



DIVERSITY DICTIONARY

Terms and definitions to help us understand, learn something new, and become more inclusive in our language!

AAPI: An acronym standing for "Asian American and Pacific Islander".

Accessible: The appropriate term when referring to situations that allow people with disabilities and non-disabled individuals alike to engage in a particular activity. Ex: "Accessibility parking" or "accessibility seating" at the movie theater.

ADD: Acronym for attention deficit disorder. ADD encompasses a poor working memory, inattention, and high distractibility.

ADHD: Acronym for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. An individual with ADHD may experience difficulties in focusing their attention on specific tasks, sitting still for long periods of time, and often experience hyperactivity.

AFAB: An acronym for "Assigned Female at Birth".

African-American: An American who is of African and especially of Black African descent.

Ally: A person who is actively supportive of equality for minority groups - such as people with disabilities, people from different ethnicities, the LGBTQ+ community, and so on.

AMAB: An acronym for "Assigned Male at Birth".

Asexual (Ace): A person who experiences little to no physical attraction to others, though they may feel emotional or romantic attraction.

Asian-American: An American who is of Asian descent.

ASL: Acronym for American Sign Language. ASL is a complete and visual language in which one uses hands, body language, and facial expressions to communicate. ASL is the predominant sign language used by Deaf communities and those who are hard of hearing.

Autism: Sometimes referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism is a developmental disorder that ranges in severity and affects one's ability to interact and communicate with others.

Benevolent Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination based on sex that is unintentionally or more subtly communicated. Ex. reinforcing stereotypes about women's gender roles, being criticized for behavior or actions deemed traditionally "feminine," etc.

BIPOC: An acronym standing for "Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color".

Bisexual (Bi): A person who experiences attraction to more than one gender. Sometimes used interchangeably with Pansexual.

Black: Any various populations that have a dark pigmentation of skin who identify as Black

Bullying: Abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone in a stronger or more privileged position.

Cerebral Palsy: A disorder that affects the development of muscle, movement, balance, and posture. The term "palsy" refers to weakness and difficulty in using muscles."

Cisgender (Cis): A person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.

Closed Captioning: Displayed text on a television or screen that provides descriptions of auditory cues in addition to the dialogue.

Coming Out: The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates their identity and begins to share it with others.

Cultural Appropriation: The inappropriate adoption of customs, practices, ideas of one group of people by another group of people with more privilege.

Deaf: When using the uppercase "Deaf", this refers to a culture and community that share a language (ASL) and connection with one another.

deaf: When using the lowercase "deaf", this refers to the audiological condition of not being able to hear.

Developmental Disability: A condition beginning in the developmental period that can impact physical function, behavior, language, and learning.

Disability: A term that refers to a physical, mental, or developmental condition and how it affects an individual's activities of daily living.

Discrimination: The practice of unfairly treating a person or group differently from another person or group.

Disorder: A medically-based term that refers to a sensory, cognitive, or physical impairment, illness, disease, or condition.

DLD: Acronym for Developmental Language Disorder- A disorder that results in difficulty understanding and/or using spoken language.

Down Syndrome: A genetic disorder that results in developmental delays, intellectual disability, and other medical abnormalities. Down Syndrome disorder also often results in a distinct facial appearance.

Dyslexia: A learning disorder in which an individual may experience difficulty in reading or interpreting letters, symbols, and words.

Epilepsy: A disorder that results in seizures due to interrupted nerve cell activity in the brain.

Feminism: The belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.

Gay: A person who experiences attraction to members of their same gender. Men, women, and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Gender Binary: A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male and female. Gender Identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

Gender Dysphoria: Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender expression: How someone expresses their gender through behavior, clothing, voice, etc.

Gender identity: A person's innermost concept of self as male, female, both, or neither - how one perceives themselves and what they call themselves. Gender Identity can be the same or different from their assigned sex.

Gender non-conforming: A person who does not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender or whose gender expression doesn't neatly fit into a category.

Gender roles: A social construct that tells people how they are expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct themselves based solely upon their assigned sex at birth.

Gender-expansive: A person with a wider or more flexible range of gender identity. Can be used to describe someone exploring their gender identity.

Gender-fluid: A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid gender identity.

Genderqueer: A person who rejects ideas of traditional gender norms. Those who identify as such may see themselves as both male and female, neither male or female, or falling completely outside these categories.

Hard of Hearing: An identifying term that refers to an individual who has experienced mild to profound hearing loss.

Hate Crime: Crimes committed against an individual or group on the basis of their minority status.

Heteronormative: The assumption that heterosexuality and gender roles are the standard for normal behavior and thinking.

Hispanic: Being from, or descended of someone from, a Spanish-speaking country.

Homophobia: The fear, hatred for, or discomfort with people who are attracted to others of their same sex.

