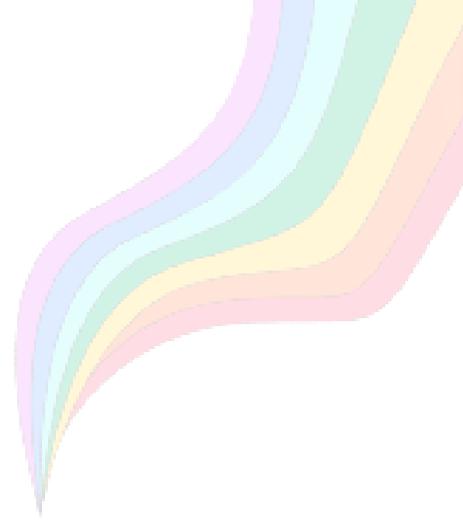


# LGBTQ+ Allyship Resource



Hello,

This allyship resource was created to act as a guide for anyone hoping to understand and support the LGBTQ+ community. There are a great many ways to be a good ally but it has to start with knowledge and understanding. From there, you can build on what you have learned and let this new knowledge influence your actions.

Information can be powerful and it is very important to understand the LGBTQ+ community but reading this document alone will not make you an ally, it is something that must show through your actions and your words. Once you learn the information, it is your job to share it with others and outwardly show your support for the Queer Community. We do not decide when we have done enough to be a good ally, that is up to the community, but that does not mean you don't put in the work anyway.

In this document, you will find breakdowns of vocabulary terms, teachings on microaggressions and gender identity, a helpful booklist, and much more. I hope this information can answer some questions you have and help you better understand the LGBTQ+ community. This resource may not have everything but what it can do is help you feel more knowledgeable about the LGBTQ+ community and inspire you to continue to learn and grow as an ally.

Natalia Maikranz



## Vocabulary and Terminology



### Defining the Letters in the Acronym

The LGBTQ+ acronym represents different types of sexualities and genders. Sometimes it includes the letters IA at the end and sometimes it is written as just LGBTQ+. Each letter has its own meaning; some letters stand for more than one thing. Not all types of sexuality or gender identities are included in the acronym which is why the + sign is important.

**Lesbian** *noun & adj.*: A woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.

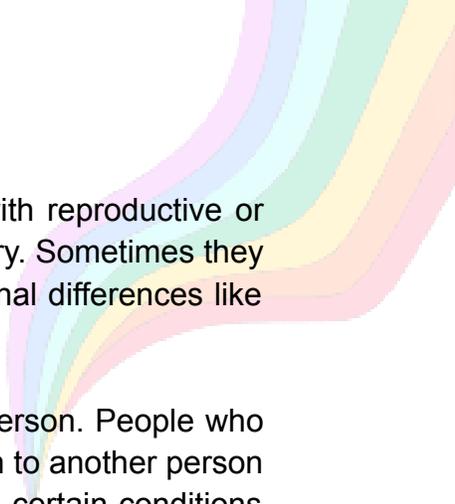
**Gay** *adj.*: experiencing attraction mainly for or only for someone of the same gender. Often used for men who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to men. It is also an umbrella term for the queer community, or as a label for anyone who does not identify as straight.

**Bisexual** *noun & adj.*: Someone who is attracted sexually and/or romantically to people of their own and different genders. Bisexuality does not mean someone is evenly split between the genders they like, and it can be different for each person. Some people can use both bisexuality and pansexuality to explain their sexual orientation.

**Transgender** *adj.*: Describes a gender for a person who has transitioned (or transitioning) from identifying as one gender to another. Sometimes used as an umbrella term for anyone who does not identify with the gender they were given at birth (ex. A person who was assigned female at birth but does not identify as female).

**Queer** *adj.*: An umbrella term used to describe someone who does not identify as straight or cisgender. This term has historically been used as a slur or derogatory term and some people in the LGBTQ+ community do not feel comfortable using this term, but many members of the community have reclaimed this term and use it to describe their gender or sexual orientation.

**Questioning** *verb & adj.*: Can be used to describe a person or a time when someone is unsure about their sexual or gender identity and is exploring these different identities.



**Intersex** *adj.*: A term used to describe a person who was born with reproductive or sexual organs that cannot be put into just the female or male category. Sometimes they are born with both ovarian and testicular tissues, or they have external differences like an enlarged clitoris.

**Asexual** *adj.*: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to another person. People who identify as asexual may identify on a scale from zero sexual attraction to another person to some sexual attraction or may just experience sexual attraction in certain conditions (ex. Demisexual: someone who only feels an attraction to another person when they have a close emotional bond with that person).

### **Words for Sexual Orientation, Attraction, or Relationship Types**

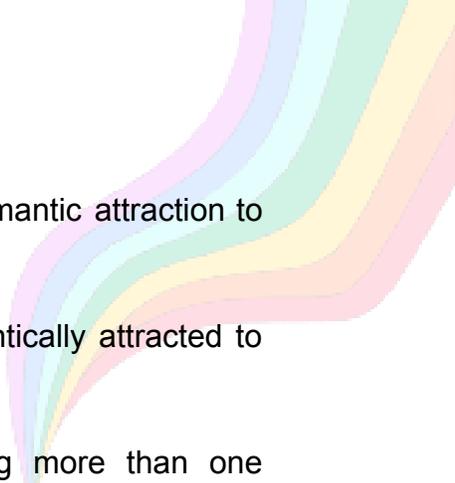
These are some more words and definitions to describe types of sexual orientation or attraction, some of them might be new to you while others you may have heard before. There may be more, but this is a good place to get started.

**Aromantic** *adj.*: Describes someone who has little or no romantic attraction to other people. People who identify as aromantic may experience different levels of romantic attraction and it is not the same for all people. Some people may have zero romantic interest while others may experience some romantic attraction or only in certain forms. Someone who is aromantic may be asexual, but some people may still feel sexual attraction to someone but do not feel or desire a romantic bond.

**Bicurious** *adj.*: Describes someone curious about having either romantic or sexual experiences with people of the same gender. This can be like questioning.

**Demiromantic** *adj.*: Describes someone who has little or no interest in experiencing a romantic connection with someone until a strong sexual connection is formed. Someone who is demiromantic may need to see how their sexual chemistry is with a person before they can feel a romantic bond with someone.

**Demisexual** *adj.*: Describes someone who has little or no interest in experiencing a sexual relationship with someone before a romantic bond has been formed. Someone who is demisexual may need to feel a close emotional connection before they can be sexually attracted to another person.

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**Heterosexual/straight** *adj.*: Someone who expresses sexual or romantic attraction to someone of the opposite gender.

**Pansexual** *adj.*: Describes a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to someone no matter their gender.

**Polyamory(polyamorous)** *adj.*: Describes the practice of having more than one intimate partner in a relationship, these relationships can be just sexual or just romantic but can also be based in both. It is important in polyamory that all people involved consent to this type of relationship and feel comfortable with the rules or boundaries that might be set.

**Skoliosexual** *adj.*: Describes someone who is mostly attracted to either, physically, sexually, or emotionally to someone who is genderqueer, transgender, or non-binary.

