

because words matter

**Glossary on Sexual Orientation,
Gender Identity or Expression
and Sex Characteristics**

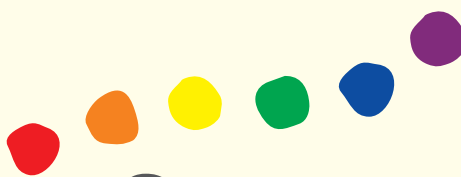



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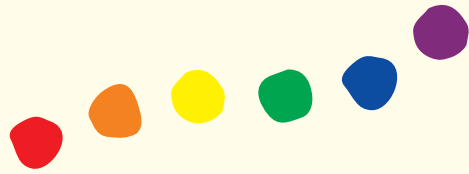


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In this glossary we have gathered
a set of basic terminologies
to better understand
the issues related to
Sexual Orientation,
Gender Identity or Expression
and Sex Characteristics.

**Words can inspire.
And words can destroy.
Choose yours well.**

Robin Sharma

Proper use of terminology in the field of human rights, particularly those related to sexual orientation, gender identity, expression or characteristics, is of paramount importance. The careful choice of word is a prime consideration as it can make the difference between respecting human rights and the perception of abusing them. A little time spent studying this vocabulary as it is currently used will pay dividends; it makes a meaningful difference to the communities we seek to serve.

This new version of the Council of Europe SOGI glossary replaces the original, which was first drafted in 2009. The changes it includes take into account both social and linguistic evolutions in the field of human rights applied to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) in the intervening period.

Language has evolved as understanding of the issues has deepened to reflect the human lives and social realities we encounter. This document covers the key current terminology in the field of SOGIESC human rights at the time of publication. Some older, discriminatory or even stigmatizing terminology from the original glossary has been removed and new words have been added. This glossary does not cover every term you will encounter, but it does detail the specific language currently employed in the field. We hope that this new SOGI glossary will encourage clear, respectful communication by all who use it.

Eleni Tsetsekou

Head of Unit





Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons.

SOGIESC

Acronym for Sexual orientation,
Gender Identity or Expression
and Sex Characteristics.

SOGIESC-based violence

Violence that targets specifically persons
perceived as LGBTI or their allies.

In some penal codes,
this form of violence
may constitute hate crime.

LGBTI

Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender and Intersex persons.







Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual persons

Sexual orientation

The “LGB” component of the acronym LGBTI. Sexual orientation is understood to refer to each person's capacity for profound attraction (emotional, physical, sexual, psychological and/or other) to, and intimate and sexual relations with, another person. It can be towards a same-sex person (homosexual), different-sex person (heterosexual), either female or male persons (bisexual) or irrespective of sex and/or gender (pansexual). In cases where a person experiences low or no sexual attraction to other persons, but who can still experience other forms of attraction we use the term asexual.

Lesbian

Refers to a homosexual woman.

