

Pocket Queerpedia

- an illustrated glossary
of LGBTQIA+ terms

#QUEER LIVES
MATTER!
#ENDSARS
NOW!



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About the glossary

The idea for this glossary was sparked by a moment in one of our offerings, 'Feminism and Freedom', a course we hosted in 2019. While grappling with discussions on gender⁷, sexuality and freedom, we ran into a number of difficulties. As with most of our courses, the participants in the room were quite diverse. Drawn from different communities, geographic locations and organisations, the participants all brought different experiences, prior knowledge, and life stories into the room.

What we considered 'foundational' terms understood by most activists, left some participants lost. What we thought were commonly accepted definitions proved otherwise. In that moment, we faced a big dilemma - how do we discuss the emancipatory power of feminist and queer¹⁶ politics when so many terms are not commonly understood? This question led us to reflect deeply on some of the questions posed by our participants. Why are some terms used in different ways by different people? What is the difference between a transgender⁵⁰ person and a gay³² person? Can a

person be transgender and gay? What does the word queer mean, and why should I care if I do not share any of these experiences?

Words have power. They can offer recognition or erase experiences. We offer this glossary to activists who wish to broaden their understanding of the world and how gender⁷ and sexuality shape this world.

This glossary incorporates feedback from our partners, individual activists, and alumni. It is also available in isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

A note about language and labels

Language does not stand still. It is a tool that we use and shape to best fit our needs. Terms come from communities in different ways and spread. Some terms fall out of use, while others remain as part of popular imagination and use.

When using the terms described here or elsewhere, it is important to remember their purpose. LGBTQIA+ terms are meant to empower individuals and communities, not police them. Class, race, cultural background, age, and other factors play a role in how people see and describe themselves. There will inevitably be differences in our use of language, and the politics we practice which shapes this language.

"If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

- Audre Lorde



Gender

Many people see their gender as a core aspect of who they are and how they present themselves to the world. Gender is a 'social and cultural construct'. This means that how we understand what it means to be a man, woman or non-binary⁴⁷ person changes over time and depends on cultural and social practices. These cultural and social practices tell us that different characteristics, ways of dressing and acting are understood as belonging to a specific gender, but change over time. For example, in 17th century Persia, wearing high heeled shoes was a way of dressing associated with masculinity and status, but in many cultures today, high heels are now associated with how women dress. Can you think of other examples of how different cultures understand genders differently to others?

While gender is a social construct, it has very real implications for how people are treated and the opportunities they might have access to. It is an important political category. People can identify as a man, a woman, non-binary, genderqueer, gender-fluid or androgynous amongst others.

Gender Expression

The way someone expresses gender⁷. Examples can include dress, mannerisms, behaviour and interests. Gender expression does not necessarily line up with a person's gender identity, and can reinforce or contradict it. Gender identity describes who we are, whereas gender expression is something we do. It is also something that can change from one moment to another, and might be influenced by context, mood, concerns for safety and fear of discrimination. Gender expression can be very important as a source of gender affirmation, but also play.

Gender Binary

The idea that gender⁷ can be divided into two separate categories, with no grey area. It maintains that there are two genders, man and woman. It ignores the socially constructed nature of gender, how people perform and express their gender, and our physical diversity. Examples include the idea that women should be delicate and men should be tough, women should be nurturing and men should be breadwinners etc. It also encourages men and women to think of themselves as two different species, contributing to misunderstandings, conflict and a lack of mutual empathy and understanding.



Patriarchy



A patriarchal society is one in which cisgender⁵², and particularly, heterosexual³⁷ men hold the majority of power and privilege. It is supported by the idea that women are inferior and subordinate to men, and plays out in tangible and not so tangible ways. Examples include women not being equally represented in decision-making positions in government and other spaces; having less opportunities and access to economic resources; not having freedom to make decisions about their own bodies or reproductive rights; and gender-based violence. Women and LGBTQIA+ people are marginalised in these societies, and any challenges to this system are viewed as a threat to patriarchal power, and therefore often met with prejudice and violence. Patriarchy gives men a place of supremacy, but also does damage to them by requiring that they live in limited, violent, unemotional and dominant ways that prevent them from living fully as humans. A question we should consider is how queer¹⁶ or LGBTQIA+ politics might challenge and help to dismantle the patriarchy, and what potential there is to restructure how we relate to each other and power.

Sexual Orientation

This describes the gender(s)⁷ you are attracted to, based on your own gender identity. Are you attracted to people of the same gender identity as you, different gender(s) identity to you or do you not experience attraction at all? For example, if you are a woman attracted to men (heterosexual/straight³⁷) you have a different sexual orientation to a woman attracted to women (homosexual/lesbian²⁹).

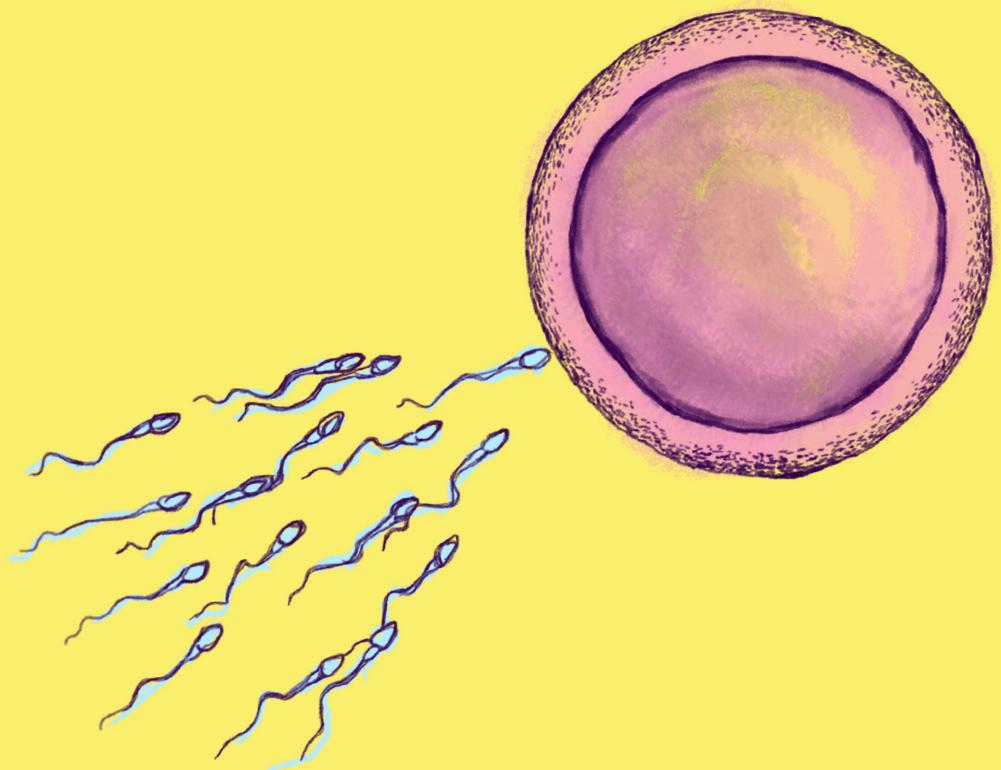
Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual³⁴, asexual⁴⁰ and pansexual³⁶ are terms that fall under sexual orientation. Sexual orientations also include more specific and casual terms, such as: gay; lesbian; straight, bi or pan.

Queer

Some people prefer this term as an umbrella or all-inclusive term for people who belong to the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. It was originally a slur that has since been reclaimed as a political term that seeks to relate to the world and systemic change in different ways from the current cis⁵²-heteronormative⁷² ones. It is a contested word within the community with some feeling it has flattened out the important differences in identity, while others feel it captures the complexity, nuance and fluidity of LGBTQIA+ identity. It allows for the fact that some people have several letters of the LGBTQIA+ acronym as part of their identities, and that some discover new aspects of their identity over time. The word is used to reject the notion that to be accepted queer people must fit into easily identifiable boxes to make others more comfortable.