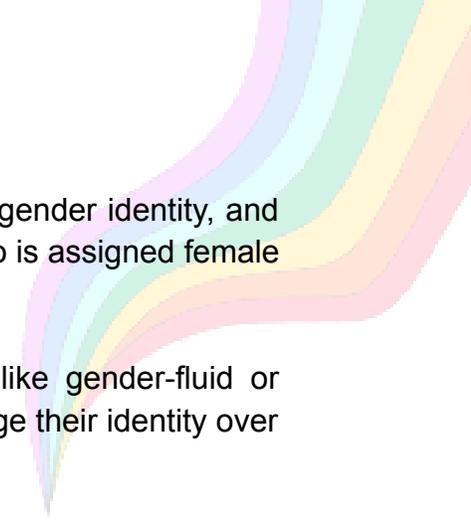
## **Words that Describe Gender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression**

Gender and sexual orientation or sexual attraction are different things. People often identify with something in both categories. The list below helps to define ways someone might identify within the category of gender identity or gender expression. This is different than the people they are sexually or romantically attracted to. There may be more words and definitions than are on this list, but the ones listed below are some of the basics.

**Agender** *adj.*: Describes someone who has very little or no connection to a “traditional” gender. Someone who is agender does not see themselves as a woman or a man. They may identify with parts of both or neither. Sometimes people who identify as agender also use terms like gender-neutral or genderless.

**Bigender** *adj.*: Describes someone who may identify with gender-based behaviors or identities of women, men, or another gender. Someone who is bigender may identify with both womanly and manly gender experiences and may sometimes move between the two.

**Biological sex** *noun*: This is a medical term that refers to anatomical, hormonal, or chromosomal characteristics that put people into three categories: male, female, and intersex. Other words that use this definition are anatomical sex, physical sex, sex assigned at birth, or just sex.

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**Cisgender** *adj.*: This is a gender description for when a person's gender identity, and their sex assigned at birth are the same. For example, a person who is assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman.

**Fluid(ity)** *adj.*: This is a term that is often attached to words like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality. These terms describe how people may shift or change their identity over time and may identify with many different options.

**FtM/F2M and MtF/M2F** *abbr.*: Female-to-male transgender person; male-to-female transgender person.

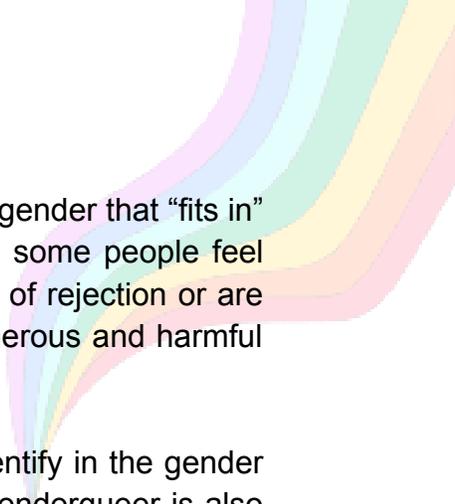
**Gender binary** *noun*: The concept that there are only two genders (women and men) and everyone has to be one or the other. This word can be used to describe how hard it is to be transgender in society because many spaces only support the gender binary. The concept is something that is real but is man-made and can change.

**Gender Confirmation Surgery** *noun.*: This is a medical term used to describe the different types of surgeries a person can have done to affirm their gender expression and identity. This is often a very personal matter and some people do not like to talk about whether they have had surgery and it is not okay to ask. Sometimes people use terms like “top surgery” or “bottom surgery” to describe a type of gender-confirming surgery they are having done without being too explicit. Some people may never get gender confirmation surgery nor must they to identify with a certain gender or genders.

**Gender expression** *noun*: How someone chooses to show their gender whether that is through clothing, hairstyles, demeanor, personality traits, or social behaviors. Gender expression often has to do with how other people see you and how you want people to see you. Words like feminine and masculine are often used to describe someone's gender expression.

**Gender Identity** *noun*: How someone sees themselves on the inside, and how they choose to describe how they feel about their gender. Gender identity is introspective, meaning it may not always be expressed on the outside and is instead how someone thinks a certain way about their gender and how they see themselves on the inside.

**Gender non-conforming** *adj.*: Describes a gender expression that does not follow a “traditional” gender expression (feminine women or masculine men). This often describes someone who identifies outside of these boundaries and may identify with parts of different genders or no gender in particular.



**Gender normative/ gender straight** *adj.*: Someone who presents a gender that “fits in” with what other people would expect. This is not always by choice; some people feel they must present a certain way in society because they are afraid of rejection or are afraid for their safety. Relying on the gender normative can be dangerous and harmful to people who do not “fit” what society says is normal and good.

**Genderqueer** *adj.*: A gender identity for someone who does not identify in the gender binary woman/man. This is like the term gender non-conforming. Genderqueer is also used as an umbrella term to describe other gender non-conforming identities like non-binary or genderfluid.

**Third Gender** *noun*: This term is used by people who do not identify with either the man or woman gender identity. This is a category used by some societies that recognize a third gender, some of these societies are historical but many still exist today around the world.

**Top Surgery** *noun*: This is a type of surgery someone has done to construct a more male-type chest or female-type chest. This may mean someone gets their breast tissue removed to present more masculine and male, or someone might get breast implants to have a more feminine or female-looking chest.

**Transgender** *adj.*: A word used to describe a person who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from one gender to another. This is often used as an umbrella term to describe a person whose sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity, for example, someone who is assigned female at birth but does not see themselves or wants to live their life as a woman.

**Transition/Transitioning** *noun, verb*: This term describes the process someone might take to change parts of themselves to better fit their gender identity and no longer live as the gender they were assigned at birth. This can include changing their name, physical features, pronouns, or clothing to better represent their gender identity and help them express their gender outwardly.

**Two-Spirit** *noun*: This term is often used by Indigenous communities to describe a cultural and historical third gender. People in these communities who identify as two-spirit often relates to parts of both male and female gender roles and characteristics.

