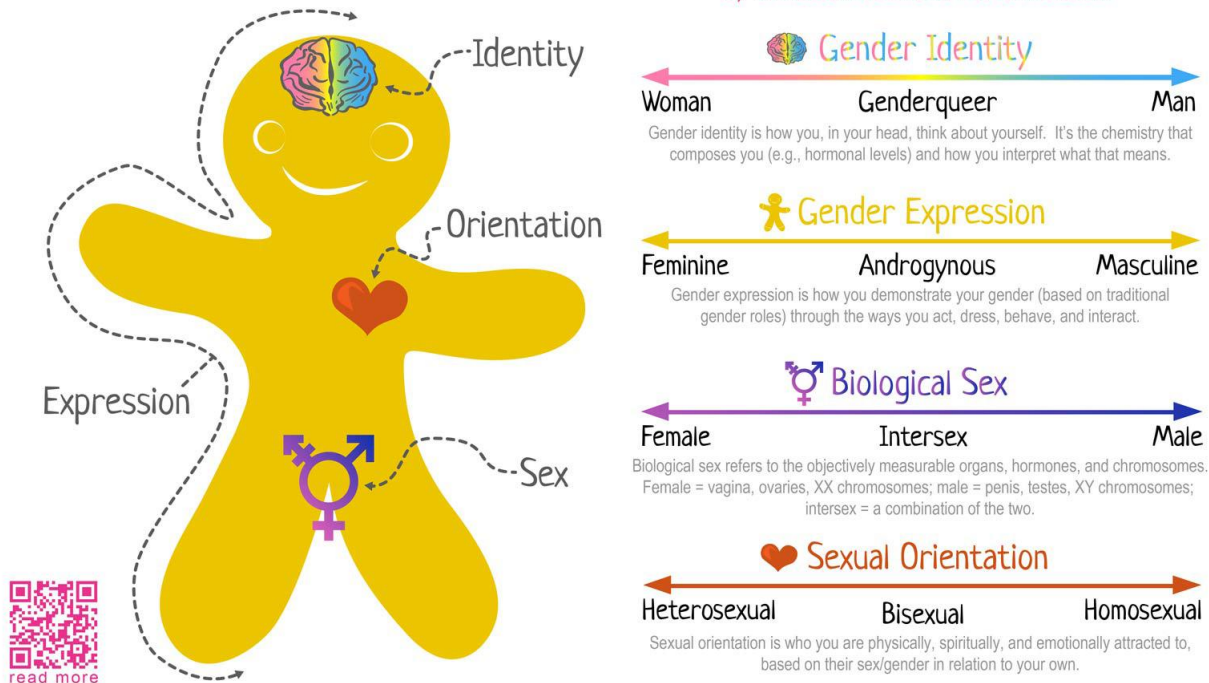


# UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND THE LGBTQIA+ SPECTRUM

## I. Understanding Gender Through Visual Representation

# The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



With an expanding array of labels that individuals use to express their gender and sexuality, it is important to begin with four elements that help shape and define who we are: gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. The figure above (The Genderbread Person, by Sam Killermann) shows these four elements as continuaums, and not as mere binaries.

**1. Gender Identity** is the reflection of “a deeply felt and experienced sense of one’s own gender” (UN, n.d.). In the Genderbread Person, gender identity points to the brain. It is how you think of yourself in your head: are you a **man**, a **woman**, or a **genderqueer**?

**2. Gender Expression** is how you express or demonstrate your gender through your actions and appearances (UN, n.d.). Are you **masculine**, **feminine**, or **androgynous**?

**3. Biological sex** refers to the “objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes you possess” (Killermann, 2011). Being **female** means having a vagina, ovaries, and XX chromosomes; being **male** means having a penis, testes, and XY chromosomes; and being **intersex** can be a combination of both.

**4. Sexual orientation** refers to “a person’s physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards other people” (UN, n.d.). On one end of the spectrum in the Genderbread Person, are the **heterosexuals** (commonly known as “straights”) or people who are attracted to the opposite sex. On the other end are the **homosexuals** (commonly known as “gays” or “lesbians”) or people attracted to the same sex. In the middle are the **bisexuals** (sometimes shortened as “bi”) or people attracted to both sexes.



## II. The LGBTQIA+ Spectrum

The term LGBTQIA+ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Ally, and Plus (+) which signifies other terms. Note however that these terms are evolving, changing, and can mean different things to people (University of California, 2018).

Thus, “it is important to respect the names, terms, and pronouns that people use to refer to themselves” (United Nations Free and Equal, n.d.). Here are some definitions:

**Lesbian** - A woman whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same gender.

**Gay** - A sexual and affectional orientation toward people of the same gender.

**Transgender/Trans** - an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of identities whose appearance and characteristics are perceived as gender atypical—including transsexual people, cross-dressers (sometimes referred to as “transvestites”), and people who identify as third gender.

**Queer** - people who are not straight but do not wish to be identified as gay may refer to themselves as queer.

**Intersex** - Adjective used to describe the experience of naturally (that is, without any medical intervention) developing primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female.

**Allyship** - The action of working to end oppression through support of, and as an advocate with and for, a group other than one's own.

**Homophobia** - An irrational fear of, hatred or aversion towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

**Asexual** - refers to a person who does not experience sexual attraction or has little interest in sexual activity.

**Cisgender** - replaces the terms “nontransgender” or “bio man/bio woman” to refer to individuals who have a match between the sex they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their gender identity. (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009).

**Pansexual** - “is most commonly used in the world outside academia as a sexual identity [and sexual orientation] term similar to ‘bisexuality,’ but more inclusive of trans people. It also shows an awareness of the implied gender binary in the term ‘bisexual.’” (Elizabeth, 2013)

For a video and other resources on sexuality concepts and terms, you may refer to:

- ❖ Video: Sexuality and Gender 101 - <https://youtu.be/QZ9-qQ68EnQ>
- ❖ Informational Guide: Key Terms and Concepts in Understanding Gender Diversity and Sexual Orientation Among Students - <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/lgbt/key-terms.pdf>
- ❖ Webpage: LGBTQIA+ Resource Center Glossary - <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>
- ❖ Vocabulary - <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>
- ❖ Webpage: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender - <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/index.aspx>

### References:

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/index.aspx>

American Psychological Association. (2015). Key terms and concepts in understanding gender diversity and sexual orientation among students. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/lgbt/key-terms.pdf>

Killermann, S. (2011, November 7). The genderbread person (graphic) from the article breaking through the binary: gender explained using continuums. *It's Pronounced Metrosexual*. Retrieved from

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/11/breaking-through-the-binary-gender-explained-using-continuums/>

Killermann, S. (2013, January 7). Comprehensive\* list of LGBTQ+ vocabulary definitions. *It's Pronounced Metrosexual*. Retrieved from <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>

United Nations Free and Equal. (n.d.). Definitions. *United Nations Free and Equal*. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/definitions/>

United Nations. (2016). Living free and equal - what states are doing to tackle violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people. *United Nations*. Retrieved from

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

University of California, Davis Campus. (2018). LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary. *UCDavis*. Retrieved from <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary.html>

