an umbrella term that encompasses many different ways to understand one's gender. Some nonbinary people may also use words like agender, bigender, demigender, pangender, etc. to describe the specific way in which they are nonbinary. Always ask people what words they use to describe themselves. Nonbinary is sometimes shortened to enby or simply “NB”. Nonbinary may also be written as non-binary. Both forms are commonly used within the community, and both are acceptable. (See In Focus: [Nonbinary People](#) for more information.) Rarely included specifically in the LGBTQIA+ acronym as the “T” for transgender is considered an umbrella term for this population.

### *QTBIPOC*

A term referring to a community made up of Queer and Trans people who are Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. A related term is QPOC, Queer People of Color. As with all language use about marginalized communities, specificity is important. If speaking about Black trans communities, name “Black trans people.” If speaking broadly about people of color and indigenous people who are LGBTQ2S, name “QTPOC.”

### *Sex assigned at birth (Sex)*

A medically constructed categorization that assigns and classifies people as male, female, or intersex. Sex assigned at birth is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia only either in ultrasound or at birth. Sex assigned at birth may align with someone's gender (described as cisgender) or may not align with their gender (described as transgender).

### *Transgender*

An adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are transgender may also use other terms, in addition to transgender, to describe their gender more specifically. Some of those terms are defined in the [Transgender Glossary](#). Use the term(s) the person uses to describe themselves. It is important to note that being transgender is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth. (See Transition in the [Transgender Glossary](#)). Abbreviated as “T” in the LGBTQIA+ acronym.

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<sup>7</sup> The decision to assign a sex at birth to intersex people may also lead to years of surgeries beginning, at times, in infancy to ensure that a child's genitals align with their sex at birth, often without consultation of the intersex person.

### *Two-Spirit*

An adjective used by some Indigenous, Native American, and First Nations people as an umbrella term to describe people who are not straight and/or cisgender. Many Indigenous communities have specific words in their language to describe these experiences and some do not. This term should not be used to describe people who are not Indigenous. Only use it for an Indigenous person if they use it to describe themselves. Abbreviated as “2S” in the LGBTQIA+ acronym, e.g., LGBTQIA2S.

## ***Pronouns & Parts of Speech***

### *Pronouns*

Pronouns take the place of names. When we ask about someone’s pronouns, we are not asking for their gender. Most common pronouns used are “they/them/theirs,” “she/her/hers,” and “he/him/his.” People can use multiple pronouns, all pronouns, or none at all (preferring their name instead). Avoid saying “I use feminine/masculine pronouns.” Anyone can use any pronouns, and these may change depending on one’s relationships, comfort level, and/or their “outness” in different contexts. Introducing yourself with your pronouns even when you are not asked to helps to normalize the practice.<sup>8</sup> (See [Pronouns.org](https://www.pronouns.org) for more information.)

### *Alum or Alumnx*

Both are terms that can be used in place of “alumnus,” “alumna,” “alumni,” or “alumnae.” These original terms are gendered and the plural defaults to the masculine form of the noun. “Alumnx” is very rarely used and may not be understood. “Alum” is well known, but is often considered informal.

### *Folx*

An alternative spelling for “folks,” used especially to explicitly signal the inclusion of groups commonly marginalized (adapted from Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

### *Latiné*

A term to describe people coming from Latin America in a gender neutral or gender inclusive way in order to gender a person by using “Latina” or “Latino.” Some people prefer this term over “Latinx” because it fits within the Spanish language more appropriately.

### *Latinx*

A term to describe people coming from Latin America in a gender neutral or gender inclusive way in order to gender a person by using “Latina” or “Latino.” Some people in the Latina/o do not prefer “Latinx;” however many people from that community who are gender non-conforming or non-binary use the term “Latinx.” There is some critique that the term anglicizes a Spanish term.

### *Mx*

A title used before a name, such as “Mr.” or “Mrs.,” that is gender neutral. This honorific is more inclusive than gendering a person you are unaware of how they identify. It is not widely known or used, and many may assume it is a typographical error. An alternative is just to use someone’s name.

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<sup>8</sup> Though this practice is helpful in normalizing pronoun usage, it is important to avoid requiring individuals to disclose their pronouns or list them on documents, nametags, etc. unless they understand the purpose of this practice. This can be a way of signaling inclusivity while failing to implement meaningful change for trans and non-binary people who are in the organization. For more information, see “*The Wake Up: Closing the Gap Between Good Intentions and Real Change*” by Michelle MiJung Kim (pp 26-27, 2021).

### *They/Them/Theirs*

Pronouns used to refer to a single person whose gender is intentionally not revealed or used to refer to a single person whose [gender identity](#) is nonbinary and/or gender non-conforming (adapted from Merriam-Webster Dictionary). An example of how to use “they” in as a singular pronoun in a grammatically correct manner would be, “Joshua said they prefer to eat chicken over beef. They are mostly vegetarian though.”