## Dos and Don'ts of LGBTQ+ Language and Terms

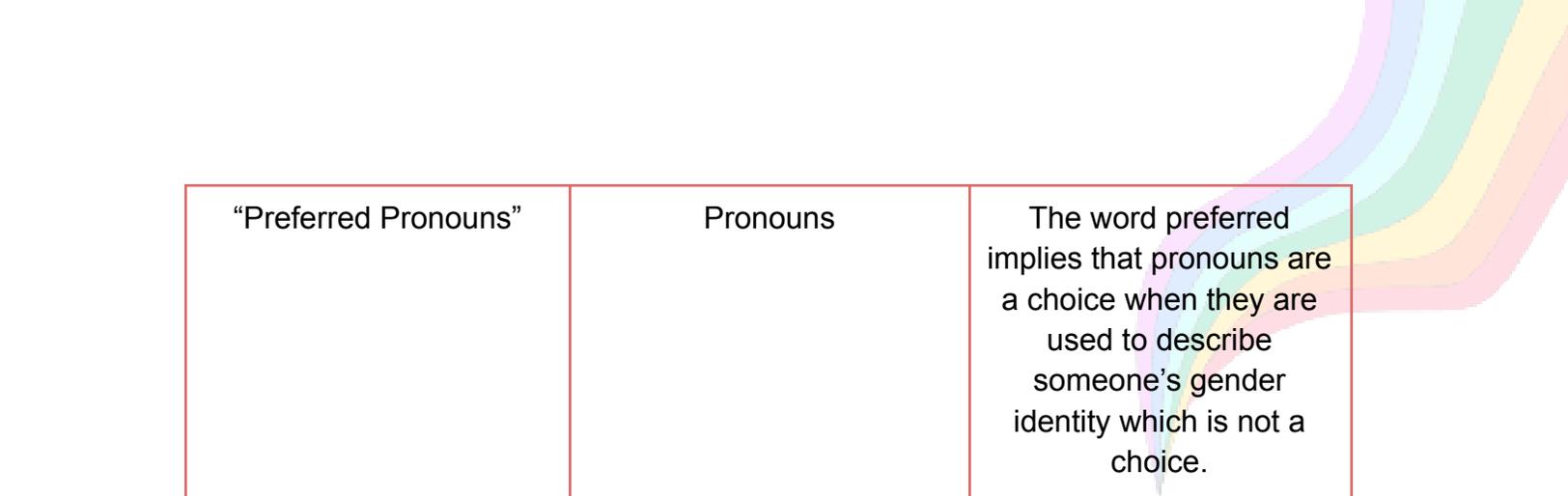
There are a lot of terms and words that describe the LGBTQ+ community. Some words are affirming and help people in the community feel represented and seen, while other words are derogatory and can be hurtful. There are also lots of words or phrases that were once used but are no longer appropriate. Some words on the list below have alternatives while other phrases should just be avoided. It can sometimes be difficult to stay up to date with the most accurate words, but the list below should help with becoming more aware of what words to stop using and which words to start using.

<b>Don't say this...</b>	<b>Say this instead...</b>	<b>Why this change is important?</b>
"a gay" or "a transgender"	A gay man or a transgender woman	Words like gay and transgender are adjectives that describe just one part of who someone is. Using it like a noun implies that someone can only be one thing when they can use many different things to describe themselves.
"Both genders" and "Opposite sexes"	All genders	Using "both genders" implies that there are only two when this is not the case. By ignoring other gender identities, people can feel unseen.

<p>“Born female” and “Born Male”</p>	<p>Assigned female/male at birth</p>	<p>Using the term assigned is a better way to describe what happens, people are not “born” a gender they are given one at birth based on what biological sex organs are present.</p>
<p>“Female-bodied” or “Male-bodied”</p>	<p>“Assigned female/male at birth”</p>	<p>Using “bodied” can make someone feel pressured to medically transition. It can also invalidate someone’s gender identity as “bodied” is implying it has to do with just body parts.</p>
<p>“Hermaphrodite”</p>	<p>“Intersex”</p>	<p>Hermaphrodite is an outdated and offensive word with a negative history.</p>
<p>“Homosexual”</p>	<p>“Gay”</p>	<p>“Homosexual” was a term often used as a psychological disorder diagnosis and because of this has an offensive history.</p>
<p>“It” when referring to someone whose pronouns you don’t know</p>	<p>Use a person’s name until you can ask their pronouns</p>	<p>Using “it” to describe someone makes them feel less than human, “it” should be used to refer to things not people.</p>

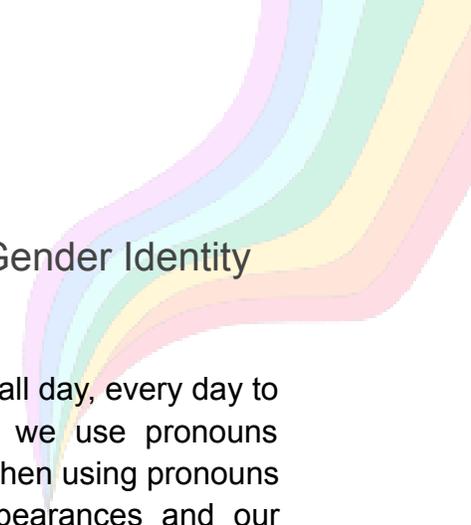
<p>“Sexual Preference”</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>Using “sexual preference” makes it sound like someone just “prefers” to be with a certain person, people are born with different sexualities, and this is not a choice.</p>
<p>“Gay Agenda”</p>	<p>Accurately describe the issue at hand, don’t assume.</p>	<p>Using “gay agenda” sounds like members of the LGBTQ+ community have a hidden cause when they are just fighting for causes that protect themselves and others.</p>
<p>“Sex change” “Sex operation”</p>	<p>Transition or transitioning</p>	<p>“Sex change” or “sex operation” makes it sound like someone who is transgender must have medical surgery to match their gender identity. Not all transgender people get surgery to change their body.</p>
<p>“Dyke”</p>	<p>Whatever sexual orientation they do identify as</p>	<p>“Dyke” is a slur used to describe a gay/queer woman. There is no appropriate replacement word.</p>
<p>“She-male” or “he-she”</p>	<p>A transgender person or transwoman or transman</p>	<p>“She-male” or “he-she” are derogatory phrases used to describe transgender women. These phrases deny the gender identity of trans women.</p>

<p>“Tranny”</p>	<p>Transgender woman/man/person or transwoman (man, person)</p>	<p>This word is a slur and has a negative history of use.</p>
<p>“Transvestite”</p>	<p>A transgender person</p>	<p>“Transvestite” is a derogatory word that has a negative history.</p>
<p>“Gay Lifestyle”</p>	<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Using “gay lifestyle” implies that the only way to look at someone’s life is through a sexual lens. This is a stigmatizing phrase.</p>
<p>“That’s so gay”</p>	<p>This phrase is often used to insult someone (something) or a way to say something is bad or “not cool”.</p>	<p>Using “that’s so gay” is a bad phrase as it implies being gay is something to be ashamed of and is a term used to bully people.</p>
<p>“A Queer” and “Queer”</p>	<p>Some people use Queer to define their sexuality, and this is okay, but it is based on each individual person. So only use this on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Queer is an adjective used to describe just one part of a person. It should not be used as a noun like “a queer”. Queer has been used as a derogatory term to describe LGBTQ+ people but some people identify as queer. It is important to know that not all community members are comfortable with this word.</p>
<p>“Admitted Homosexual”</p>	<p>“Openly gay” or “out”</p>	<p>The word admitted implies that it was once a deception in someone’s identity or that being gay is shameful.</p>



“Preferred Pronouns”	Pronouns	The word preferred implies that pronouns are a choice when they are used to describe someone’s gender identity which is not a choice.
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Using the correct language can take time. If you have ever used some of these inappropriate words and didn’t know they were bad, well now you know. If you have used some of these intentionally to hurt people, it is important to recognize the pain and hurt it may have caused someone. Using the appropriate language is an important part of being an Ally.

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## The Important Relationship Between Pronouns and Gender Identity

Pronouns are a crucial part of communication. We use them all day, every day to describe the people and things around us. For the most part, we use pronouns instinctually and barely think about them when we write or speak. When using pronouns to describe people, we often make assumptions based on appearances and our understanding of which people use which pronouns. This often causes problems because when we guess someone's pronouns, we are also making assumptions about their gender identity.

