

## What Does LGBTQ Mean?

LGBTQ is an abbreviation for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning**. We use it as an inclusive term to refer to the community as a whole and to people who do not identify as heterosexual and/or cisgender.

**Sexual Orientation (SO)**. Describes who one is attracted to emotionally, romantically and/or sexually. It encompasses attraction, behavior and identity.

**Heterosexual (straight)**. A sexual orientation that refers to individuals whose sexual and and/or romantic and/or emotional attractions and behaviors focus exclusively or mainly on members of the opposite sex or gender identity.

**Gender Identity (GI)**. A person's innermost concept of being a boy, man, girl, woman, or another gender. One's gender may not correspond with one's physical anatomy. GI does not determine SO and vice versa.

**Gender Expression** How gender is conveyed externally, through physical appearance, voice, movement. Clothing, hair styles, makeup, voice, use of body such as posture and gait, are often means for expressing gender.

**Cisgender (cis)** Describes a person whose gender identity matches their gender/sex assigned at birth. A person who is not transgender.

## Brief Glossary

**Lesbian**. SO that describes a woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted primarily to other women.

**Gay**. SO that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted primarily to people of their own gender. It can be used regardless of gender identity, but is more commonly used to describe men.

**Bisexual**. SO that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of their own gender and people of other genders.

**Transgender (trans)**. Describes a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond. Also used as an umbrella term to include gender identities outside of male and female.

**\*Queer**. Please see note below.

**Questioning**. Term used to refer to people exploring their GI and/or SO.

**Ally**. Person who supports and stands up for the rights, dignity and well-being of LGBTQ people and their families.

**\* Important note about the term "Queer."** **Historically**, the label queer conveyed an *extremely negative connotation. It was a term of derision, a slur, a derogatory label used to hurt LGBT people.*

**In recent years**, *the term Queer has been reclaimed by mostly young people as a term of pride.* Queer is now used by some to refer to SO and/or GI in addition to, and beyond, the labels LGBT. Many use it interchangeably with "LGBTQ." **\*Please do not use the term Queer when talking to seniors unless they use this term for themselves and ask you to do so as well.**

## Keep In Mind

**Members of the LGBTQ community have experienced much pain and suffering as a result of institutionalized discrimination, ignorance, fear and prejudice. These experiences negatively impact the health and well-being of LGBTQ individuals and families.**

**"The vast majority of LGBT older adults have lived through discrimination, social stigma, and the effects of prejudice both past and present, including a history of being labeled as criminals, sinners and mentally ill."** (National Resource Center on LGBT Aging and SAGE, *Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults*, p.4)

- Labels and terms change over time and can resonate differently for individuals.
- Pay attention, be sensitive, and open to the language and labels individuals use (and do not use) to self-identify.
- Not everyone will self-identify with a label or wants to be put into a category.
- During an individual's life time, their SO and/or GI may change.
- No one should be forced to disclose their SO and/or GI. It is a privilege to have someone feel comfortable and safe enough to come out to you. But they may not want that information shared with others. **Respect and honor confidentiality.**
- Some people only come out to a few individuals in their life time.
- "Outing" someone is when someone reveals someone else's SO or GI.
- **It is up to each individual to decide whether and how to discuss and reveal their sexual identity and gender orientation, respect this decision.**

## LGBT Task Force Vision

*The Abramson Center for Jewish Life is a safe place for LGBTQ individuals and their families to call home; to work at; and to receive services from. Our commitment to providing exceptional person-centered care includes an awareness of, sensitivity to the diversity of human sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.*

*The Center fosters a community and culture of compassion, understanding, and sensitivity to the inherent value of all people including members of the LGBT community.*

*We strive to create and nurture an environment in which individuals are valued, celebrated and supported to be their authentic selves and to continue to grow and flourish as elders.*

The Abramson Center's LGBTQ Task Force held our first meeting on September 18, 2014. As a result of our efforts, the Center attained the special status of Leader in Health Care Equality for 2015, 2016 and 2017.



We would like to hear from you. Please contact us to discuss your questions, concerns, comments, and suggestions.

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## LGBTQ Task Force: *What It's Like to Be Me*

Person-centered care (PCC) begins with the premise that **each human being has inherent dignity and worth.** PCC involves recognizing the whole person we encounter and serve and appreciating that each and **every person is unique and multi-dimensional.**

*Be open to learn about each person as a unique individual with a unique life journey.*

**“The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you: they are unique manifestations of the human spirit.”**

Wade Davis, Ethnobiologist.

Sexual orientation (SO) and gender identity (GI) are core aspects of a person. They affect individuals in many ways throughout one's life span. SO and GI influence a person's sense of self, social connections, interests, health and well-being.