### *Womxn/Womyn*

Alternative spellings for “woman” or “women” used, especially in intersectional feminism, to avoid the suggestion of sexism perceived in the spelling sequences “m-a-n” and “m-e-n,” and to be inclusive of trans women and nonbinary people (adapted from Dictionary.com).

### *Ze/Zir or Ze/Hir*

A pronoun option that is gender neutral. This is used less often, but some people in the trans and non-binary community may use these pronouns.

## **Supporters of the Community**

### *Accomplice*

Accomplices will strive to be allies (see below) but also will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress marginalized individuals or groups—and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group. Similar to allies, accomplices may be named by LGBTQIA+ community members based on their actions, but individuals may describe their goals as “striving to be in solidarity with LGBTQIA+ communities.” (Adapted from [LearningforJustice.org](#)).

### *Ally*

An adjective used to describe a straight and/or cisgender person who supports and advocates for LGBTQIA+ people. Plural is allies. In more recent critiques, LGBTQIA+ communities have found challenges with people self-identifying as allies. People within the LGBTQIA+ community can name someone as an ally based on their actions, but individuals could phrase their role as someone “striving to be an ally.” Some communities include allies within the LGBTQIA+ acronym, though recently this usage has been questioned. Consult with your community before including ‘Ally’ in the LGBTQ+ acronym.

The list of terms stated above is not exhaustive. For additional terms and resources see the appendix.

## **Guidance for Assessment and Evaluation**

A common practice for educational institutions is to gather feedback and assessment on programs, outcomes, retention, graduation, and satisfaction. Understanding how LGBTQIA+ people experience the institution is valuable and can provide insight into areas of improvement<sup>9</sup>. When creating assessment

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<sup>9</sup> “Understanding how LGBTQIA+ people experience the institution is valuable and can provide insight into areas of improvement” can be a useful template for describing why the institution is collecting this information.



instruments, it is best practice to include sexual orientation and gender identity in demographic questions even if the assessment is not focused on LGBTQIA+ people<sup>10</sup>.

### **Surveys**

Sometimes, the simplest and most open way to ask about gender and sexual orientation is simply to write "Gender: \_\_\_\_\_" and "Sexual Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_" if you are working with a relatively small group and do not need to do quantitative analysis on the data. For more analysis, the following may be useful approaches, but may not be the best approaches depending on the specific circumstance. Prior to collecting demographic information, it is important for you to know why collecting this information is important. It may also be helpful to inform participants why information related to gender and sexual orientation is being collected and how it will be used.

#### *Example Demographic Questions*

1) Gender-Select all that apply (optional):

- Agender
- Cisgender
- Genderqueer or gender fluid
- Man
- Nonbinary
- Questioning or unsure
- Transgender
- Woman
- A gender not listed:
  - Please specify:
- Prefer not to disclose

2) Sexual orientation - Select all that apply (optional):

- Asexual
- Bisexual/pansexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Queer
- Questioning
- A sexual orientation not listed:
  - Please specify:
- Prefer not to disclose

3) Pronouns that should be used to refer to you-Select all that apply (optional):

- She/her/hers
- He/him/his
- They/them/theirs

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<sup>10</sup> When organizations facilitate assessments and surveys, especially when choosing to collect demographic information, it is recommended that the organization do due diligence to respond to items raised in survey responses and communicate findings and action steps related to surveys.

- Ze/zir/zirs
- Pronouns not listed:
  - Please specify:
- Prefer not to disclose

(Examples above adapted from the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals)

## Inclusive Writing Practices

### *When Writing Content*

When referring to people in stories, narratives, or web site content, aim to be accommodating and respectful of the identities and pronouns the people themselves use. Clarify with students or employees the names and pronouns they would like used in any content written about them. Writers should identify transgender people with the names and pronouns they use, and that are consistent with the way they live publicly. Writers should not say a transgender man was “born a woman”; if this information is relevant, say he was “designated female at birth” or “assigned female at birth.” In your writing, avoid comparisons that reflect a heteronormative bias—in other words, heterosexual/cisgender as “normal” or the norm. Only include content about gender identity or sexual orientation when relevant to the content and with clear permission from the person being discussed<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, be aware of only telling trauma stories when writing or speaking about LGBTQIA+ people. Ensure the writing and or speaking does not create victim only narratives; aim to also celebrate and empower.

### Terms to Avoid

#### **Avoid: "homosexual" (n. or adj.)**

Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-LGBTQIA+ activists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using "homosexual" except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using "homosexual" as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word "gay." Many mainstream news outlets’ style guides restrict use of the term "homosexual."

*Instead use:* “gay” (adj.); “gay man or lesbian” (adj., n.); “gay person/people”

Use “gay,” “lesbian,” or when appropriate, “bisexual,” “pansexual,” or “queer” to describe people attracted to people of the same gender or more than one gender. Ask people how they describe themselves before labeling their sexual orientation.

#### **Avoid: "homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex," etc.**

Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-LGBTQIA+ activists to denigrate LGBTQIA+ people, couples, and relationships.