*Kewpie, known as the 'Daughter of District Six', was a prominent activist, performer and small business owner of the queer community in District Six from the 1950s. More on her history as well as an extensive collection of photographs documenting her life and community can be found here: <https://gala.co.za/projects-and-programmes/a-daughter-of-district-six/>

Biological Sex



The biological categorisation of our bodies based on physical sex characteristics²¹. In school many of us have been taught a simplified, colonially influenced, understanding of biological sex. This understanding confuses biological sex with gender⁷ and makes it seem as if there are only two types of human body in the world - we call this binary thinking. Popular thinking around biological sex is often scientifically outdated and has erased, or forgotten, different ways of understanding sex and gender in African and other cultures.

In the past this binary, where there are only two categories, has been based on outward sex characteristics such as facial and body hair, breasts and genitals. It has since been expanded to include reproductive organs, such as a uterus and ovaries or testicles, and the concept of chromosomes²⁴, such as XX and XY. But even with this expanded understanding, it does not take into account that our bodies come in different forms. People's bodies don't always fit into the narrow definitions of what a biological

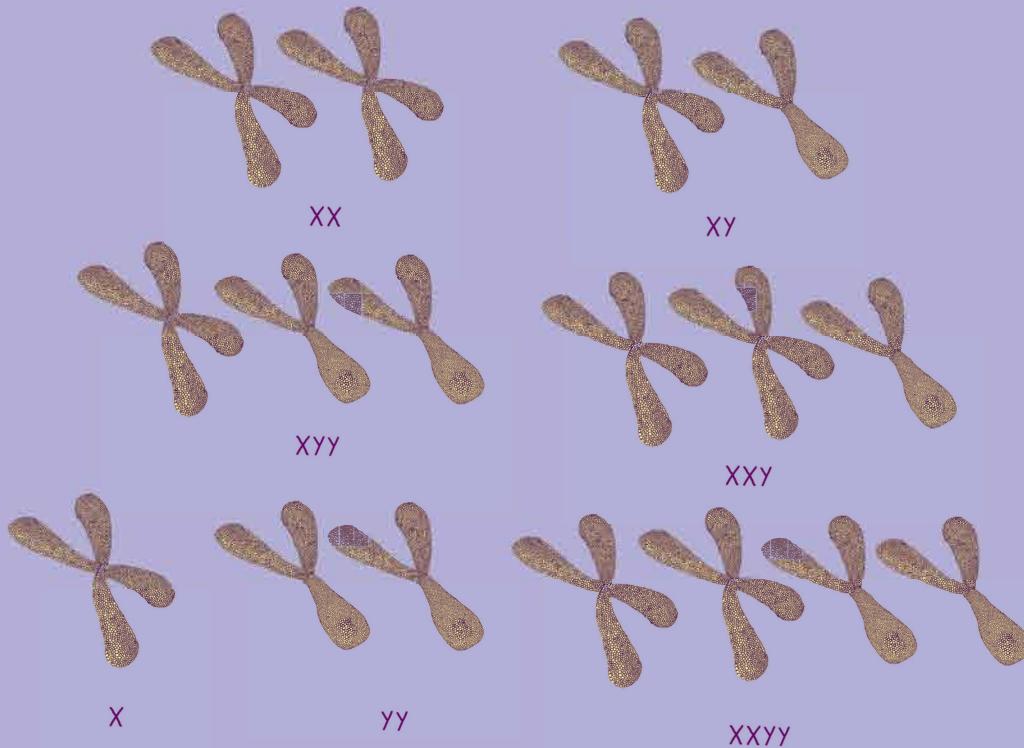
female or male are. Many people's assigned biological sex also does not define their gender. What this means, for example, is that you can be **assigned female at birth**²⁸, biologically have more testosterone or 'male-appearing' genitals and still identify as a woman, man or **non-binary**⁴⁷ person. This could include **intersex**⁴⁴, **transgender**⁵⁰ and non-binary people.

This is important to understand because it affects how we treat and organise people socially, politically and medically, such as who can access things like work, healthcare and even public bathrooms.

Physical Sex Characteristics

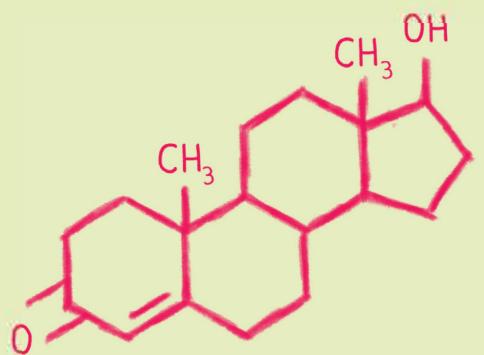
The physical parts of our bodies that we commonly associate with someone's gender⁷ or sex. Based on these perceived differences people are usually assigned male or female at birth²⁸. Physical sex characteristics include: sex organs such as the penis and vagina; the reproductive system including the uterus/womb, ovaries and testicles; and secondary sex characteristics such as facial hair, breasts, body shape and muscle development. These characteristics are a combined result of our chromosomal²⁴ and hormonal make-up - the genetic and chemical processes that influence our bodies' development. Many people associate XY chromosomes with having more testosterone, and a penis and testicles - 'being male'. Many people also associate XX chromosomes with having more estrogen and having a uterus and vagina - 'being female'. But this biological relationship is not always the case and can vary quite a bit - many people are in reality intersex⁴⁴.

Sex Chromosomes

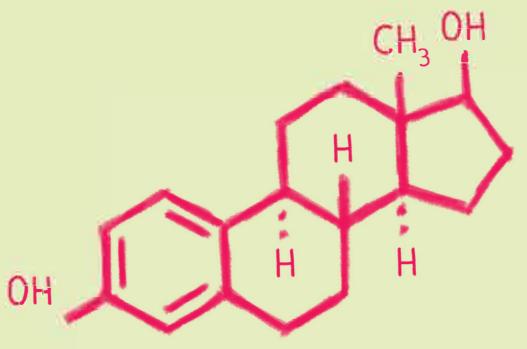


The genetic building blocks that provide instructions to our bodies as they grow and develop. In school, we were taught about two sex chromosomal combinations, XY which results in a male child, and XX which produces a female child. However, biological sex¹⁸ is a bit more varied and complicated than that. While not as common, there can be several different combinations of the X and Y chromosomes, a person who has male physical characteristics can have XX chromosomes, while a person who has female characteristics can have XY chromosomes. The only way to know what your chromosomes are would be to be tested. To the left are several possible chromosomal combinations that occur in human beings.

