

LGBTQ+ Youth & Mental Health

According to the Journal of Pediatrics and the Human Rights Campaign, much evidence has found that societal prejudice causes significant medical and psychological harms to LGBT people:

8 **TIMES**

More than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide

6 **TIMES**

Nearly 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression

3 **TIMES**

More than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs

3 **TIMES**

More than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and STDs



Youth questioning their sexual orientation reported more¹

bullying

homophobic
victimization

unexcused
absences from
school

drug use

feelings of
depression

suicidal
behaviors

¹ Birkett M, Espelage DL, Koenig B. LGB and questioning students in schools: The moderating effects of homophobic bullying and school climate on negative outcomes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 2009;38:989–1000.



LGBTQ+ Terminology

These are definitions that the youth within Prism Youth Community developed by looking at online resources and discussing within our group. However, even within the LGBTQ+ community, different people define words differently. If someone uses one of these words differently than is defined here, honor and acknowledge the way they use that word. In addition, this list of definitions is not exhaustive, although it is meant to be thorough. If someone mentions an identity not on this list, try to look it up from a reputable source, and respect their self-identification.

Gender Identities

Androgyne (noun) – A person appearing and/or identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.

Cisgender (adjective) – Describing a person who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Assigned at Birth (noun phrase) – What gender doctors said that you were at birth based on physical characteristics.

Gender Binary (noun) – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female – and that a person must be strictly either/or.

Gender Expression (noun) – The way someone externally expresses themselves through clothing and style choices. Examples include: Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous

Gender Identity (noun) – A person's sense of their own gender, which may or may not correspond to the gender they were assigned at birth. Examples include: Male, Female, Non-binary, Genderqueer, etc.

Genderqueer, Gender Non-Conforming, Gender Variant, Non-binary (adjective) – Describing a person who identifies outside of male or female and/or not strictly as male or female.

Trans or Transgender (adjective, offensive as a noun) – An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity is different than their gender assigned at birth. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant community as a whole (i.e. the trans/transgender community).



Sexual Orientations

Asexual (adjective) – Describing a person who is not sexually attracted to any gender or does not have a sexual orientation.

Bisexual (adjective) – Describing a person attracted to people of their own gender and another gender. Also sometimes defined as attraction to two or more genders.

Gay (adjective) – Describing a person primarily attracted to people of the same gender as them. (i.e. men attracted to men, women attracted to women.) Also sometimes used as an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community.

Lesbian (noun) – A person who identifies as a woman or woman-aligned who is attracted to other people who identify as female.

Pansexual (adjective) – A person who is attracted to people of all gender identities, also sometimes described as attraction regardless of gender identity.

Romantic Orientation (noun) – Describes the romantic attraction that someone experiences towards another person. Most romantic orientations are in terms of someone's own gender and the gender of the people they are attracted to.

Sexual Orientation or Sexuality (noun) – Describes the sexual attraction that someone experiences towards another person. Most sexual orientations are in terms of someone's own gender and the gender of the people they are attracted to.

Other

Ally (noun) – Typically any person who supports and stands up for the rights of marginalized people in groups that they do not belong to. (I.e. a cisgender person standing up for transgender rights, a white person standing up for rights for people of color)

Biological Sex (noun) – Correlates to your genitalia, hormones, and chromosomal makeup.

Biphobia (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals and other multisexual people, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as in general society.

Bottom Surgery (noun) – Surgery to modify external genitalia.

Coming out (verb) - Disclosing one's own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



Gender Binary (noun) – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female – and that a person must be strictly either/or.

Gender Confirming Surgery (noun) – Surgeries that can help people feel more secure with their gender identity by changing physical characteristics.

Heteronormativity (noun) – The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to other marginalized orientations.

Heterosexism (noun) – Prejudice against individuals or groups who have nonheterosexual behaviors or identities.

Heterosexual Privilege (noun) – The benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to the LGBTQ+ community.

Homophobia (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of gay people, their identities, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes.