Hostile Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination based on sex that is communicated in an open way through hostile behavior. Ex. insulting, degrading, objectifying openly, etc.

Identity-First Language: When talking about people with disabilities, using language that puts identifiers first before the person. Ex: "Deaf individual" instead of "Individual who is deaf".

IEP: Acronym for Individualized Educational Program- An academic plan created to best support and address the specific needs of a student.

Inclusion: Accepting others regardless of who they are or their background. In a school setting, inclusion involves ensuring that each student has equal opportunities and the chance to participate in all academic fronts.

Intersectionality: Different aspects of an individual such as race, class, and gender that interconnect to create a unique experience.

Intersex: A person born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy.

Intolerance: Showing an attitude of dislike or hatred towards a particular group.

Latinx/o/a/e: Being from, or descended of someone from, a Latin American country. Latino/Latina are gendered terms for male and female respectively.

Learning Disability: A disorder that affects one's ability to understand, write, or use spoken language.

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or physically attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use the term to describe themselves.

LGBTQIA+: An acronym for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual". The plus sign represents other queer identities that aren't included in the acronym.

Low Vision: Vision loss that cannot be corrected with glasses or contacts. It often involves blind spots and blurry sight.

Mental Health Disability: A mental health disease or disorder that hinders or impairs an individual in their day-to-day activities.

Microaggression: A comment or action that subtly expresses, whether intentional or not, a prejudiced attitude towards a member of a marginalized group.

Misandry: Hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against men.

Misogyny: Hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women.

Native-American: A member of any of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Non-binary: A person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman.

Non-disabled: The appropriate term to describe an individual who does not have a disability.

Outing: Exposing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation without their permission.

Pacific Islander: A native or descendant of someone who was native of the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, or Polynesia in the Pacific Ocean.

Pansexual (Pan): A person who has the potential for emotional, romantic, or physical attraction to people of any gender. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

Patriarchy: A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

Person of Color: A person who is of a race other than white or who is of mixed race descent.

Person-First Language: When talking about people with disabilities, using language that puts the person first before the disability. Ex: "Person with a disability" instead of "Disabled person".

Physical/Mobility Disability: A disability that involves physical impairment in gross and/or fine motor skills, such as walking or grabbing an object with your fingers.

Prejudice: An unfair feeling of dislike for a person or group because of their race, sex, religion, etc.

PWD: Acronym for Person(s) With Disabilities.

Queer: An umbrella term used to cover a spectrum of identities and orientations that are outside of the traditional norms.

Questioning: A term used to describe someone who is in the process of exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Racial Profiling: The act of suspecting or targeting a person on the basis of a person's race.

Racism: A belief that race impacts human traits and ability and that those differences make a particular race superior to another.

Scapegoating: Unfairly assigning blame to a group for the actions of individuals or to individuals for the actions of a group.

Sex assigned at birth: The sex (male, female, or intersex) that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Sexism: Prejudice or discrimination based on sex. Primarily discrimination against women.

Sexual orientation: A person's emotional, romantic, or physical attraction to other people. Note: a person's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.

Short Stature: An individual of short stature often has a shortness of height due to a medical or genetic condition. Appropriate terminology when referring to an individual of short stature would be "little person"- NOT dwarf or midget.

Spectrum: Often refers to the scale in which Autism is diagnosed and assessed.

Stereotype: To unfairly believe that certain characteristics apply to entire groups rather than individuals.

Title IX: A federal law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972 that bars discrimination on the basis of sex in the United States' education systems.

Tokenism: The policy or practice of making only symbolic efforts in correcting issues of inequality.

Tourette Syndrome: A disorder that causes an individual to have repetitive movements or unwanted sounds that are not controlled easily.

Toxic Masculinity: A social construct with a specific idea of how men should behave and feel which results in harm done to women as well as men themselves.

Transgender (Trans): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transitioning: A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their gender.

Transmisogyny: Hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against trans or non-binary people who express themselves on the feminine end of the spectrum.

Transphobia: The fear, hatred for, or discomfort for those with a different gender identity/expression than the sex assigned at birth.

Two Spirit: A umbrella term used by some indigenous peoples to describe a person who identifies as having both a masculine and feminine spirit.

Unconscious Bias: Prejudice or unsupported judgements in favor of or against one thing, person, or group as compared to another in a way that is usually considered unfair.

Victim-blaming: When a victim of a crime is held responsible for the act.

Wage Gap: The difference between what women and men earn for the same work.

Wheelchair User: An individual who uses a wheelchair.

White Privilege: The set of social and economic advantages that Caucasian and/or light-skinned people have due to their race/'white-passing' appearance.

Whitewashing: Erasing people of color from media through the casting of white actors as characters who are non-white.