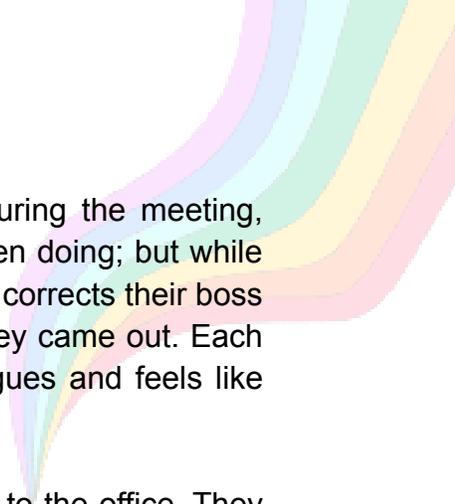
### **Pronouns and Gendered Language**

Historically, singular pronouns in English are binary, there is he/him and she/her to describe people, but gender is a construct and so is binary language. The good news is that language can change and is ever evolving, and the way to use pronouns can change too. Pronouns may seem like a small issue but the meaning behind using the correct pronouns for someone is more than just grammar, it is part of understanding who they are and how they see their gender. Being misgendered and having someone use the wrong pronouns is extremely hurtful and can cause a lot of emotional damage. Nobody likes it when someone else makes the wrong assumption about them and we like it even less if they keep making a mistake after we have corrected them. Using the wrong pronouns has the same effect.

### **A Misgendering Scenario**

Alex uses they/them pronouns and identifies as nonbinary. Throughout their life, they have dealt with many instances when they have been misgendered or heard someone use the wrong pronouns to describe them and the long-term impact takes its toll.

Alex likes to wake up early and take their dog on a walk before work. They enjoy being outside and taking some time to enjoy the peace and quiet before they go to work. It has been a stressful time since they came out as nonbinary and Alex has been having a hard time because of it. They finally feel comfortable in their identity, but it hurts a lot when their co-workers and even family still cannot use the right pronouns.

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When Alex gets to work there is a morning meeting and during the meeting, Alex's boss Sarah recognizes some of the great work they have been doing; but while Sarah is giving them a shout-out, she uses the wrong pronouns. Alex corrects their boss in the moment, but this is not the first time it has happened since they came out. Each time it happens Alex feels less and less respected by their colleagues and feels like nobody is taking them seriously.

During lunch, Alex has a dentist appointment and heads over to the office. They are a new patient here and spend some time filling out paperwork, but they leave the section about gender blank because the only options are male and female. When they hand it back to the receptionist, she says Alex forgot something and just fills in the spot for "female" since Alex's driver's license still says female with the name Alexandra. Alex wants to correct her but is just feeling drained after this morning with their boss and overhearing people talk about how annoying it is to use different pronouns when they talk about Alex. Feeling defeated they have a seat and wait for their appointment.

After work, Alex has a dinner plans with some friends and they are looking forward to relaxing and having some fun. After coming out as nonbinary, their friends have been supportive and have done everything they can to ensure they use the right pronouns when talking about Alex. They have seen how hard it has been when Alex has been misgendered and understand how painful this can be. Surrounded by their friends, Alex finally feels comfortable and relaxed knowing that these people are not questioning or assuming their gender identity and have accepted them as they are.

Even though Alex had a great time with their friends, from the moment they got home they couldn't stop thinking about what happened at work and at the dentist's office. They keep replaying the moments in their mind and it's difficult to just let it go because something like this happens almost every day. Alex does not regret coming out as nonbinary and would never want to change anything about themselves but, these moments of misgendering have made it so difficult for Alex to feel free to live the life they want to live.

While this short story only shows one day of Alex's life, the moments when someone uses the wrong pronouns or misgendered them happens almost every day and each of these encounters build upon each other and weigh Alex down. For the most part, the mistakes made were not malicious, but their impact was still there and could have easily been avoided with a little bit of effort from their boss, coworkers, and receptionist.

## What Could have been done differently?

The people Alex came into contact with that day could have easily fixed their mistakes, or better yet not make them at all. With a little bit of effort Alex's day could have gone a lot differently.

For starters, when Alex came out as nonbinary at work Sarah their boss should have not only worked with Alex to address their needs but acted as a model for everyone else in the office. If Sarah made it clear she would use Alex's correct pronouns everytime, then it would show everyone else they must do the same.

Alex's coworkers should have never talked about them behind their back. It is cruel and unjust. They talked about how they found it difficult to use the correct pronouns to talk about Alex without ever taking into consideration how important it is for Alex to feel welcome and safe at work. Their co-workers could take some time to privately practice Alex's new pronouns if they were struggling. Even narrate on their own an interaction they had with Alex using they/them pronouns.

At the dentist's office, the receptionist's mistake could have been avoided if the paperwork had a section dedicated to a patient's pronouns and gender identity. It is important to ask for both legal identification and personal identity for the instances when someone's gender identity and legal documentation do not match. There is no reason not to ask for both pieces of crucial information. The receptionist should have also asked Alex in the moment what pronouns and name they use or if Alex did not feel comfortable talking about their gender in front of the waiting room the receptionist could have asked staff in the back to verify the correct information in the exam room.

# A Guide to Gender-Neutral Pronouns

Everyone uses pronouns, they are not a new concept but for many people using pronouns correctly can be very difficult. For many of us, we were taught that there are two singular pronouns he/him and she/her, but there are many singular pronouns that exist that can help someone express their gender identity in a way that makes them feel seen. This section should help you understand what pronouns exist, how to use them, and why pronouns are such an important part of a person's identity.

## Gender Neutral Singular Pronouns

There are now many gender-neutral pronouns that exist in English and a person can decide which ones work for them. If you meet someone with pronouns you are unfamiliar with, it is best to take the time to practice using them on your own so that you can avoid mistakes when you are speaking with them or about them. The chart below shows the different gender-neutral pronouns that exist in English, some of these can be spelled differently but it is good to be familiar with gender neutral pronouns that are not "they/them".

### Singular Pronouns in English.

He	Him	His	His	Himself
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Zie	Zim	Zir	Zis	Zierself
Sie	Sie	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	Eirself
Ve	Ver	Vis	Vers	Verself
Tey	Ter	Tem	Ters	Terself
E	Em	Eir	Eirs	Emself

## Time for Some Examples

Alex was walking to the bus when they realized they forgot their phone at home.

Jamie likes to take zir dog on walks in the park, it has always been a favorite of zis.

Sky was mad at eirself for not studying harder for eir math test. Ey knew that pushing it off was a bad idea.

Taylor loves to play tennis with vis Dad. Ve has been playing tennis since ve were in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Jordan rode tem bike to the store because tey was out of milk.

## Best Practices for Using the Correct Pronouns and Gender Descriptions

### Recognize Everyone has Pronouns.

Pronouns are not just for transgender or non-binary people. Everyone has and uses pronouns every day.

### Ask Everyone for Pronouns

Don't just ask someone who is or looks transgender or nonbinary for their pronouns. It is best to ask everyone. Let's say you are in a meeting when everyone introduces themselves, ask that they include their pronouns.