Sex Hormones

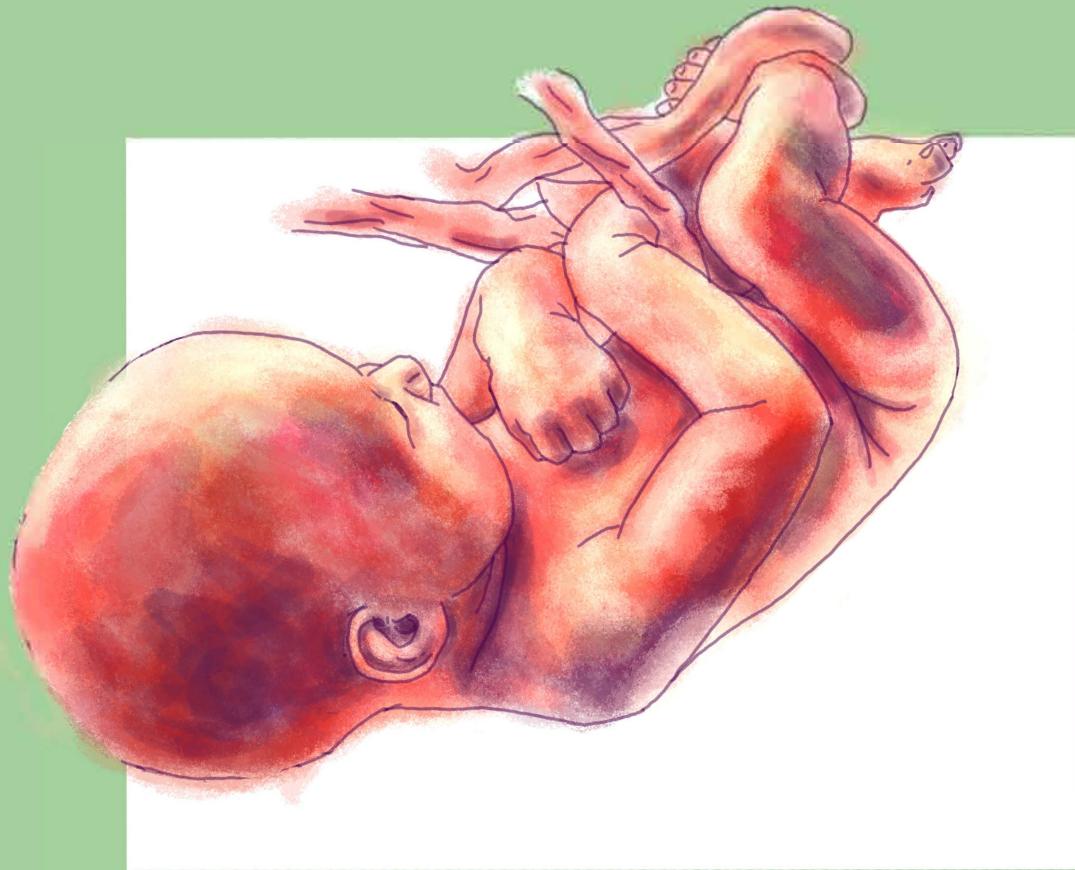


TESTOSTERONE



ESTROGEN

Sex hormones effect how the body develops throughout our lives, starting in the womb where we develop our biological and physical sex characteristics²¹, and thereafter affecting how puberty appears and how we age. Estrogen commonly (but not always) leads to sex characteristics such as a uterus and ovaries, breasts, less body hair and smoother skin. Testosterone typically produces male sex characteristics, such as testes, penis, more facial hair and a deeper voice. It is important to remember that sex hormones are responsible for other aspects of our health such as bone density, mood, blood regulation etc. In the case of intersex⁴⁴ or transgender⁵⁰ people who need Hormonal Replacement Therapy, it is crucial that they have consistent access to these treatments.



AMAB & AFAB

'Assigned female at birth' or 'assigned male at birth'. This acronym refers to the idea that **gender**⁷ is assigned without consultation with the person themselves, and that this assignment can turn out to be wrong. It is also a way to talk about a person's history and medical needs without mis-gendering them. "He was assigned female at birth and was encouraged to wear dresses as a child, which made him quite uncomfortable."

Lesbian

A woman who is attracted romantically and/or sexually to other women, or a homosexual woman. The word also describes a political and cultural identity that can provide community and solidarity. Both transgender⁵⁰ and cisgender⁵² women can identify as lesbian.





Gay

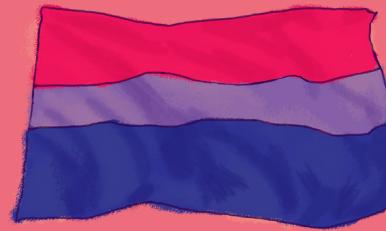
A man who is attracted romantically and/or sexually to other men, or a homosexual man. The word also describes a political and cultural identity that can provide community and solidarity. Both *trans*⁵⁰ and *cisgender*⁵² men can identify as gay.

The term 'gay' or 'the gays' has been used to describe *queer*¹⁶ people in a casual, colloquial manner by those within the LGBTQIA+ community. Some might find this offensive however, especially when used by people who don't fall within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.



Bisexual

A person attracted to people of both the same and different gender⁷ to themselves. Bisexual people do at times suffer from being seen as less legitimate than lesbian²⁹ or gay³² sexualities both outside and inside the LGBTQIA+ community, in spite of evidence showing that they often face the same or more discrimination.



Pansexual

Pansexual, which means a person can be romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of all genders⁷, or regardless of gender, is a more recently adopted word, and some consider it to fall into the bisexual 'family' while others consider it to be a different term, though there is a lot of overlap.

Some feel Pansexual is more inclusive than Bisexual³⁴, which they feel is more exclusionary. But many feel this is not true. They argue that Bisexual has always meant that a person is attracted to a person independent of their gender identity, presentation and physical sex characteristics²¹. People will use the term they feel most comfortable with, with a variety of reasons as to why they choose that word, and this should be respected.



Heterosexual/Straight

Sometimes a woman and man find each other attractive and engage in a relationship. This is referred to as a heterosexual or straight relationship/attraction.

Our society tends to promote this kind of relationship as being both the 'default', 'normal' and most valuable. This is done in many ways including over-representation in the media, while excluding or representing homosexual relationships as odd or 'abnormal'. Often homosexual relationships or characters are reserved for comic relief or evil. Media content of two people kissing is viewed as overly sexual and 'unsafe' if it is not *cis*⁵² and *heteronormative*⁷². Youth education around sex and relationships that is inclusive of non-heteronormative content is often frowned upon.



Asexual

A person who experiences very little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexual people describe how they feel in different ways. Some dislike the act of sex and want nothing to do with it, while others just don't find much interest in it. Some asexual people might still be romantically attracted to others, and have relationships with no sex. Others might have sex but not feel strongly about it. Asexual people can also identify with other sexual orientations¹³ if they are romantically attracted to a specific gender/s⁷.



Questioning

People often need space to understand and explore themselves and the world around them to understand their gender⁷ and sexuality. Cis⁵²-heteronormativity⁷² is extremely pervasive in our society and it can be hard to come to grips with being perceptually different given how much discrimination this can come with. The term questioning allows people to do this, not committing to any one label or set of labels until they have had the time they need to feel more sure of themselves.



Intersex



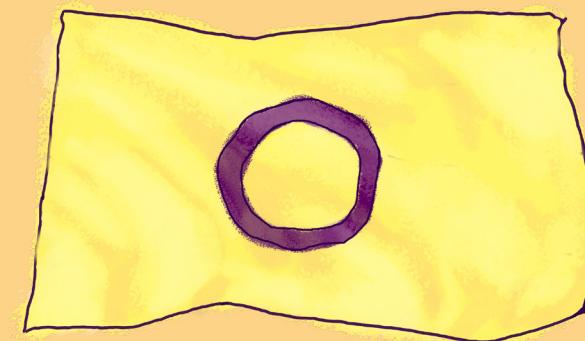
A term used to describe when a person's external sex characteristics hormone production and chromosomes don't line up in a way typically understood as being 'female' or 'male'. Sometimes this is visible at birth, or it is revealed at a later stage of life when a person goes through puberty or wishes to have children. It is possible to be intersex and never know it. Intersex does not refer to one particular biological aspect or facet, it refers to a whole variety of different conditions where the persons **biological sex¹⁸** is not typically male or female. For example, the person may have more testosterone but also have female external sex characteristics such as breasts and a vagina.

Activists for intersex rights advocate for informed consent around the medical care they receive, and increased access to this medical care when it is wanted. They also fight to reduce prejudice that can cause stigma, shame and violence. When intersex babies are born, doctors have been known to perform surgery to 'correct' their condition, and this has serious long-term

consequences, especially if they are corrected to conform to a sex they don't identify with. Activists want doctors to stop this practice and wait until the child can make their own informed decision as to whether they wish to have surgery or not, and what kind of surgery. They may also need hormone replacement therapy, as **sex hormones**²⁶ effect our health in a variety of ways (one example being maintaining bone density).

