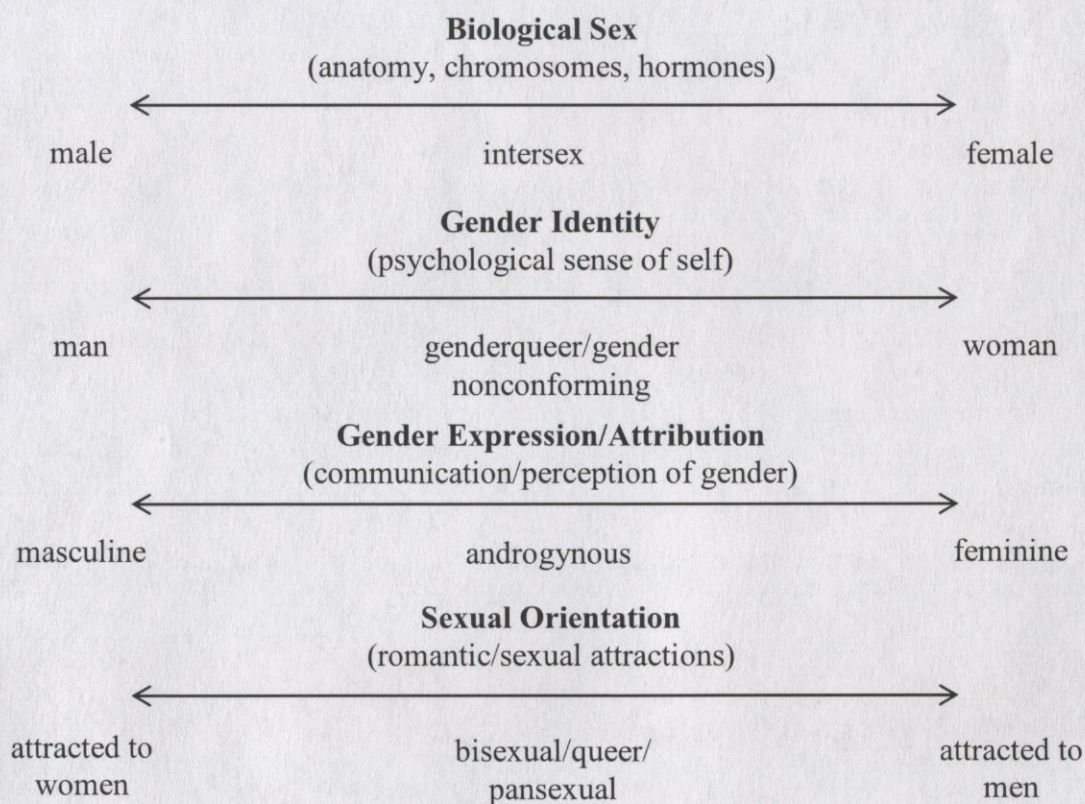


Section 1: Understanding Sex, Sexuality and Gender

**Adapted from the Indiana Transgender Rights Advocacy Alliance (INTRAA)*

When considering any individual in terms of sex, sexuality and gender, every person can be placed somewhere on each of the following continuums: Biological Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression/Attribution, and Sexual Orientation. Using this set of continuums to define a person still may not show the entire picture, but it is probably closer to reality than the picture we get from the old, binary “male or female” system. This multi-continuum model can be a helpful tool in explaining the nuances of gender identity and gender expression to those who have not experienced the challenge of living as a transgender or gender nonconforming person in our society.



The **Biological Sex** continuum, shown on the top scale, includes external genitalia, internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, voice, and body shape. These characteristics are objective in that they can be seen and measured (with appropriate technology).

The scale consists not just of two categories (male and female) but of points along the continuum, with most people existing somewhere near one end or the other. The space in the middle is occupied by intersex people (formerly, hermaphrodites), who may have combinations of characteristics typical of males and typical of females (such as both testis and an ovary or XY

chromosomes – the usual male pattern – and a female appearing body) or they may have features that are not completely male or completely female (such as an organ that could be thought of as a small penis or a large clitoris or an XXY chromosomal pattern).

Gender Identity is how people think of themselves and identify in terms of being male or female, or being more masculine or more feminine. Gender identity is a psychological quality. Unlike biological sex characteristics, it can't be observed or measured, only reported by the individual. However, there is current medical research to support that gender identity may reside in certain structures in the brain which develop based on instructions from certain genes during the embryonic development.

Like biological sex, gender identity is a continuum between male and female with space in the middle for those who identify as gender nonconforming. We might expect that if the observable, physical body can be a mix of sex-related characteristics, then the brain and therefore a person's identification might also reflect such a mix. However, we lack language for this intermediate position because our culture assumes that there is no continuum, only male and female gender identities (and that there will be a 100% match between biological sex and gender identity). In fact, many people feel that they have both masculine and feminine qualities.