### Never Assume Someone's Pronouns

If you cannot guess someone's name don't assume you can guess someone's pronouns. If you are unsure ask and offer up your own in exchange.

### Practice Makes Perfect

It can take time to become comfortable using new pronouns for someone. If you find you are struggling, take the time to practice on your own. Familiarize yourself with nonbinary pronouns and just forget what you know about grammar rules.

### Correct, Apologize and Move On

Making mistakes happen. If you misgender someone and use the wrong pronouns correct yourself and apologize. Keep it quick and don't make it a huge deal, it is not the other person's duty to make you feel better about your mistake.

### Avoid Gendered Language

Instead of using phrases like "ladies and gentleman" try using inclusive language that isn't gendered like "folks", "y'all" or "everyone". Instead of using gender to describe someone you see use other identifiers if you don't know their gender identity. Ex: Can you give this to the person with brown hair and a purple shirt? Instead of. Can you give this to the lady with brown hair and a purple shirt?

### Don't Use "they" for Everyone

Sometimes people become so comfortable with gender-neutral pronouns that they use them for everyone. This isn't a scapegoat for asking for someone's pronouns and not all non-binary or genderqueer people use "they/them" pronouns.

### Some People use more than one Pronoun

Some people may use a mix of pronouns to describe themselves like using both "she" and "they". Make sure to use both interchangeably and frequently. Just because someone is okay with the pronoun "she" doesn't mean they are okay with you ignoring their use of "they".

## LGBTQ+ History Timeline

This is a brief timeline of LGBTQ+ historical events. It does not include everything but this should help you recognize some important milestones and may inspire you to do some further research about an event that sparks your interest. For the sake of space, this timeline only covers the last few decades of history and focuses on the United States, but there are plenty of historical events and people that could have been included. Let this also be a reminder that the LGBTQ+ community is nothing new, while it may have looked different throughout history it has always been present.

**1924:** Henry Gerber founded **The Society for Human Rights** in Chicago; this was the first documented gay rights organization in the United States.

**1950:** Harry Hay created one of the first sustained gay rights groups in the United States, it was named **The Mattachine Society**.

**1952:** The American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual lists homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disorder.

**1955:** **Daughters of Bilitis (DOB)** was created as the first lesbian rights organization in San Francisco.

**1961:** Illinois becomes the first state to decriminalize homosexuality.

**1969:** **The Stonewall Riot** takes place in New York City when police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. Over 400 people, protested their treatment during the unprovoked police raid. The protest lasted for six days. This riot helped inspire the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement that followed.

**1970:** On the year anniversary of the Stonewall Riot, community members marched through New York in an event called **Christopher Street Liberation Day**. This was considered one of the first gay pride parades.

**1973:** The first meeting of Parents and Friends of Gays takes place before going national as **Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)** in 1982.

**1973:** The **American Psychiatric Association** removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

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**1974: Kathy Kozachenko** became the first openly LGBTQ+ elected official. She served on the Ann Arbor, Michigan City Council.

**1978: Harvey Milk** was inaugurated as the first openly gay San Francisco city supervisor. He and the mayor were later assassinated.

**1978: Gilbert Baker** designs and sews the first rainbow flag in honor of the LGBTQ+ community.

**1979:** The first **March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights** takes place with an estimated 100,000 people walking in the march.

**1981:** The **AIDS Epidemic** begins. The first case of an unknown disease is reported that would eventually be named Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

**1982:** Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.

**1987: President Ronald Regan** makes his first public speech about AIDS, 6 years after the first case is diagnosed. He signs an executive order creating the first Presidential Commission on AIDS.

**1993:** President Clinton signs the **Don't Ask, Don't Tell** military policy that prohibits service members from being open about their sexual orientation.

**1996:** President Clinton signs the **Defense of Marriage Act** which prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage. The act defines marriage as “a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife.”

**1997: Ellen DeGeneres** comes out as a lesbian as well as plays the first character to come out on a TV series on a prime-time network.

**1998: Matthew Shepard** was brutally attacked and tied to a fence because he was gay. He eventually died from his injuries and his death inspired the 2009 **Hate Crimes Prevention Act**. This law protects the LGBTQ+ community from hate crimes.

**2003:** The US Supreme Court overrules a Kansas law that criminalizes gay or lesbian sex stating the law was unconstitutional. This ruling helped to decriminalize same-sex sexual conduct.



**2004:** The first legal same-sex marriage takes place in Massachusetts.

**2011:** The **Don't Ask, Don't Tell** policy is removed which allows military service people to serve openly.

**2012: President Obama** becomes the first sitting US president to support the freedom of LGBTQ+ couples to get married. The **Democratic Party** also becomes the first major political party to openly support same-sex marriage.

**2013:** The Supreme Court strikes down section 3 of the **Defense of Marriage Act**. Their ruling ensured that same-sex married couples are entitled to federal benefits.

**2016: The Stonewall Inn** and its surrounding areas were recognized as the first LGBTQ+ national monument.

**2017:** Residents of Washington D.C. can choose a gender-neutral option for their driver's license. This added the **gender marker "X"** to be used on a legal document.

**2017: Danica Roem** becomes the first openly transgender woman to be elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

**2019: Billy Porter** becomes the first openly gay Black man to win an Emmy for best lead actor in a drama series.

**2020:** The Supreme court rules that federal law protects LGBTQ+ workers from discrimination.

**2021:** An executive order signed by President Trump in 2019 was repealed by President Biden which ended the ban on transgender people serving in the military.

**2021: Secretary Pete Buttigieg** becomes the first openly gay Cabinet member to be confirmed by the US Senate.

**2021: Dr. Rachel Levine**, was the first openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the US Senate. She serves as the assistant secretary for health at the Department of Health and Human Services.

## Current Laws and Legislation

Anti-LGBTQ state bills are on the rise. It is incredibly important to stay aware of what current legislation may be hurting the LGBTQ+ community. Being an Ally also means standing against these hurtful laws and voting for officials who do not support this legislation.

### Ohio Laws and Legislation

Ohio does not have statewide laws that protect the LGBTQ+ community from discrimination. While some counties or cities have created laws that do protect this community, there is still no umbrella protection coming from the state government. Without laws that protect the LGBTQ+ community, it is still possible to fire someone, deny housing, or refuse public services because they may identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. While many of these protections do not exist, some laws are trying to make it more difficult for the LGBTQ+ community.

#### House Bill 616: “Don’t Say Gay” Bill

This is a house bill that has been introduced but not yet signed into law that bans any instruction or materials on sexual orientation or gender identity from kindergarten through third grade in all public and most private schools. In grades four or higher these issues can be discussed but the curriculum or instructional materials must be “age-appropriate or “developmentally appropriate”. Any teachers or schools found violating these rules could lose funding or licensing. Supporters of these types of laws call them “Parental Rights in Education” while opponents refer to them as “Don’t Say Gay” bills.

#### Why laws like this are dangerous

Laws that prohibit schools and teachers from discussing gender identity and sexual orientation can hurt children who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. If they cannot talk about very normal feelings like sexual attraction and gender identity, then a child might feel very alone and afraid of who they are. If students and teachers are not allowed to have open conversations about the LGBTQ+ community then stigmas and fears surrounding it can grow. Teachers or administrators who are members of the LGBTQ+ community may not be able to share part of their identity with their students and may have to keep “closeted” at work in a way that heterosexual or cis-gender employees do not.