Gay

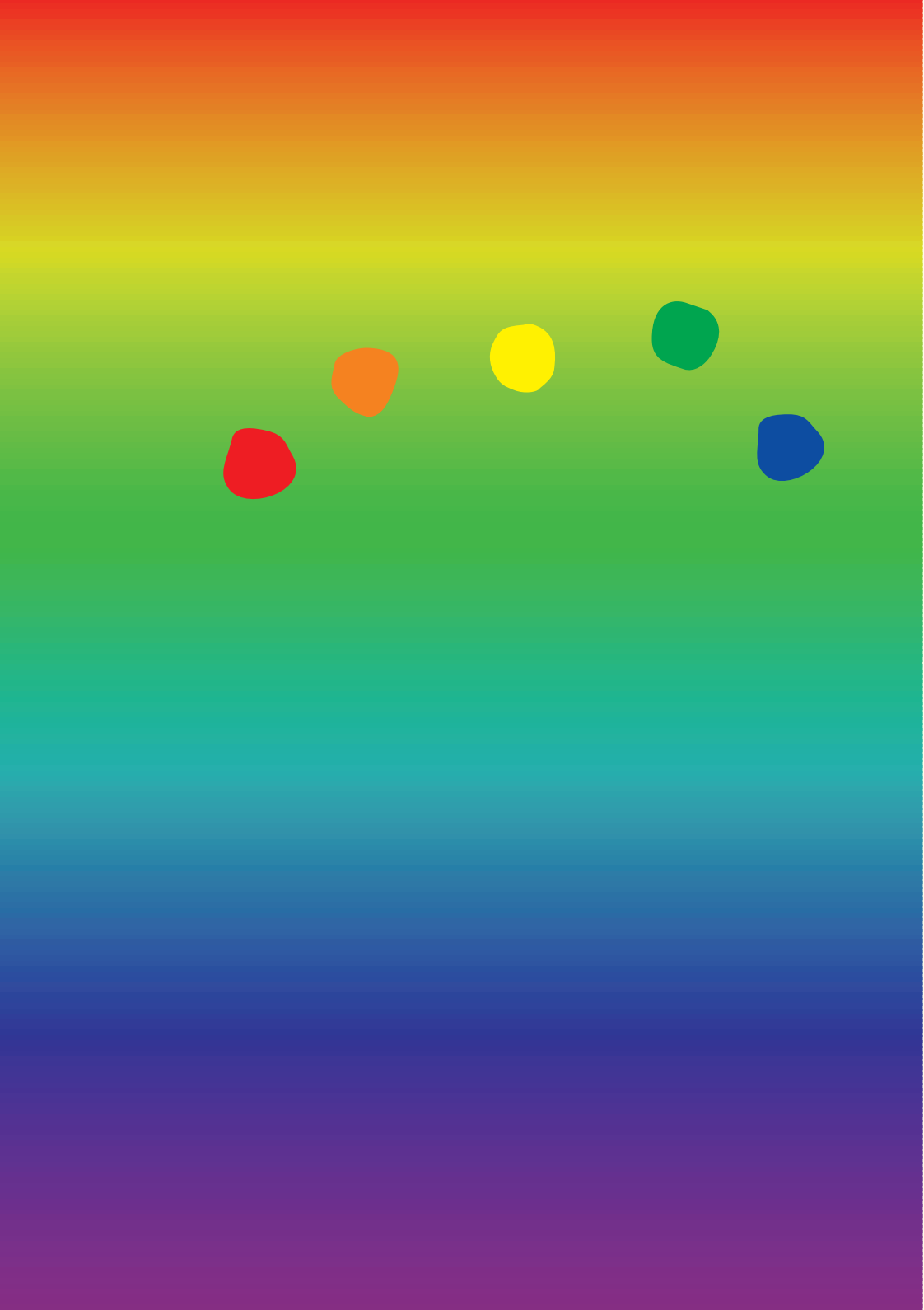
Refers to a homosexual man.

Homophobia

Irrational fear of, and aversion to, persons perceived as homosexual, based on prejudice, or unfamiliarity/lack of information.

Biphobia

Irrational fear of, and aversion to, persons perceived as bisexual, based on prejudice or unfamiliarity/lack of information.





Gender Identity The “T” component of the LGBTI acronym. Gender identity is understood to refer to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.

Gender Expression Social expression of an individual's gender identity, including the use of name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behaviour, voice or body characteristics.

Sex Refers to the biological characteristics used to define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive.

Sex marker Legal sex appearing on documents (birth certificates, Identification documents, etc.).

AFAB/AMAB Assigned Female at Birth/Assigned Male at Birth.

Transgender Transgender is an umbrella expression referring to persons who have a gender identity different from predominant social expectations based on the person's sex assigned at birth.

Cis-gender A person whose gender identity and expression corresponds to predominant social expectations based on the person's sex assigned at birth.

Transphobia Irrational fear of, and aversion to, persons perceived as transgender based on prejudice.





Sex Characteristics

The “I” component of the acronym LGBTI. Refers to the chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical features of a person, which include primary sex characteristics such as reproductive organs and genitalia and/or in chromosomal structures and hormones; and secondary sex characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breasts and/or structure.

Intersex

Persons born with biological sex characteristics that do not fit societal norms or medical definitions of what makes a person male or female. Sometimes a person's intersex status is detected at birth; sometimes it only becomes apparent later in life, notably during puberty. There are many forms of intersex; it is an umbrella spectrum or term, rather than a single category.

Interphobia

Irrational fear of, and aversion to, persons perceived as intersex, based on prejudice.