Intersex people also face societal and cultural prejudice and violence, often even at birth before they have the means to advocate for themselves.

*Mokgadi Caster Semenya is a South African middle-distance runner and 2016 Olympic gold medallist. Semenya was born in Ga-Masehlong, a village in South Africa near Polokwane (previously called Pietersburg), and grew up in the village of Fairlie, deep in South Africa's northern Limpopo province. She was born with **XY chromosomes**²⁴, which she only found out about after testing requested by the International Association of Athletics Federations.



Non-binary

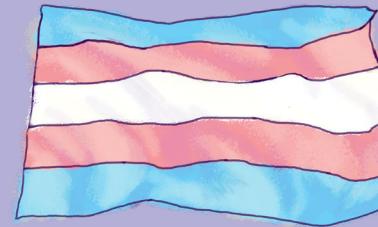
We call something 'binary' when there are only two possible options, which are complete opposites of each other. So people who identify as non-binary do not experience gender⁷ as something that fits into two categories - man or woman. Non-binary people do not fall within the gender binary¹⁰ and see it as limiting, inaccurate and, often, oppressive. There are many kinds of non-binary people who each have different, and sometimes shifting, relationships to gender. Gender-fluid people do not experience gender as something that is set, but move between different gender identities. Neutrois means someone who sees themselves as neutral when it comes to gender identity. An agender person does not identify as any gender at all. It is important to understand this way of seeing gender, as it breaks with the more rigid ideas of what we can or cannot be.



*Jacob Tobia (born August 7, 1991) is an American LGBTQIA+ rights activist, writer, producer, television host and actor. In 2019, they published their memoir titled *Sissy: A Coming-of-Gender Story*. Tobia is also the voice of the character Double Trouble in DreamWorks' animated series *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*.

Transgender

A person whose gender⁷ is not the same as the one they were assigned at birth²⁸. It's not always obvious if a transgender person is a man, woman or non-binary⁴⁷. It's always good to ask a person's gender no matter if they are transgender, cisgender⁵² or non-binary. Asking shows respect for a person's identity rather than assuming based on their appearance. Many trans people describe feeling gender dysphoria⁵³, but not experiencing this doesn't mean a person is not trans.



Cisgender



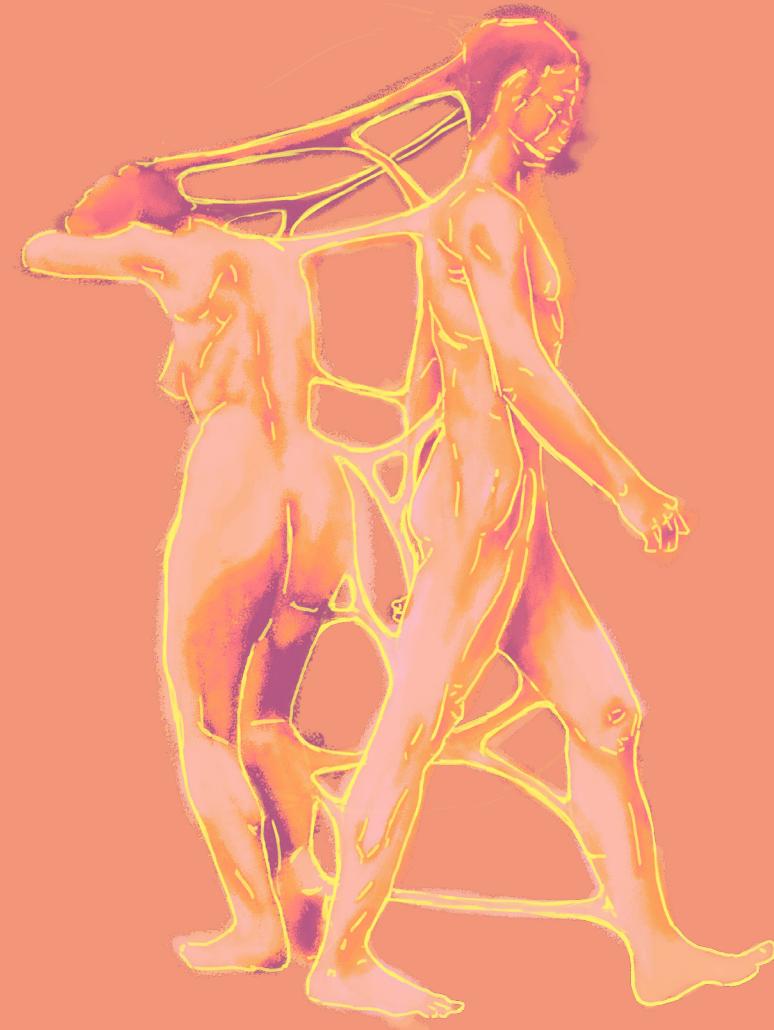
This is a word that describes someone as identifying or being the same gender⁷ they were assigned at birth²⁸. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender⁵⁰. The term woman includes those who identify as women, including transgender, cisgender and intersex⁴⁴ women. The term man likewise includes those who identify as men, including transgender, cisgender and intersex men. The word also helps challenge the idea that one group of people is 'normal' just because they are in the majority, and another group of people is 'abnormal', thereby avoiding the suggestion that one group is more valid and real than the other.

*It could be argued that focusing so much on a baby's genitals is a little... odd. Gender reveal parties are an example of how people emphasize the gender binary¹⁰ in some societies. They were started by Jenna Myers Karvunidis in 2008 in the USA, who has since said she regretted this. One of her children has since come out⁷³ as gender non-conforming. Many view this as a harmful tradition, and bizarrely, due to people trying to be increasingly dramatic in their gender reveal parties, some have resulted in injury and death due to explosives being used.

Gender Dysphoria

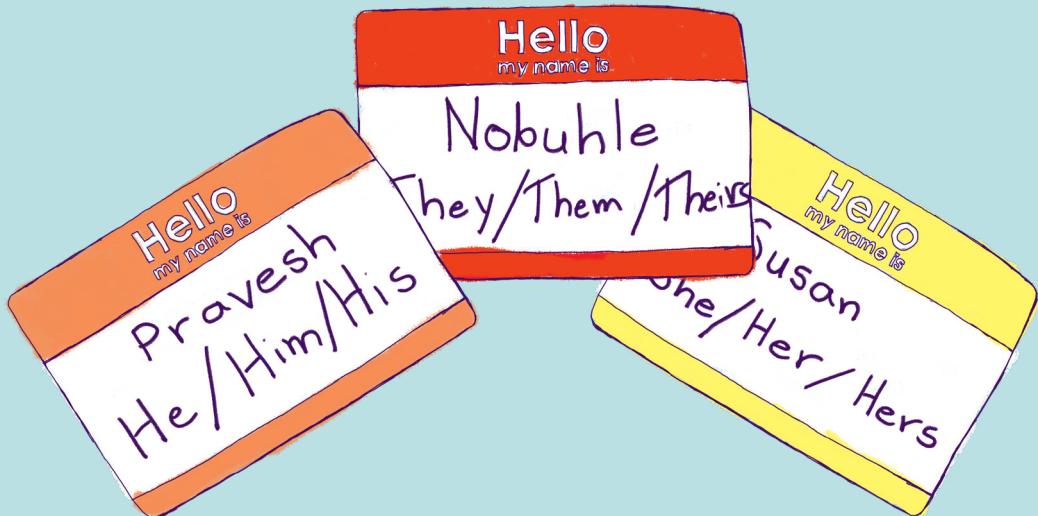
Transgender⁵⁰ people often describe having gender⁷ dysphoria, the feeling that their appearance, bodies, social presentation and other aspects of their identities do not represent who they really are. There is a disconnect between how others see them and how they experience themselves. It can cause people to feel disassociated, anxious and depressed, and can vary in how it manifests, as well as how intensely. This can be a very intense and negative experience and many transgender people address this through transitioning in various ways.