## House Bill 454: “The SAFE Act”

This House bill that was introduced in 2021 prohibits specific medical coverage for LGBTQ+ youth. This bill would prevent minors from receiving gender-affirming care and would prohibit doctors or other health providers from providing medical procedures, puberty blockers, and hormones to trans and non-binary youth. Any health care providers who offered this care could lose their licensing.

### **Why laws like this are dangerous?**

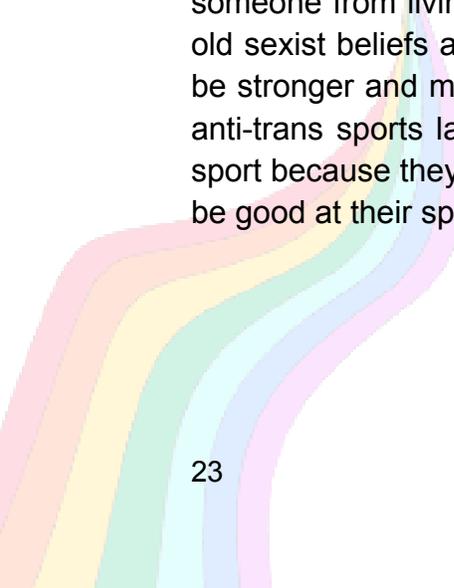
Legislation that prohibits trans and non-binary youth from receiving gender-affirming care has many dangerous consequences. Without this care, many trans and non-binary youth struggle with depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts or actions. Gender-affirming care helps youth finally feel comfortable in their own body and feel that their outward appearance matches who they are on the inside. Preventing trans and non-binary youth from getting this essential healthcare can cost a child their life. Procedures and medication given to patients who are receiving gender-affirming care are highly researched and side effects are discussed at length before anyone begins this treatment.

## Senate Bill 187:

This bill was created to allow collegiate athletes to earn compensation for their name, likeness, and image but an anti-trans amendment was added that is very harmful to the trans community. The new amendment prohibited transwomen from playing on a women’s sports team.

### **Why laws like this are dangerous**

Bans on transwomen playing on a women’s sports team are bad in two ways. The first is that this is preventing a transwoman from playing on a team with people of her gender. This can cause great psychological harm to a person and prevents someone from living openly about their own identity. Secondly, laws like this also uphold old sexist beliefs about athletes. Many people often see those assigned male at birth to be stronger and more athletic than those assigned female at birth. People who support anti-trans sports laws believe that transwomen have an unfair advantage in playing a sport because they were assigned male at birth. This is not true as athletes work hard to be good at their sport regardless of gender.



## What is a Microaggression?

Microaggressions are common daily slights that are either verbal, behavioral, or environmental that can be intentional or not and communicate a hostile or derogatory message to stigmatized or marginalized groups. These are often brushed off as a joke or just “stating the truth” when in reality they can be very harmful to those who are on the receiving end. Microaggressions are incredibly common and anyone in the queer community can confirm they have experienced the harm they cause. Being a supportive ally means not only recognizing these microaggressions but speaking out against them.

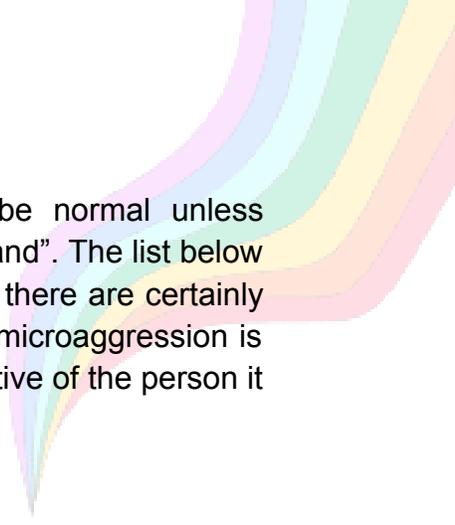
### **A Coffee Shop Scenario**

Let’s say you go to a coffee shop for an interview. This is the first time you are meeting this person and you are excited because they may have an open position at their job you are interested in. The coffee shop you meet at is surprisingly busy today and the only open table is one by the door. You take the seat by the door but whenever someone opens the door to come inside, they bump right into you because it’s so crowded and the table is too close to the door. You brush it off and try to keep focused on the interview, but it keeps happening, over and over again. Each time it happens you get more annoyed and distracted but there is nowhere else you can move as you don’t want to interrupt the interview. After the interview, you head home only to realize later that day that your arm is bruised from all the times the door and people knocked into you.

This is what microaggressions can do to a person. Maybe one or two can be ignored but when it keeps happening day in and day out it can have a big toll on someone’s life. So, making one sly comment and trying to explain it away as a joke may seem like an easy thing to do but it isn’t so easy for someone who has heard hurtful things like this before and knows they will hear them again.

### **Examples of Microaggressions**

You most likely hear microaggressions all the time but maybe interpret them as jokes, light-hearted questions, or even compliments. Some common ones are “you look just like a real man” or “Who is the wife? Or Who is the husband?”. These comments may seem harmless but the meaning behind them is more serious. If you say to a transgender man that “you look like a real man” it implies they are not a real man and that they are something different or less than a “real man”. When asking a same-sex couple “who is the wife in the relationship” it implies that someone must be the more

A decorative rainbow graphic in the top right corner, consisting of several curved, overlapping bands of color (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) that taper to a point.

“feminine” or “womanly” one and that this relationship cannot be normal unless someone is more like the “wife”, and someone is more like the “husband”. The list below should help you become more familiar with some common ones but there are certainly more out there. The most important thing to do when recognizing a microaggression is to read between the lines and look at that comment from the perspective of the person it is directed at.

### **Microaggressions about Gender Identity and Expression**

These are some examples of microaggressions about gender identity and expression. These are all phrases, but actions can also be microaggressions as well, like not having gender-inclusive bathrooms or only having male and female options for official documents.

“You are young, it’s probably just a phase.”

“Maybe you are just a tomboy.”

“How can you feel both like a man AND a woman?”

“Can’t you just pick one pronoun? Why do you need more than one?”

“What is your real name?”

“You don’t look any different why should I use different pronouns?”

“Why can’t you just love yourself the way you were born?”

“You would never have known they used to be a man.”

“What surgery have you had?”

“I know I keep using the wrong pronouns but it’s just too hard.”

All these phrases degrade the experience of someone who is not cisgender. It implies they don’t know what is right for them and makes it very clear someone does not support who they are. Some of them come from a place of ignorance and put the burden on the individual to educate others on their identity. While other phrases are defensive and are implying someone’s identity is a problem to others.

### **Microaggressions about Sexual Orientation and Attraction**

These are some examples of microaggressions that are targeting someone’s sexual orientation. These are examples of what someone can say but microaggressions can be actions as well like parental information forms only having a spot for the “mom” and the “dad” or physically distancing yourself from a queer couple in public.

