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# Glossary of Terms

**A note on the terms: Although we would prefer to not to live by labels, they are useful in self-identifying and defining a place in a community. Because cultures are always changing, the subtleties of identity and how women have shaped that identity has changed over the years. Some of the terms may only relate to certain age groups or time periods. In all cases, people should have the right to identify themselves, and this glossary is written as a guide.**

ASO – AIDS Service Organization

Aboriginal – A person who is of First Nations, Metis, or Inuit heritage. An alternative umbrella term used in this booklet is “Native”.

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

APHA – Aboriginal Person living with HIV/AIDS

Bisexual – a person who loves and partners with both men and women in life and sex.

Boi – a modern young lesbian who dresses and acts like a boy in gender role play, but does not necessarily want to change her sex.

Butch – A lesbian who dresses in masculine-like clothes and takes on the social roles of a man in a relationship with another woman, e.g. opening doors, paying the bill, etc. Most butches are attracted to femme-like women.

Coming Out – when someone recognizes that they are attracted to the same sex, or that they have their own gender identity, and starts to be open about it with other people. It can be a slow or fast process depending upon their circumstances.

Discrimination – The act of showing prejudice; a prejudicial act

Dyke – a woman who is a lesbian and identifies with a specific part of lesbian culture and expresses this through clothing and attitude, e.g., short hair and doc martens shoes.

Femme – A lesbian who dresses in feminine clothes and takes on the social roles of a woman in a relationship with another woman, e.g. wears lipstick, dresses and/or skirts and likes to be treated with special deference. Most femmes are attracted to butch-like women.

Gay – a man who is attracted to another man. For a long time this term was used for everyone who was attracted to the same sex, and there are still some women who will call themselves gay when they are talking about their sexual orientation.

Gender bender – a young person who dresses like the opposite gender or a mixture of genders and it may be difficult for people to know if they are a boy or girl. They play with gender identity and sexual orientation, but do not necessarily consider themselves transgender.

Harm Reduction – in the Aboriginal Community is a creative approach and practice that strives to preserve our people and cultures by encouraging and maintaining balance. Harm Reduction approaches work toward reducing harm and risk in the presence of substance use.

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Homophobia – The irrational fear and intolerance of people who are homosexual. Homophobia assumes that heterosexual people are the normal way of being, and therefore, better and right.

Homosexuality – same sex attraction, whether it is physical, emotional, mental or spiritual that results in romantic or physical connection.

Internalized Homophobia – occurs when the person who has same sex attractions believes it is wrong, and therefore, does not want to have same sex attractions and does not like that about him or herself. The outcomes can be small or severe.

Intersexual – a person who is born with ambiguous male or female genitalia. There have been intersexual people as long as there have been people, and they would have been raised according to how they presented themselves in behaviour as they were growing up.

LGBTTI or GLBT – Acronym which has grown, and will continue to change to try and be as inclusive as possible. It refers to Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Trans, Two-Spirited and Intersex.

Lesbian – a woman who loves and partners with women in life and in sex.

Man-woman – a term used by various anthropologists in books to refer to Aboriginal men and women of the past who were born as female, but lived as men in their respective communities. The change of gender role was on a spectrum of behaviour and clothing. Not all man-woman gave up their female roles when adding on male roles.

Queer – a term meaning that something is different or odd, and was used against LGBTTI by homophobic people in the 70's and 80's. This term has been reclaimed by LGBTTI in the last 15 years or so and is used to show pride in being different.

Sexual Orientation – is determined by who you are attracted to and partner with romantically. It is the basis for all of the labels for the LGBTTI.

Straight or heterosexual – a person who loves and partners with a person of the opposite sex.

Transgender woman – a woman who defies biological limits of gender, having been born male but now lives as a woman in lifestyle. She may have had surgery or hormone therapy to change her biological gender.

Transgender man – a man who defies biological limits of gender, having been born female, but now lives as a man in lifestyle. He may have had surgery or hormone therapy to change his biological gender.

Two Spirit – an Aboriginal person who is attracted to the same sex, or both sexes, and/or is transgendered or intersexual, and/or someone who possesses sacred gifts of the female/male spirit which exists in harmony in the one person. Most Aboriginal cultures in North and South America have special status or roles, or understood gender crossing roles ceremonies to acknowledge his/her special identity and special relationship with the Spirit.

Woman-man – a term used by various anthropologists in books to refer to Aboriginal women and men of the past who were born male, but lived as women in their respective communities. The change of gender role was on a spectrum of behaviour and clothing. Not all women-men gave up their male roles when adding on female roles.

WSW – women who have sex with women, but do not necessarily identify as lesbian