Gender euphoria is the opposite of this feeling, and is often experienced as people start transitioning or being accepted by themselves and others as the gender they identify as. Correct gendered language, physical changes and other types of gendered expression such as clothing can create gender euphoria.

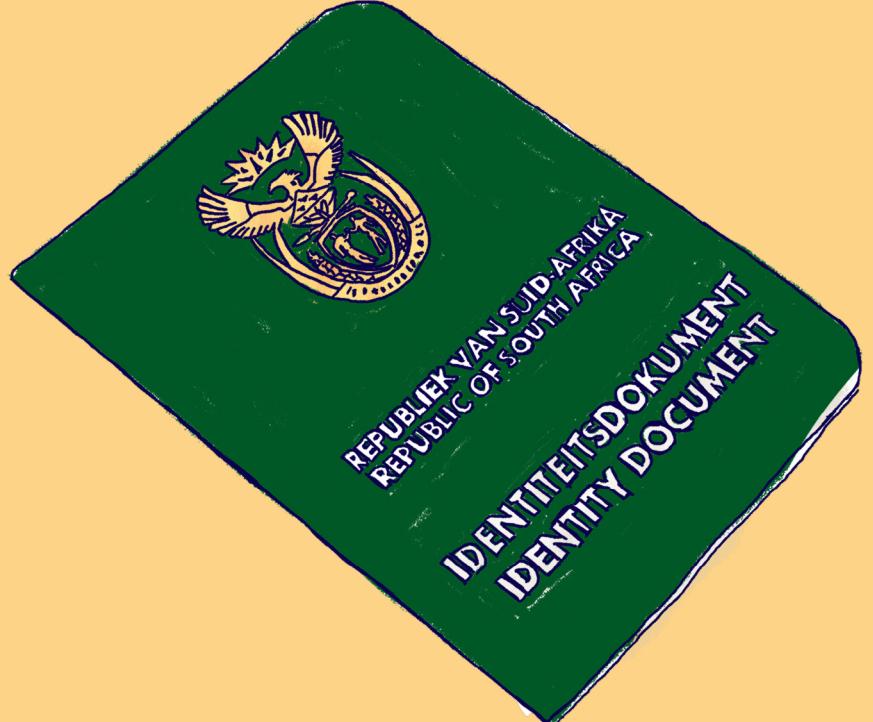


Social Transition

This involves steps that help a person to interact with those around them as their true gender⁷. It can include coming out to friends, family and colleagues, changing one's name, people using different gendered language to describe the transitioning person that fits with their identity, and changing the way they present through gender expressions⁸ such as clothing and hair.



Legal Transition



One aspect of transitioning that transgender⁵⁰ people can pursue is the change of legal and other documents to a more accurate gender⁷ descriptor and a name change. In South Africa, these can be changed by applying to Home Affairs. Each change (e.g. name or gender marker) can take approximately nine months and applications can be cancelled with no reason given.

Some activists are working to have an additional marker introduced, such as 'X' to indicate a non-binary⁴⁷ gender. Others think that the gender marker is an outdated concept and should be removed entirely as it is not always safe to have your gender identity visible in a variety of contexts, especially if you are transgender or intersex⁴⁴.

Medical Transition



Medical interventions can help transgender⁵⁰ and non-binary⁴⁷ people align their body/sex characteristics more closely with their gender⁷ identity. Not everyone is able, or chooses to transition, but it is often beneficial to trans people's mental, emotional and physical health. It is crucial that people are provided with informed choices, as everyone is contending with different challenges and needs.

Not everyone is able to transition medically who needs to. Reasons for this include the fact that it is extremely expensive to do so, medical aids don't cover transgender health needs, and few resources are offered by the state for those who cannot afford private health care. Those who can afford private health care often can't afford to transition because it is not covered by affordable medical aid packages. This often results in people not transitioning, going into massive debt, or being put on ridiculously long waiting lists. Some choose to travel overseas for certain kinds of treatment but this is often also very expensive and can pose additional health risks.

Hormone Replacement Therapy - HRT

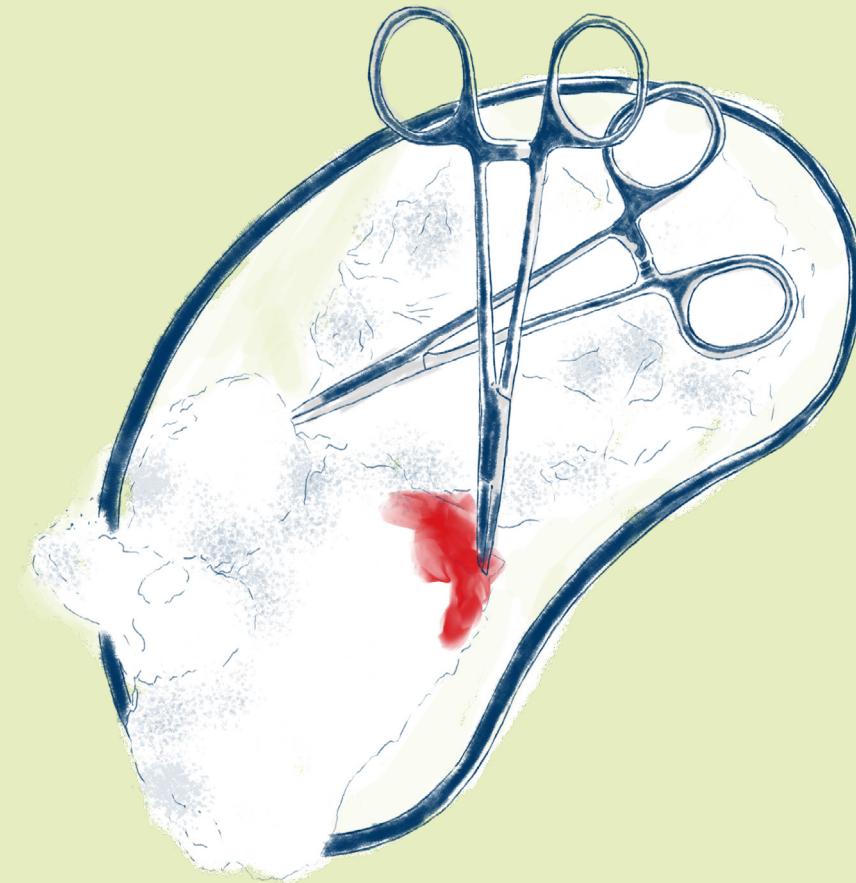


Using sex hormones²⁶ to help transgender⁵⁰ women, men and non-binary⁴⁷ people to physically transition. Hormone blockers can also be used to assist with the process. Many report experiencing mental and emotional benefits as a result of this therapy. Methods of delivery can vary and include tablets/capsules, injections and topical creams, and can be prescribed by an endocrinologist (specialist who deals with hormonal health) or general practitioner (GP or doctor). Cisgender⁵² and intersex⁴⁴ people can also require hormone replacement therapy to replace hormones.