“She said she was bisexual, but she married a man. I knew it was just a phase.”

“You can be gay just don’t hit on me.”

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy lines in a rainbow color palette (red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple) that curves from the top right towards the center of the page.

“You don’t look/sound gay.”  
“Why do you have to flaunt it?”  
“No homo, but...”  
“Why do you have sex with so many people, just pick one.”  
“I’ve always wanted to go to a gay bar.”  
“I’m not homophobic I know so many queer people, my best friend is gay.”  
“I’ve always wanted a gay best friend.”

Like the microaggressions about gender, many of these undermine a huge part of a person’s identity. Some of these phrases imply there is a right and a wrong way to be queer while others are offering “better” ways to live their life. Some of these phrases don’t sound mean at all but suggest a person is interested in queer culture or people for the “spectacle” of it.

### **Addressing Microaggressions**

When you can spot microaggressions it is much easier to address them. Below are some ways to call out microaggressions you see other people making but also how to respond if you say something that may have been hurtful or insensitive. We all make mistakes and as important as it is to correct other people it is important to know how to respond if you are the one who made the mistake.

Addressing Someone Else's Microaggression	Addressing Your Microaggression
<p><b>Appeal to their better nature</b>            Instead of calling that person bad, draw attention to their good side, you can say something like “I know you are better/smarter than to say something like that.”</p> <p><b>Respond with Information</b>            If someone makes an uninformed comment or promotes a stereotype, respond with a fact, or call attention to the lie. “I think that is just a perpetuated stereotype, I actually learned...”</p> <p><b>Ask why it's funny</b>            When someone makes a homophobic or transphobic joke ask them why the joke is funny or say you don't get it. When people must explain a joke, they may realize why it is offensive and not funny at all.</p> <p><b>Promote empathy</b>            If someone says something offensive remind them what it feels like to be offended or hurt. “I know you don't like it when people make comments or jokes about____, your comment can be just as upsetting to someone else.”</p> <p><b>Call out their intention and impact</b>            If someone double downs on a microaggression and says, “yea but that's not what I meant”. Remind them that their intention does not erase the harmful impact their statement makes.</p>	<p><b>Don't get defensive</b>            It is so easy to get defensive when someone calls us out. If you make a mistake and someone corrects you take a breath and think before you react. Getting defensive will just make it more difficult to move on.</p> <p><b>It is not about you</b>            If you commit a microaggression keep in mind that you are apologizing because you hurt someone else and not because you want to feel better about it. Let whoever you wronged decided what kind of apology or action they want from you.</p> <p><b>Correct yourself and move on</b>            Sometimes we catch our own mistakes, it's part of the learning process. Correct yourself in the moment, apologize and keep moving.</p> <p><b>Recognize your own biases</b>            If you get called out for a microaggression or correct yourself this is a good opportunity for some self-reflection. Ask yourself why you think that way and do your research, so you know better for next time.</p> <p><b>Don't just say one thing and do another</b>            Homophobic/transphobic microaggressions are harmful whether a member of the queer community is present or not. Don't just correct yourself in one space because someone is watching, and you could “get in trouble” for commenting. Be mindful wherever you are.</p>

## LGBTQ+ Book List

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Reading is a great way to learn about the LGBTQ+ community and a great way to support LGBTQ+ creatives. This list has a few of the many amazing books out there but use this as an opportunity to find a way to mix support for the community with something you love to do whether that is reading, shopping, or watching movies.

### Fiction

***On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*** By Ocean Vuong

Written as a letter from a Vietnamese son to his mother, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* tells the story of family trauma, economic upheaval, and a coming-of-age love story that is bound to break your heart.

***The Guncle*** By Steven Rowley

This funny and warm novel centers around a once-famous gay sitcom star who through a family accident becomes the primary caregiver for his niece and nephew over the summer.

***Juliet Takes a Breath*** By Gabby Rivera

After coming out to her Puerto-Rican family, Bronx native Juliet flies across the country to Portland, Oregon to intern for a feminist writer. While there Juliet tries to find answers about her identity but leaves with much more than just answers as she navigates love, queerness, and youth on her summer adventure.

***I Wish You All the Best*** By Mason Deaver

Ben De Backer is forced to move in with his estranged sister after their parents kick them out of the house for coming out as non-binary. As they try to get through their last semester of high school Ben forms a close friendship and eventual romance with charismatic Nathan.

***Nevada*** By: Imogen Binnie

When Maria finds out her girlfriend has been cheating on her she decides to ditch her life and drive cross-country. This story tackles past trauma, adventure, and the complex identity of a transwoman who is just trying to navigate her newly upended life.

## Non-Fiction and History

***The Stonewall Reader*** Edited by the New York Public Library

The Stonewall riots were a crucial turning point for LGBTQ+ rights, through this retelling of this historical event, the lost stories of the transgender women, and lesbians who fought during the riot are finally brought to life.

***How to Survive a Plague- The Story of how activists and scientists tamed AIDS*** By David France

This insider perspective of the AIDS epidemic highlights the role grassroots activists played in harnessing the power of science to fight through societal indifference and government ignorance to save lives.

***Transgender History*** By Susan Stryker

*Transgender History* travels forward in time telling the story of transgender America from trans communities after WWII to identity politics in the 90s. This book puts trans history in the context of many historical events and includes helpful sidebars, quotes, and brief biographies of key historical figures.

***We Are Everywhere*** By Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown

Curated by the famous Instagram account @lgbt\_history, *We Are Everywhere* is an extensive photographic history of the Queer Liberation Movement.

***Queer Love in Color*** By Jamal Jordan

Journalist Jamal Jordan traveled thousands of miles to document the stories of LGBTQ people of color. Through this book, she puts portraits with memories as she asks “How do you learn to love yourself and other people like you, when every cue in the world tells you it’s impossible?”

## Memoirs

***All Boys Aren't Blue*** George M. Johnson

This young adult collection of essays follows the life of Johnson through his teenage years as a queer Black child. Through his powerful prose, he tells stories about finding solace in his grandmother’s love and the heartbreak of bullying, racism, and sexual assault.



***Here For it*** By R. Eric Thomas

In this set of funny and witty essays, author R. Eric Thomas tells his story as a Black Gay Christian through a series of anecdotes that cover everything from internet fame to love.

***We Have Always Been Here: A Queer Muslim Memoir*** By Samra Habib

Habib retells the story of her family's immigration to Canada in her teen years from Pakistan. In a community that never wanted her to exist, she shares her experiences as a queer Muslim as she comes to understand herself, sexuality, and personal acceptance.

***Fairest*** By Meredith Talusan

Talusan was born with albinism in the Philippines and from a young age she was referred to as the "sun child" as she eventually migrates from her home country to the United States where she studies at Harvard University, she explores how her identity as a transwoman and the color of her skin has impacted her life and perception.

***Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*** By Susan Kuklin

This book of personal stories and portraits follows the lives of six transgender and gender non-conforming teenagers through their coming out experiences.

## **Children's Books**

***My Two Moms and Me*** By Michael Joosten, illustrated by Izak Zenou

This book features a diverse cast of lesbian mothers as they move through their daily routines from play dates to bedtime stories. Ages 0-3.

