

# KEY TERMS FOR WORKING WITH LGBTQ+ SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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\*Note: Both the terms "victim" and "survivor" are used in this document, as each individual who experiences sexual violence may identify differently throughout the recovery process.

# INTRODUCTION

This guide was created by Rutgers University's Center on Violence Against Women and Children as part of the Enhancing Victim Services Project. The project aims to enhance direct services for victims/survivors of violence and strives to expand upon university-wide responses to violence on campus. One population of focus is the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) victim/survivor community, whose experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence (SV) may differ from those of cisgender and heterosexual victims/survivors. This guide covers the rates at which LGBTQ+ individuals experience IPV and SV and the unique ways they experience violence, the barriers LGBTQ+ victims/survivors may face accessing services, and best practices for serving LGBTQ+ victims/survivors on college campuses.



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## **KEY TERMS TO KNOW**

Below is a list of key terms which pertain to the LGBTQ+ community and other students on campus. Note: This list is not exhaustive of all sexual and gender identities. It is important to both ask and respect how each client identifies.

### **Biological Sex**

Biologically determined characteristic influenced by chromosomes, hormones, and physical anatomy (i.e., reproductive organs and secondary sex characteristics) (APA, 2015).

### **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual, emotional, or romantic attractions to others based on biological sex and/or gender identity (PFLAG, 2021).

### **Lesbian**

Describes women who are exclusively sexually, emotionally, and romantically attracted to other women (PFLAG, 2021).

### **Gay**

Sexual, emotional, or romantic attraction exclusively to those of the same gender as oneself (PFLAG, 2021).

### **Bisexual/Bi**

Refers to sexual, emotional, and romantic attraction to men and women; or sexual attraction of people who are the same sex and different sexes from oneself (PFLAG, 2021).

### **Pansexual/Pan**

Refers to sexual, emotional, and romantic attraction that is independent of another's gender identity or expression (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Queer**

Sometimes used as an umbrella term for minoritized (i.e., non-straight) sexual identities. Note: Some LGBTQ+ people still consider this term offensive, as it has historically been used as a slur against this community. Only use this term for individuals who identify themselves as queer (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Asexual/Ace spectrum**

Refers to experiencing limited or no sexual or romantic attraction to others; this occurs on a spectrum and being asexual does not necessarily mean never having romantic or sexual relationships (PFLAG, 2021)

## **Demisexual**

An identity used to describe an individual who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction only after an emotional bond is formed with a particular person(s). Often described as part of the asexual spectrum (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Straight/heterosexual**

Refers to sexual, emotional, and romantic attraction to those one identifies as a different gender from one's own (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Gender identity**

One's internal sense of their gender, which encompasses social roles, physical attributes, and behaviors. Gender identity and biological sex are not synonymous (PFLAG, 2021)

## **Cisgender/Cis**

Refers to someone whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Transgender/Trans**

Refers to someone whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not match (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Nonbinary**

Refers to someone whose gender identity is not distinctly male or female (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Genderfluid**

Refers to someone who does not experience their gender identity as fixed over time (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Two-Spirit**

Term used by some North American Indigenous communities, including American Indians and Alaska Natives, to describe those who identify with a third gender and fulfill unique social and/or ceremonial roles because of this (PFLAG, 2021).

## **Non-Monogamy**

An umbrella term for all sexual and romantic practices outside of being sexually and/or romantically active with one partner at any given time. Some forms/types of non-monogamy include, but are not limited to polyamory, open relationships, relationship anarchy, and swinging.

Note: This term does not apply exclusively to those who identify as LGBTQ+ (Balzarini et al., 2017).

## **Polyamory**

A form of non-monogamy in which all partners in a given relationship are aware of and accept that their partners may desire or have additional sexual and/or romantic relationships at the same time. Types of polyamorous relationships include but are not limited to triads (three people who are all dating each other), hierarchical poly (with consented upon primary, secondary and/or tertiary partners) and polyfidelity (where no partners other than those initially in the poly relationship when established are allowed), etc.

Note: This term does not apply exclusively to those who identify as LGBTQ+ (PFLAG, 2021).

# References

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## Thank you!

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