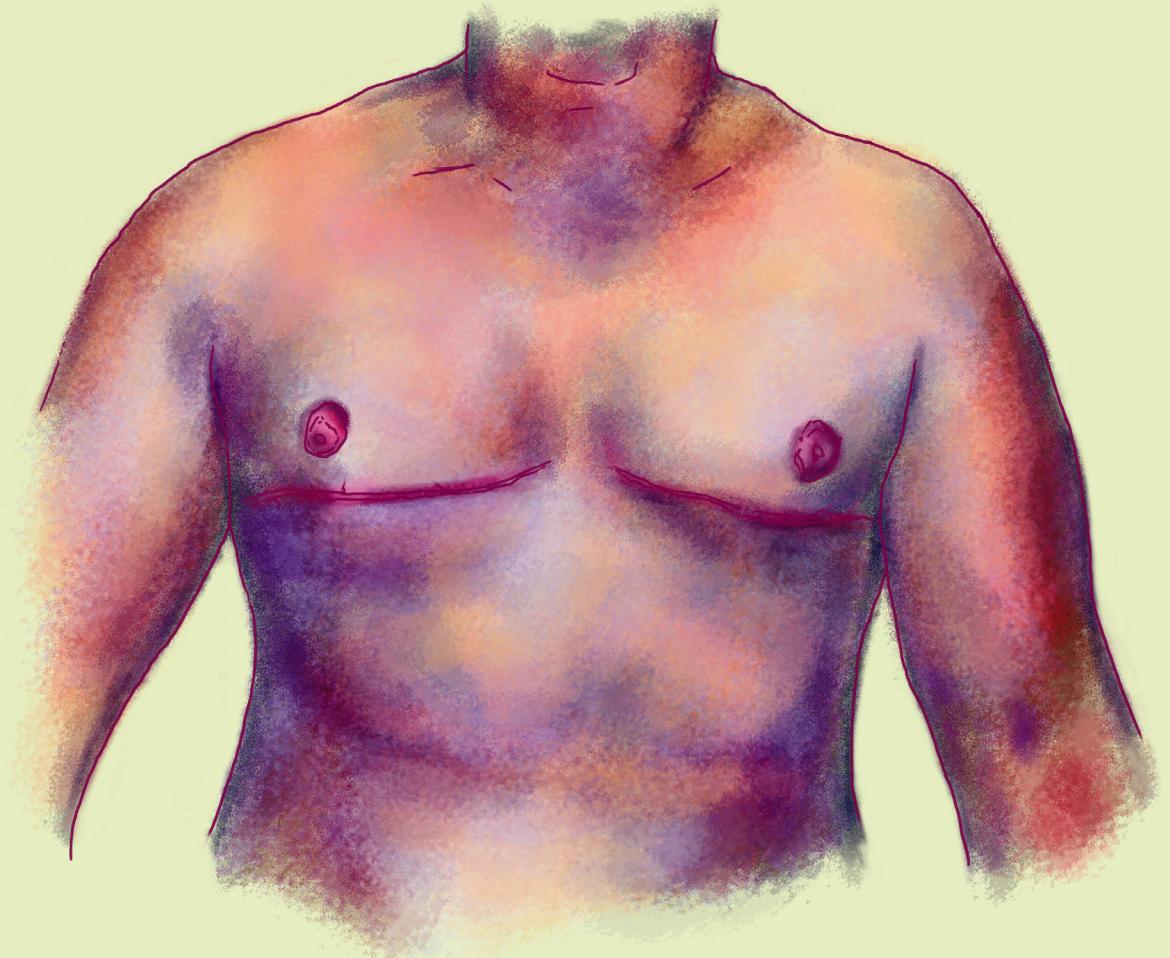
Gender Affirming Surgery

There are several different surgeries that transgender⁵⁰, intersex⁴⁴ and non-binary⁴⁷ people can undergo. These surgeries help people feel more at home in their bodies and help alleviate dysphoria⁵³. They can also be necessary for physical health reasons. People may base the choice as to whether they undergo several procedures, or none at all, on their experience of dysphoria, health, affordability, accessibility and other considerations.

It is important to note that the procedures transgender people do or don't undergo have no influence on whether they are transgender or not, and that intersex people should have the option to undergo surgery, but that it should only be done with their consent and not as a 'corrective procedure'. Accessibility is a major issue. Surgical procedures tend to be very expensive, and waiting periods for state health care can be as long as twenty years.



Terms that have been adopted by many medical professionals and others in the community to describe this are often 'top' or 'bottom' surgery, allowing trans people to talk about these processes in a less invasive manner rather than having to describe their genitals in detail. However treatment is not limited to these surgeries, especially for transgender women.

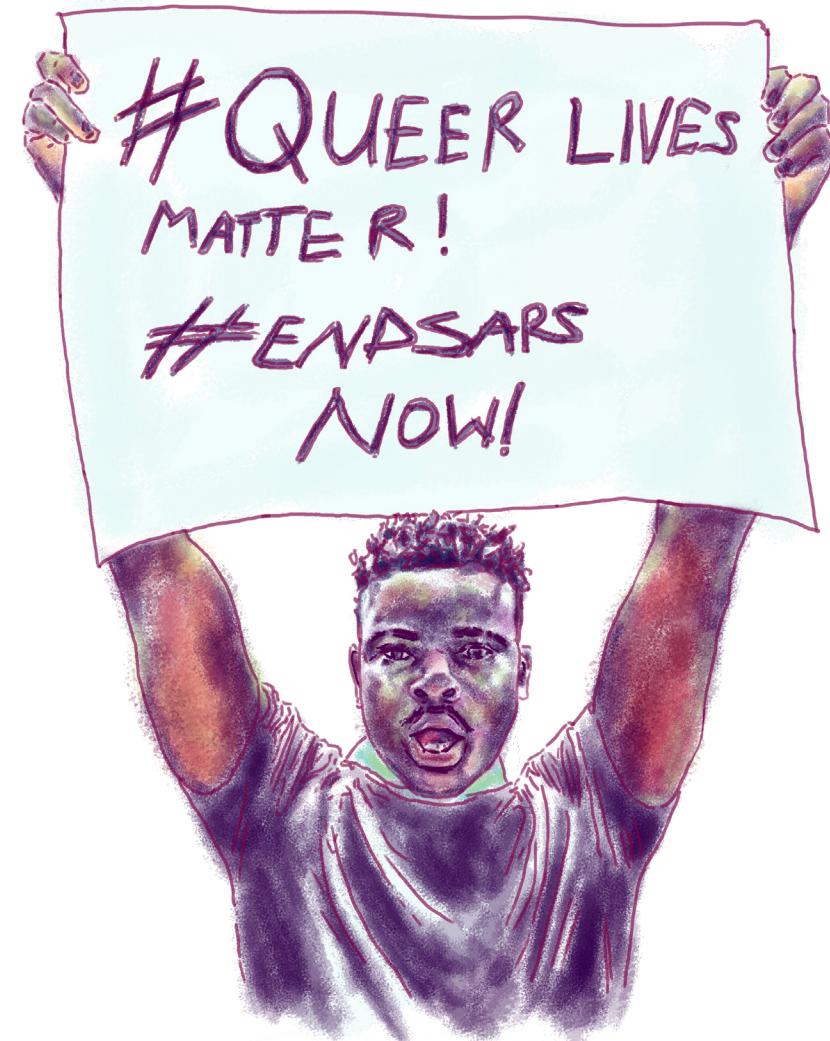


Homophobia

Prejudice directed at people who engage in same sex relationships. This shows itself in different ways, from informal bullying and exclusion, to laws that criminalise any acts considered to be 'homosexual'. Homophobia can manifest in extremely violent ways, and many people are forced to keep their identity a secret to survive. Those who appear to challenge ideas around the gender binary¹⁰ and sexual orientation¹³ can also be affected by homophobia.