***Daddy, Papa, and Me*** By Leslea Newman, Illustrated by Carol Thompson

A story about a toddler spending a day with his dads that shows love and happiness can be found in everyday activities. Age 0-3.

***Julián is a Mermaid*** By Jessica Love

After meeting three young women dressed as mermaids, young and gender non-conforming Julián daydreams about being a mermaid just like them. Age 4-8.

***The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*** By Dana Alison Levy

The Fletchers are just like any other family as they deal with annoying neighbors, lots of pets and four very different brothers. The fact that they are a family of two dads and some adopted kids means very little when the focus is on showing how important family is. Age 8-10.



***Zenobia July*** By Lisa Bunker

Attending school for the first time as a girl, Zenobia finds a chosen family among the other LGBTQ+ children in her class as she comes into her own as a hacking and coding genius. Age 10+.

## **Parenting and Education**

***Coming Out, Coming Home: Helping Families Adjust to a Gay or Lesbian Child*** By Michael LaSala

This book takes a qualitative approach to coming out. LaSala studies sixty-five multicultural gay and lesbian children and their parents to find the best and most effective way for families to grow after a child comes out.

***The Gender Creative Child*** By Diane Ehrensaft

The core lesson in *The Gender Creative Child* is that gender is fluid, and it is important to take a child's lead as they come to terms with their gender identity and expression.

***God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships*** By Matthew Vines

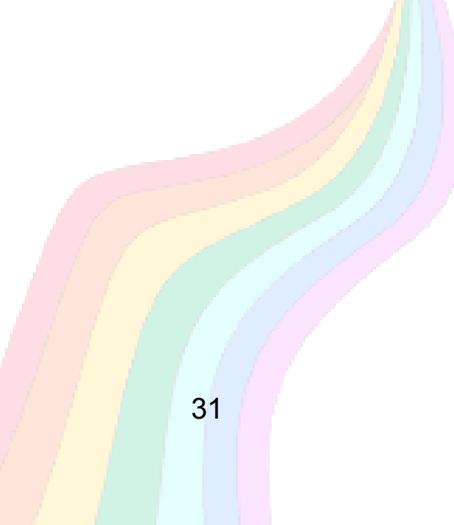
As a gay Christian, Vines explores the role same-sex relationships play in the bible as he argues there is a place for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church.

***This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids: A Question-and-Answer Guide to Everyday Life*** By Danielle Owens-Reid and Kristin Russo

This Q&A-style book is a great place for any parent to get started by covering basic information and sharing real-life stories.

***Transgender Children and Youth: Cultivating Pride and Joy with Families in Transition*** By Elijah Neely

Written by a therapist and former deputy executive director of New York City's LGBT Community Center, this book covers everything a parent needs to raise a happy and healthy child in transition.



## Podcasts

Who doesn't love a good podcast? Here are just a few of the many podcasts out there that talk about the LGBTQ+ experience and more. So pick a random episode or start from the very beginning and get back to cleaning your house or driving to work as these podcasts can go with you anywhere.

### Nancy

Hosted by two best friends, this podcast takes the time to focus on the LGBTQ+ experience today and share their own stories along the way.

### Getting Curious with Johnathan Van Ness

Johnathan Van Ness, the non-binary star of Netflix's *Queer Eye* uses their podcast to interview experts on any number of topics from history, pop culture, LGBTQ+ politics, and anything else under the sun.

### Queerology

Host Matthias Roberts holds a master's degree in both counseling and theology, and he uses his podcast to ask a very important question. How might we live better as queer people of faith and allies? He brings on theologians, activists, and priests to discuss the intersection of faith and sexuality.

### LGBTQ&A

Host Jeffery Masters interviews some of the most famous members of the LGBTQ+ community, from Laverne Cox to Pete Buttigieg. His focus is to record the oral history of the LGBTQ+ community and highlight the stories of some of the most important members of the community today.

### Making Gay History

This podcast is here to tell the intimate and personal stories of many forgotten LGBTQ+ people in history through rare archival interviews.

### Gender Reveal

This podcast is about transgender and non-binary people. Host Tuck Woodstock interviews notable trans and nonbinary people as he tries to get at the heart of what gender really is.

### Queer America

This podcast focuses on the forgotten history of the LGBTQ+ community in America. The hosts share forgotten or sidelined stories about some of the most important times in American history.



## Local Resources for the LGBTQ+ Community and Allies

There are a lot of great resources out there both local and national. Here are some that may be of use to you, but this is by no means all the helpful organizations or places that support the LGBTQ+ community many more can be found online so take the time to see what is out there.

### **Out Support**

An organization founded by mothers who wanted to help support their LGBTQ+ children. Their goal is to advocate for and educate members of the LGBTQ+ community and their families and friends on how to be supportive and advocate for protection. They are based out of Medina Ohio but work within their greater community as well.

Website: [Out Support](#)

### **The Bayard Rustin LGBTQIA Resource Center**

This community center was created in partnership with Akron AIDS Collaborative and offers a safe space for community members to find resources for housing, jobs, and substance abuse. Their Afrocentric focus puts an underrepresented community at the forefront and prioritizes their needs. The center is in downtown Akron Ohio.

Website: [Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice](#)

### **PFLAG Akron**

This is a local chapter of a national organization that works to advance equity and equality for the LGBTQ+ community. You can become a member online or help support their cause through their resource and donation pages.

Website: [PFLAG Akron](#)

### **CANAPI**

This non-profit based in downtown Akron serves both Summit and Portage counties. They are dedicated to HIV support and services as well as advocating for the LGBTQ+ community.

Website: [CANAPI](#)

### **Summa Health Pride Clinic**

Summa hospital systems have a clinic dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community. They offer services ranging from pediatrics to reproductive care.

Website: [Summa Health Pride Clinic](#)

### **Queer in Canton**

A Canton-based nonprofit that looks to create community through equality.

Website: [Queer in Canton](#)

### **Stark Help Central**

This nonprofit looks to better the lives of children and youth by providing many needed resources. They have a section dedicated to being a good LGBTQ+ Ally.

Website: [Stark Help Central](#)

### **Spectrum at Kent State University**

A KSU-based organization that brings together faculty, staff, and students to create a community of inclusion and promotes LGBTQ+ policies on campus.

Website: [Spectrum Kent State University](#)

### **Safe Zone Project**

An online resource that offers free trainings, resources and activities on creating an inclusive LGBTQ+ workspace or classroom.

Website: [The Safe Zone Project](#)

### **Greater Akron Chamber Diversity Equity Inclusion Resource**

This resource guide offers some insight in creating a diversity equity and inclusion resource that can help make a business more inclusive.

Website: [Diversity Equity Inclusion Resource Guide](#)

### **TransOhio**

This organization offers legal resources, medical providers, and education for trans residents in Ohio.

Website: [TransOhio](#)



### **Margie's Hope**

An organization whose mission is to help transgender and nonbinary people. Their website is full of groups like Trans Alive who work with parents, friends, and children.

Website: [Margie's Hope](#)

### **Plexus**

Plexus is an LGBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce who have numerous businesses that are owned and run by LGBTQ+ community members or are supportive of the community.

Website: [Plexus](#)