

LGBTQIA+ Terminology: A Very Brief Summary

I. Introductions

This summary can be used as a resource for classrooms, meetings, and other environments interested in a concise introduction to inclusive, respectful LGBTQIA+ language.

II. Pronouns

Overview. Pronouns include but are not limited to she/her, they/them, he/him. A person's pronouns may not match what they 'look like' to you. Therefore, try your best not assume others' pronouns. **Never** single out one person because you feel particularly uncertain about their pronouns.

If I don't know someone's pronouns, what should I do?

Call them by their name!

If I want to learn someone's pronouns, what should I do?

- 1) Lead by example and introduce yourself with your pronouns.
- 2) At the beginning of each class/meeting, ask people to state their pronouns. How to do this:
 - a) **Have everyone introduce themselves** with their pronouns:
Example: "My name is Fatima and my pronouns are she/her")
 - b) **If on zoom/virtual**, having everyone place their pronouns next to their names:
Example: Jessica Wang (They/Them)
 - c) **If in an environment too large for everyone to introduce themselves**, ask anyone who speaks (e.g. the person who is primarily leading the meeting or whoever asks a questions) to introduce their pronouns along with their name
Example: "I'm presenting on health today. My name is Ramesh and my pronouns are he/him."

III. LGBTQIA+ Descriptors

Overview. There are many ways to refer (and not to refer) to the LGBTQIA+ community. Here are explanations for a few common descriptors you may encounter.

*****LGBTQ+, LGBTQI+, LGBTQIA+.** By using a plus sign, all of these options are generally considered an inclusive way to refer to the entire LGBTQIA+ community. These acronyms and the plus sign represent "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Allies, and more."

Queer. While queer was historically a slur, this term has been reclaimed by the LGBTQIA+ community and, within the community, is now often considered an acceptable descriptor. That said, to remain both respectful of past connotations and inclusive when in formal environments, using the previous options (with the plus signs) is preferable.

LGBTQ. By using 'Q' (which stands for 'queer'), LGBTQ is often considered a general, encompassing term for individuals in the community. However, the previous options (with the plus signs) are even more inclusive, as some people may not feel Queer can be used as a general term to capture identity.

Gay. In formal environments, please avoid referring to the entire LGBTQIA+ community as gay. Although some people in the LGBTQIA+ community may identify as gay or use the term broadly, this descriptor is not applicable to everyone.

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Logistical & Contact Information

This document was initially written in 2021 by DAC Curriculum/Education Committee Co-Chair Emily J. Siff, with comprehensive insights from members of the Executive Committee and Curriculum/Education Committee of Yale School of Medicine's Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) for LGBTQIA+ Affairs. ***For questions, please contact*** emily.siff@yale.edu