LGBTQ+ (acronym, adjective) – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual or aromantic, and other marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities. Also sometimes spelled out LGBTQIAP+ or other variations

Outing (noun) – Involuntary disclosure of one's sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

Partner (noun) – A significant other in an intimate relationship; a gender neutral alternative to boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, or other binary-based relationship terms.

Queer (adjective, offensive as a noun) – Queer has a history as a slur, and is sometimes still used as a slur. Because of this, many still dislike this word and view it as offensive. However, some people use queer as a self-identifier to generally describe not being cisgender or straight. As someone who is not LGBTQ+, it's probably best to avoid using the word entirely.

Questioning (adjective) – a process of exploration by people who are unsure about applying a label to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation

Sex (noun) – This correlates to someone's sexual characteristics, including physical genitalia, chromosomal makeup, and hormones.

Top Surgery (noun) – Surgery referring to the augmentation or reduction of breast tissue.



Transition (noun) – A person’s process of being recognized and/or feeling more secure with their own gender identity. Someone’s transition can, but does not have to include: coming out; changing one’s name and/or gender marker on legal documents; hormone therapy; and some form of surgery. It’s best not to assume how one transitions as it is different for everyone.

Transphobia (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of transgender people, their identities, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid gender role stereotypes.

Using Pronouns:

You can’t know what someone’s preferred gender pronoun is by looking at them. Asking and correctly using someone’s pronoun is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.

Asking what people’s pronouns are:

In private, ask, “What pronouns do you use?” and “Who is it okay to use them around?” If you are in a classroom or other group setting where introductions are required, there are multiple ways to ask people’s pronouns:

- Introducing yourself to the group using your pronouns can normalize not assuming someone’s pronouns, and also be a sign to trans people that the space is safe for them. For example, one could say, “Now let’s introduce ourselves by saying our names and pronouns. My name is ____ and I use he/him/his pronouns.”
- However, for some trans people, saying their preferred pronouns in front of a group of people can be daunting. Written introductory forms for people to fill out can alleviate this. In this form you can include a space asking specifically what name they go by (which allows people to write a name other than their birth name), a space for pronouns, and the rest could be fun get-to-know-you questions like “what’s your favorite color” or “favorite movie”. Not only do you get to know the people in your group, but it allows trans people to comfortably disclose their name and pronouns (and secondarily, cisgender people can disclose nicknames and can be educated about pronouns).

Misgendering:

If you make a mistake, correct yourself right away by saying something like “Sorry, I meant she” and move on. This is important so you don’t draw attention to what happened and make the other person feel uncomfortable. If you realize your mistake afterwards, approach the person in private to apologize. The emphasis should be on correcting the mistake, and not on making yourself feel better.

You may hear the wrong pronoun used for someone. If you know that they are comfortably out to the person who used the wrong pronoun, correct them without further embarrassing the person who has been misgendered. This means saying something like “Actually, Xena uses the pronoun she,” and then moving on. If other youth or colleagues are consistently using the wrong pronouns for someone, do not ignore it! It is important to ensure that everyone’s gender identity and pronouns are respected. Not using the correct pronouns for someone can illustrate to them that the space is not safe and that their gender identity is not respected.



Examples of how to use pronouns

She went to her bedroom.

I am her co-worker.

She loves herself.

He went to his bedroom.

I am his co-worker.

He loves himself.

They went to their bedroom.

I am their co-worker.

They love themselves.

Ze went to hir bedroom.

I am hir co-worker.

Ze loves hirself.

<https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/about/alice/>

This site lets you read the text of Alice in Wonderland, but gives you the option to change the gender pronouns used to familiarize yourself with pronouns you may not use often, i.e. they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs.

<https://minus18.org.au/pronouns-app/> (Seems to only work with apple devices)

http://www.practicewithpronouns.com/#/?_k=vye4yh (Should work on all devices)

These apps, similarly to the above site, allow you to familiarize yourself with gender pronouns you may not be used to using, like they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, and other pronouns.