Currently same sex relationships between women are illegal in forty five countries, while same sex relations between men are illegal in seventy two: <https://ilga.org/maps-sexual-orientation-laws>

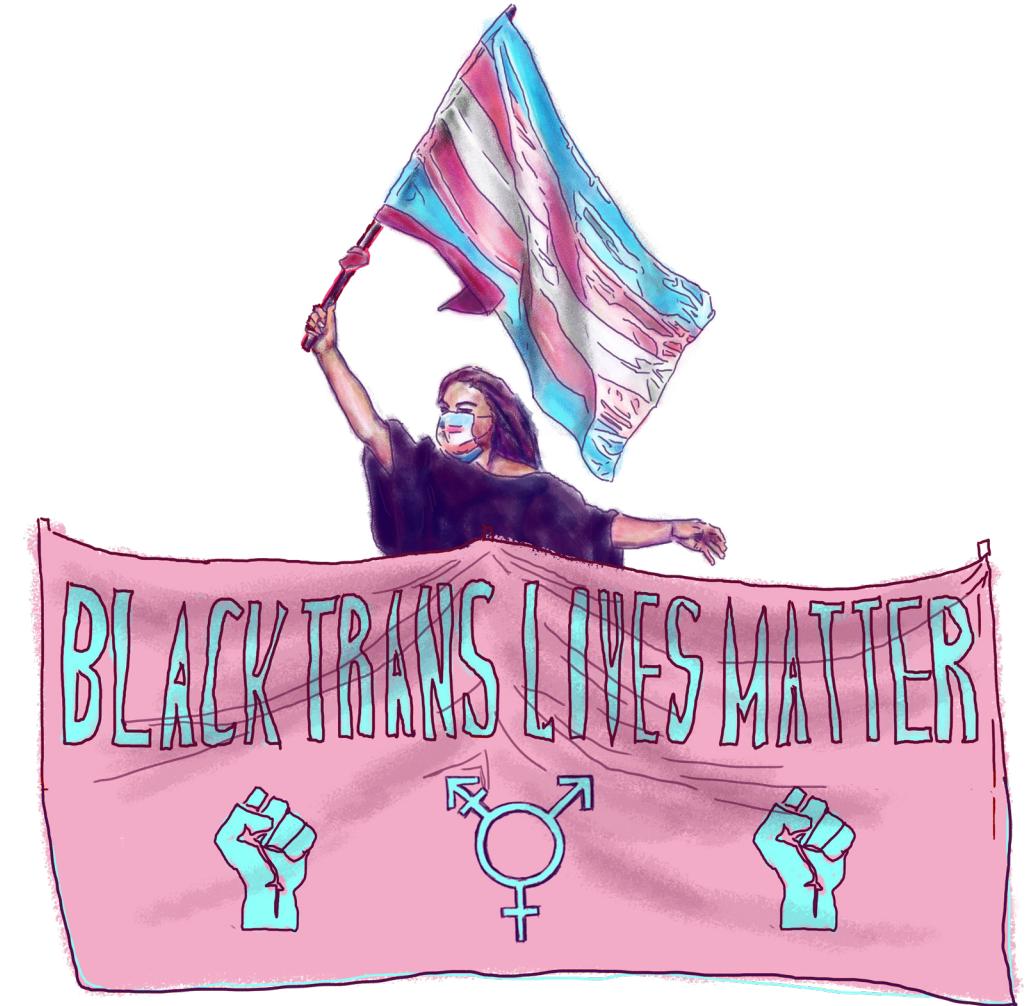
*Matthew Blaise is a queer organiser and activist from Nigeria protesting against the violence perpetrated by the SARS police unit.



Transphobia

Transphobia is the prejudice against and oppression of transgender⁵⁰ people. Transphobia and homophobia⁶⁷ are two different types of oppression, though a person (for example a trans lesbian²⁹ woman) can experience both of these simultaneously.

TERF - 'trans exclusionary radical feminism' is a term describing so-called feminists who see trans people (especially trans women) as a threat. They often promote conservative values and believe in gender⁷ essentialism. Gender essentialism is the idea that gender is dictated by genitals, and supports the idea of the gender binary¹⁰. They claim that transgender men are misguided lesbians and transgender women are predatory men trying to invade their safe spaces. Another term used by this group is 'gender critical'.



Heteronormativity



Giving **heterosexual**³⁷ relationships higher status in society than other types of relationships. This includes organising society around the idea that heterosexual relationships, and the **gender binary**¹⁰, are natural and 'normal', and all other forms of relationship are somehow 'abnormal' or less valuable/respectable/real.

It also encourages more conservative **gender**⁷ roles in **cisgender**⁵² heterosexual relationships.

Being Out

When someone comes out of the 'closet', they open up about their sexual or gender orientation to those around them. People within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum can face prejudice and persecution of various degrees depending on who and where they are, which encourages them to 'stay in the closet'. You should never disclose someone's **sexuality¹³** or **gender⁷** identity for them as this can be extremely dangerous.

Terms such as 'stealth' or 'discreet' are used to describe someone wishing to remain in the closet. People often choose to be discreet due to concerns about safety and security in the workplace, home and society in general, as well as unwanted scrutiny. In many countries it is illegal to be homosexual or transgender⁵⁰, and people could face arrest or worse if outed.





Nuclear Family

The commonly held idea of a family in many societies is of one father and one mother, with children. This is a very narrow definition of family which doesn't represent people's real lives. It is a colonial notion of family that, historically and in the present, are often at odds with African and other cultures. Many families have a single parent, two fathers or mothers, a grandparent as caregiver, an older sibling taking care of their other siblings or different numbers of children that may be biological or adopted.

Chosen Family

The family a person chooses. A chosen family holds a lot of importance due to the high rate of estrangement experienced by people on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. It also holds value in terms of allowing people to feel less isolated in their experiences that might not be accessible to cis⁵²-heterosexual³⁷ people, providing a space for mutual understanding and support.

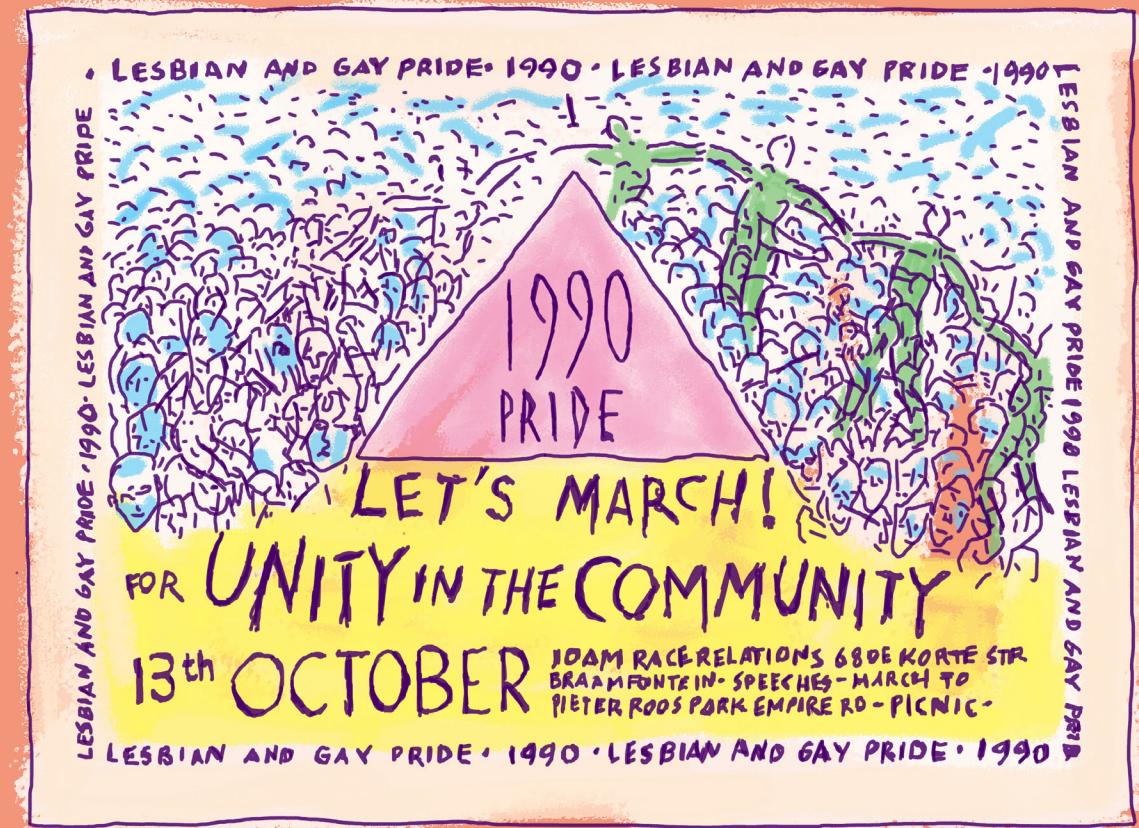


Pride

The 1969 Stonewall Uprising was a 'riot' led by Black trans women fighting against the oppression of queer people in New York City. The uprising was met with police violence. A year later, in commemoration of the events at Stonewall, the first Pride parade was held on 28 June 1970.