Gender Expression and **Gender Attribution** are related concepts. Gender expression is everything we do that communicates our gender identity to others: clothing, hair styles, mannerisms, way of speaking, activities, etc. Gender attribution is the sex or gender identity that others perceive us to have based on our gender expression.

Gender expression and attribution is a continuum, with feminine at one end and masculine at the other. In between are gender expressions that are androgynous and gender bending expressions (neither masculine nor feminine, or both masculine and feminine). How we express ourselves and how others perceive us may not be exactly the same. Therefore, how we are perceived and treated by other people may vary from how we want or expect to be perceived or treated.

Sexual Orientation indicates who we are attracted romantically and/or sexually. The ends of this scale are labeled "attracted to women" and "attracted to men," rather than "homosexual" and "heterosexual," to avoid confusion as we discuss the concepts of sex and gender. In the midrange is bisexuality (attracted to men and women). There are also people who are asexual (not sexually attracted to anyone) or queer/pansexual (attracted to men, women, and/or people with other identifications).

These four continuums operate independently. Our cultural expectation is that men occupy the extreme left ends of all four scales (male, man, masculine, attracted to women) and women to occupy the extreme right ends (female, woman, feminine, attracted to men). However, the real world does not observe these boundaries. A person with male anatomy could be attracted to men (gay man), or could have a gender identity of female (transgender woman), or could have a feminine gender expression on occasion (crossdresser). It's a mix-and-match world, and there are as many combinations as there are people who think about their gender.

The truth is most of us do not live in the black and white areas, but rather in the shades of gray that fall in the middle.

Section 2: Language Matters.

Some basic LGBTQ terminology:

LGBTQ is an acronym for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning community.

Lesbian is used to identify women whose primary romantic, emotional and/or sexual attractions are to other women.

Gay is used to identify men, and sometimes women, whose primary romantic, emotional and/or sexual attractions are to other men, or other women.

Bisexual is used to identify individuals who are romantically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to both men and women.

Transgender (Trans) is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth, including but not limited to transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynous people, genderqueers, and gender non-conforming people.

A **transgender woman** is a transgender individual who currently identifies as a woman.

A **transgender man** is a transgender individual who currently identifies as a man.

Queer is an umbrella term used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Some use queer as an alternative to "gay" in an effort to be more inclusive.

Questioning is used to identify an individual who is unsure of their sexual orientation.

Ally is used for an individual who does not identify as LGBTQ but actively supports members of the LGBTQ community and opposes heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia.

Straight is used for individuals whose primary romantic, emotional and/or sexual attractions are to people of the opposite sex.

Asexual is used for people who are not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation. These people may still have romantic attractions and feelings.

Genderqueer is used by some individuals who identify as neither entirely male/masculine nor entirely female/feminine or as outside the gender spectrum all together.

Gender Nonconforming is used for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.

Transition is the process through which a person begins to live as the gender with which they identify. Transitioning may include dressing as the correct gender, changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, or changing legal documents (e.g. driver's license, Social Security record, birth certificate) to reflect their gender identity.

Intersex is used for people who are born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems that are not traditionally associated with society's expectations of either male or female. Intersex people may or may not identify as part of the transgender community. "Hermaphrodite" is considered a derogatory term.

Homophobia is the fear and/or hatred of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people.

Transphobia is the fear and/or hatred of transgender people.

Using inclusive language

Words to Avoid	Try These Instead
husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend	partner, spouse, significant other
homosexual	gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer
sexual preference	sexual orientation
"lifestyle" or "alternative lifestyle"	sexual orientation
transvestite, he-she, she-he	transgender
it	she or he (sometimes they)

More on "Queer"

In addition to being an umbrella term sometimes used to refer to the entire LGBTQ community, **queer** may also be used to describe an individual identity for those who feel somehow outside of societal norms in regards to gender, sexuality, and/or politics.

Historically, the word has been used as a slur against members of the LGBTQ community. Depending on the user, the term has either a derogatory or an affirming connotation, as many have sought to reclaim the term that was once widely used in a negative way. It is important to understand the historical implications of the word.

Always ask how an individual feels about the use of the word to describe them. Here, it is best to follow the **golden rule of being an ally**:

Call people what they want to be called, and do it respectfully.

Section 3: Privileges of Being Straight

The following are examples of aspects of interpersonal relationships which people in heterosexual relationships often take for granted. Imagine the trauma endured by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals who are not afforded the same rights.

- The right to kiss or show affection in public
- The right to talk about your relationship
- The right not to have your normalcy questioned
- The right to live comfortably in a residence hall without enduring the fear of rejection from roommates and floormates
- The right to marry
- The right to dress without worrying about what it represents
- The right to a reference base shared by faculty, staff and friends, so you never have to feel excluded
- The right to open support from family and friends

Exercise: Please try to answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Isn't it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know that you wouldn't prefer that?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me so long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?

8. If you should choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?

9. Why do you insist on being so obvious, and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be who you are and keep it quiet?

10. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?

11. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered trying aversion therapy?

Section 4: “I’m Coming Out!”