Resources for Further Education

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) – This national organization is focused on creating a safe environment for students who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. They provide educational resources for educators to use in their school community and also provide resources for student-led efforts to make the classroom and school setting a safer and more positive place. You can find these resources or join their educators' network at www.glsen.org

The Trevor Project – This is a national organization that focuses on crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for students in the LGBTQ+ community. Their suicide prevention hotline is available to call or text 24/7 at 866-488-7386. The Trevor Project also provides educational resources for both youth and adults as well as educational resources for the school community. For more information, visit <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

StopBullying.gov – This online resource explains how a safe environment can be created for youth who identify as LGBTQ+ in the classroom, at home, and in the community. In addition, it provides an overview on legal statutes and civil rights laws apply to LGBTQ+ issues and provides additional government resources for education on LGBTQ+ bullying. Visit <http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/index.html>

Human Rights Campaign – This organization that works towards equal rights for members of the LGBTQ+ community provides information and resources about creating an inclusive learning environment for students. They have also have many campaigns that are engaging with educational communities across the country to help create safe learning environments. You can find information at <http://www.hrc.org/topics/children-youth>

Cyberbullying.org – This resource focuses on the education and prevention of cyber bullying. Youth are engaging in an ever-expanding world of social media, and the virtual world is becoming a more dangerous place for LGBTQ+ youth. Here you can find resources for educators, parents, and teens to help learn where and when cyber bullying takes place, who is vulnerable, and how to help prevent it. To learn more, or to report a case of cyber bullying, visit cyberbullying.org



Gender Spectrum – This resource allows those looking to expand their knowledge of the gender spectrum and other various topics about gender identification. To learn more about gender in youth as well as events and workshops concerning gender, go to genderspectrum.org

Love is Respect – It is important to promote healthy relationships among all youth, and youth in the LGBTQ+ community are no exception. To find information for youth about healthy relationships (LGBTQ+ or not) as well as for youth to engage with a trained individual and ask questions about their relationship, call 866-331-9474 or text loveis to 22522 or visit <http://www.loveisrespect.org/healthy-relationships/healthy-lgbtq-relationships/>

Trans Latin@ Coalition – The Trans Latin@ Coalition organizes and advocates for the trans latin@ community, and provides resources to uplift trans latin@ people through leadership, personal, economic, and professional development. You can access these services at <https://www.translatinacoalition.org/>

Black Trans Advocacy – Black Trans Advocacy provides education, outreach, case management, and direct services regarding the key issues that affect all disenfranchised people with a specific focus on those who are both black and transgender. You can access these services at <https://www.blacktrans.org>

Transgender Law Center – Transgender Law Center is a legal advocacy organization with resources and information regarding transgender policies and legal action. For more information, visit <https://transgenderlawcenter.org>

National Transgender Discrimination Survey – This is a survey that draws on the experiences of 6,450 transgender and gender-nonconforming people from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. They look at the intersections of poverty, race, and gender identity, and the economic, mental, and social discrimination that these people face. Find the executive summary and full report at <http://www.transequality.org/issues/national-transgender-discrimination-survey>

Growing Up LGBT in America – This is a collection of studies and reports done on what growing up in America is like for LGBT youth. This is a great place to start on educating yourself on some of the challenges faced by students that will find their way into your classrooms. To read the report and stories from LGBT youth, go to <http://www.hrc.org/youth-report>

SPART*A - SPART*A is a group created by and for LGBT people who have served or currently are serving in the military. They provide legal and advocacy services, as well as professional development and community. For more about SPART*A, go to <http://www.spartapride.org>

Campus Pride - Campus Pride is a web resources specifically designed for the awareness and inclusion of LGBT people in college. They have specific resources ranging from a checklist of action steps to take in making your institution safer for LGBT students, to the advocacy of LGBT students in health services. For more on Campus Pride, go to <https://www.campuspride.org>

PFLAG- A resource primarily for allies, focused on ensuring that all people are respected and valued based on their gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression. PFLAG focuses on meeting people where they are and answering questions that may seem insensitive to LGBTQ+ people, and helping allies and friends of LGBTQ+ people to better support them. Check PFLAG's website for the closest in-person PFLAG group in your state at www.pflag.org