The Pride march, often referred to as parade or just 'Pride', has since been adopted and adapted in different countries around the world. The first pride march in Africa was started by the Gay and Lesbian Community of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) on 13 October 1990. Queer anti-apartheid activists like Bev Ditsie, Simon Nkoli and Edwin Cameron were calling for an explicitly non-homophobic⁶⁷, non-racist and non-sexist future and saw the liberation of queer people as an important part of the liberation of South Africa. This activism contributed to LGBTQIA+ rights being included in the Constitution.

Although Pride was imagined as a space to advocate for and celebrate freedom for LGBTQIA+ people, it is also



surrounded by tensions and contestations. Many argue that the spaces have become commercialised, depoliticised and exclusionary along class, race and gendered lines as well as being dominated by certain sub-groups in the queer¹⁶ community - most often, though not exclusively, by cisgender⁵², white gay men.

In places like Ekurhuleni, Pride is an important space to highlight the plight of LGBTQIA+ people including constant threats of violence and death. In Uganda, Pride events are regularly disrupted by police and queer people face arrests, harassment and physical assault in day to day life.





Drag

An exaggerated 'fabulous' performance of a gender⁷ for theatrical purposes. Drag performers are often referred to as 'Drag Queens' and 'Drag Kings'. While trans women have a history of engaging in drag for various reasons (such as a safe space to transition and earn a living in a hostile society), drag performers and transgender⁵⁰ women are not the same, and some transgender people have an uncomfortable relationship with drag precisely because of the often deliberately comedic 'performance' of gender and the potential confusion people have regarding performance and identity. Drag performers tend to have a separate persona with their own name, pronouns, style and character.

*Manila von Teez is a well known South African drag performer who has won several awards and pageants.

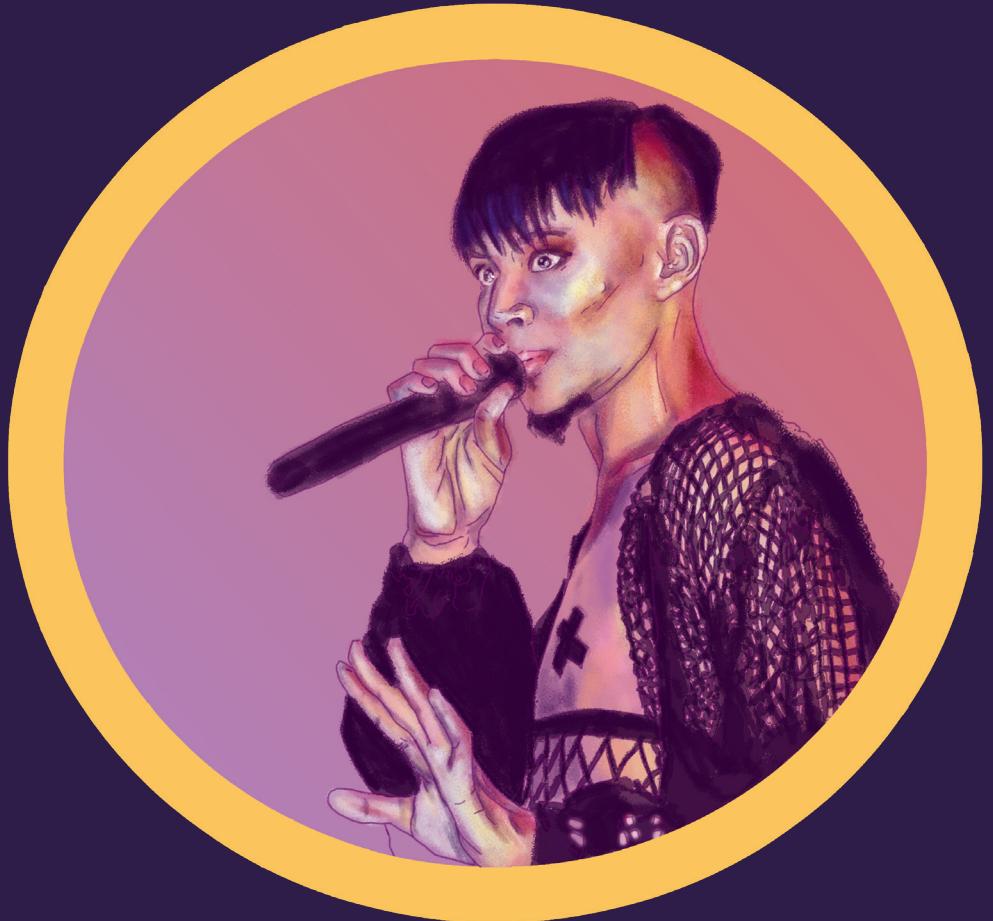
Gayle

Gayle is a type of language used in South African communities consisting of colloquial or slang words. Often a name such as 'Betty' or 'Delores' was used to stand in for something else such as 'club' or 'police'. It originated during apartheid in South Africa in coloured* working class LGBTQIA+ communities. It allowed communities to communicate safely in predominantly heterosexual³⁷ spaces and organise politically. It also allowed people to live their lives more freely at time when homosexuality was a criminal act in South Africa.

*In South Africa, the term 'Coloured' refers to a diverse group of people, largely descended from the indigenous Khoi and San, and persons from Africa and Asia enslaved at the Cape, with some European ancestry. However, the term 'Coloured' is contested - embraced by some and rejected by others.



Ball Culture



Vogue balls were popular in the USA during the 80s and have recently become popular in **queer**¹⁶ communities internationally. They were celebratory and political spaces where **gay**³², **lesbian**²⁹ and **transgender**⁵⁰ people of colour could gather together. It is a space where many play with **gender expression**⁸. Houses (**chosen families**⁷⁸ who lived together and supported each other) would 'walk' (compete) in categories with each other, simultaneously celebrating and satirizing **gender**⁷, class and other social categories that could be considered performative. There have recently been a number of balls held in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Notable examples of this would be the House of le Cap who have hosted various Balls as part of the arts, dance and queer night scenes respectively.

*Kirvan Fortuin (10 August 1991 - 13 June 2020) was a South African dancer, choreographer and LGBT activist. They founded House of Le Cap, South Africa's first ballroom house, in 2017.

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Translation and feedback are by Kealeboga Ramaru, Allan Maasdorp, Chulumanco Mihlali Nkasela, Dinga Sikwebu, and Akha Hamba Mchwayo Tutu.

For more info contact:
Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education
67 Main Road
Mowbray, Cape Town
South Africa

021 685 3516
info@tshisimani.org.za
www.tshisimani.org.za

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In the current harsh social and economic conditions, we face multiple forms of oppression. We need spaces we can gather together safely and learn. We created this visually illustrated LGBTQIA+ and/or queer inclusive glossary to help activists and others share knowledge with each other and to strengthen allyship between us.



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