*Instead use:* “relationship,” “couple” (or, if necessary, “gay/lesbian/same-sex couple”)

<sup>11</sup> Failing to get clear permission from the person being discussed could lead to disclosing someone’s identity to individuals or groups that the person discussed has not disclosed their identities to, which may have negative impacts (physical, financial, emotional, etc.).

As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion, or relationship “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” or “queer” unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship “straight” if engaged in by someone of another orientation.

### **Avoid: "gay marriage"**

Marriages do not need to be overly stated as “gay.” Labeling a marriage too specifically could create an “othering” of the marriage and people leading to tokenization or marginalization.

*Instead use: “same-sex marriage”*

This term is more specific and accurate since the identity of the people getting married may not be known. Again, ensure that labeling it as “same-sex” is specific to the writing and aligns with the purpose of the writing.

### **Avoid: "sexual preference"**

The term "sexual preference" is typically used to inaccurately suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured" or "changed"<sup>12</sup>.

*Instead use: “sexual orientation” or “sexual identity”*

Sexual orientation is the accurate description of a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to people of the same gender and/or people of a different gender, and is inclusive of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and pansexual, as well as straight people.

### **Avoid: “men and women,” “Ladies and Gentleman,” and “he or she”**

These labels and framing create a binary that often leaves trans and non-binary people feeling excluded.

*Instead use: “people,” “community members,” “folks,” “everyone,” “distinguished guests,” or “they”*

### **Avoid: "gay lifestyle," "LGBTQ lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," or "transgender lifestyle"**

There is no single “LGBTQ lifestyle.” LGBTQIA+ people are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrases "gay lifestyle," "LGBTQ lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," and "transgender lifestyle" are used to denigrate LGBTQIA+ people by inaccurately suggesting that their sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured" or "changed."<sup>13</sup>

*Instead use: “LGBTQIA+ people and their lives”*

### **Avoid: "gay rights" or "special rights"**

People who are LGBTQIA+ are not asking for rights that are different from the rights everyone has. They are simply seeking full equality under the law and an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

*Instead use: Equality for LGBTQIA+ people, LGBTQIA+ people advocating to be treated equally, LGBTQIA+ rights, gender rights, or sexual orientation rights.*

### **Avoid: “flamboyant”**

This term has often been used as a negative to shame or devalue feminine males. In media flamboyance or femininity has been used as a sign of weaknesses and as humor to laugh at gender non-conforming queer men.

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 1 for more information on the impacts of this concept.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 1 for more information on the impacts of this concept.

*Instead use: “Feminine”*

“Feminine” is a more accurate description of someone’s gender expression. However, consider how and why this is used and ensure it is not reinforcing negative ideas or tones about femininity<sup>14</sup>.

**Avoid: “Transgendered”**

This phrasing is inaccurate and leads one to believe that something happened to the person who is trans.

*Instead use: “Transgender”<sup>15</sup>.*

**Avoid: "hermaphrodite" (n. or adj.)**

A term used to describe a person or animal with male and female sex organs. This term should no longer be used to describe people, and it is considered offensive and degrading.

*Instead use: “Someone with an intersex condition”*

**Closing**

When writing about LGBTQIA+ populations it can be very sensitive. Even those within the community can speak or write in a manner that microaggresses, offends, excludes, or devalues LGBTQIA+ people. Spending time processing the goal of the piece and how to talk about gender and sexuality in a humanizing, caring, and sensitive manner is key.

When possible, checking with those in marginalized communities to control their narrative and to empower is key; however, pay careful attention to placing additional work and burdens (particularly without compensation) on LGBTQIA+ people.

## Appendix

**Additional Public Resources**

American Progress: How to Collect Data on the LGBTQ+ Communities

<https://americanprogress.org/article/how-to-collect-data-about-lgbt-communities/>

Consortium of Higher Education LGBTQ Resource Professionals Best Practices for Asking Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

<https://www.lgbtcampus.org/assets/docs/suggested%20best%20practices%20for%20asking%20sexual%20orientation%20and%20gender%20on%20college%20applications.pdf>

GLAAD

<https://www.glaad.org/reference/terms>

L.A. Times Updates LGBTQ+ Style Guidelines adopts Singular use of “They”

<https://www.latimes.com/local/readers-rep/la-rr-lgbtq-guidelines-updated-20170417-story.html>

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<sup>14</sup> This could also lead to signifying that there is “only one way to be a man” and, in extreme cases, can go beyond offending someone into discrimination on the basis of gender.

<sup>15</sup> Additional terms are defined in the Transgender Glossary

NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists Spanish Style Guide  
<https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/espanol/>

Trans Journalists Association Style Guide  
<https://transjournalists.org/style-guide/>

Transgender Glossary

University of Iowa LGBTQ+ Style Guide  
<https://diversity.uiowa.edu/resources/dei-style-guide/style-guide-lgbtq>

University of Maryland Guide for Demographic Data Collection  
<https://lgbtq.umd.edu/good-practices-demographic-data-collection>