Allies are a crucial part of the LGBTQ community. Most LGBTQ individuals have heterosexual/cisgender individuals who care about them and are trusted with personal information, particularly around the coming-out process.

“**Coming Out**” has multiple meanings. Usually, it describes the event of someone who identifies as LGBTQ revealing to a person or group of people how they identify. Coming out is often referred to as a singular event with phrases such as, “when did you come out?” or “when did you come out to _____?” or “are you out?” It is important to remember that coming out is a process, not a one-time event.

Just because someone is out to you does not mean they are out to other people. Never discuss a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity with any one else before talking to the person about who they are and are not out to. Respect where they are in their process. **Forced “outing” of someone is never appropriate, whether intentional or accidental.**

Coming out exercise

Take a few minutes to write a letter to a loved one (parent, sibling, best friend, partner, etc.) explaining that you have recently come to terms with your identity as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer individual. Think about what you would say, and how you would say it. Also, think about how your loved ones would respond to this disclosure.

Section 5: How to Be an Effective Ally

Remember

If an individual comes to you with an issue,

1. You are not a counselor or therapist, you are simply a friendly ear.
2. Listen respectfully and intently, show them that you care by hearing and listening to what they are saying.
3. Respect their privacy, but be honest that you cannot keep confidentiality on certain subjects.
4. ASK. If you are not sure of what they mean, or are talking about things you don't understand.
5. Know your resources, utilize them when appropriate and refer when you can.

Check your privilege: Don't make these assumptions

1. He will fall in love with a she.
2. She will fall in love with a he.
3. All parents will be horrified if their kid is LGBTQ.
4. One sexual interaction with a member of one's sex will "turn someone."
5. LGBTQ behavior and identities are a "phase" that a person outgrows.
6. An LGBTQ identity can be "interrupted" or "undone" by appropriate intervention by someone in authority (parent, counselor, teacher, etc.).
7. Female athletes are gay.
8. Male athletes aren't gay.
9. Straight relationships last, gay relationships don't.
10. Gay people grow old alone, straight people won't.
11. Gay relationships don't/won't/can't last.
12. Straight relationships do/will/can last.
13. Not having older LGBTQ role models around is healthy for LGBTQ college students.
14. An LGBTQ staff member/RA/professor is more biased toward LGBTQ identities than a straight staff member/RA/professor is biased against them.

15. There aren't any LGBTQ staff, students, or faculty at LSU.

16. People can work/study at their best and be productive, healthy, and happy if they feel they must deny or hide their identity in order to stay in housing or keep their jobs.

What can you do to help?

Push for curricular and policy inclusion, advocate for the needs of LGBTQ students, and support them in their time at LSU.

- Know your campus (conduct a campus climate survey-formal or informal).
- Approach administrators about policy changes to make the university more LGBTQ friendly (ie: transgender student housing and health policies; anti-harassment policies; nondiscrimination policies; gender neutral bathrooms; domestic partner benefits for faculty and staff; LGBTQ admissions initiatives).
- Advocate for a staff person dedicated to LGBTQ issues (this position may be located in multicultural affairs).
- Advocate for an LGBTQ Center.
- Collaborate with ally faculty about LGBTQ inclusion in the curriculum.
- Help students to navigate "sticky" situations with other faculty, staff or administrators.
- Listen to LGBTQ students, and take their concerns seriously.

Section 6: Resources for LGBTQ Students and Allies

LSU

- The LGBTQ Project – <http://www.lsu.edu/diversity/safespace/>
 - Karie Holton, lgbtqproject@lsu.edu, (225) 578-4339
- First Contact Peer Mentoring for LGBTQ Students – www.lsu.edu/firstcontact
 - firstcontact@lsu.edu
- LSU Mental Health Services – www.shc.lsu.edu/mental_health.html
 - Business Hours – (225) 578-8774
 - Emergencies (24/7) – (225) 924-5781

Baton Rouge

- Capital City Alliance – www.ccabatonrouge.org
 - info@ccabatonrouge.org, (225) 366-7487
- Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) of Baton Rouge - <http://www.pflagbr.org/>
 - pflagbr@gmail.com
- HIV/AIDS Alliance for Region Two (HAART) – www.haartinc.org
 - (225) 927-1269
- Metropolitan Community Church – www.mccbr.org
 - mccbr@aol.com, 225-248-0404
- Unitarian Universalist Church – www.unitarianchurchbr.org
 - (225) 926.2291

Louisiana

- Equality Louisiana – www.equalityla.org
 - Bruce Parker, bparker@equalityla.org, (225) 588-7673
- Louisiana Trans Advocates – www.latransadvocates.org
 - info@latransadvocates.org, (225) 366-7582

National

- National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce – www.thetaskforce.org
- National Center for Transgender Equality – www.transequality.org
- Human Rights Campaign – www.hrc.org
- Lambda Legal – www.lambdalegal.org
- The Trevor Project – 1-866-488-7386 or www.thetrevorproject.org