

## **Leaflet text for LGBT Primer**

### **What is LGBTQ?**

LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning) is a broad term that refers to people who don't identify with traditional sexual and gender roles. That can mean that you may be attracted to someone who is the same gender as you, or that your self-image may not match the gender that you were assigned at birth. It can also mean that you *don't* identify with any gender or sexuality at all, and just want to be seen as a person. LGBT encompasses all those categories.

### **Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals**

Lesbians and gay men are women and men who are physically and emotionally attracted to the same gender. Bisexual people are attracted to both genders. This doesn't have to mean that they're equally attracted to both genders—some bisexuals are attracted primarily to men; others to women. For example, you can be a bisexual man who's mostly attracted to men, but is also attracted to women. It just means that you are attracted to both genders to a significant degree.

Many gay, lesbian and bisexual people know that they are gay from a young age, but some take longer to realize that they are, especially if they live in an area that isn't very welcoming of its LGBT population, or if they have family members who are strongly opposed to people being LGBT.

### **Transgender people**

Transgender is an umbrella label that applies to people who don't identify with the gender role assigned to them at birth. This can refer to male-to-female transgender people (MTFs; trans women), female-to-male transgender people (FTMs; trans men) and genderqueer people. Genderqueer is a broad category itself, referring to anyone who doesn't identify with the traditional male/female binary. Someone who identifies as being genderless can be seen as genderqueer, as can someone who sees themselves as having a fluid gender going between both poles (bigender).

Some transgender people, usually referred to as transsexuals, wish to transition their bodies to match their self-image. Transitioning may include changing one's dress and appearance, taking cross-gender hormones (estrogen for MTFs; testosterone for FTMs), and surgeries (breast implants, facial feminization surgery and vaginoplasty for MTFs; mastectomies, hysterectomies and construction of a prosthetic penis for FTMs.)

### **Queer**

Queer is a catch-all term to refer to all LGBTQ people. There are some people who might be considered gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, but don't feel that the traditional labels quite reflect the complexity of their experience. For example, someone who is not only attracted to male- and female-identified people, but genderqueer people as well, might not feel comfortable with the label "bisexual," because "bisexual" implies that they would be only be attracted to people who identify with the male/female binary. "Queer" is broad enough to encompass all aspects of themselves.

**Questioning**

"Questioning" refers to people who wonder if they are somewhere along the LGBT spectrum, but aren't quite sure yet. They may have started noticing that they've had crushes on people of their own gender, or wonder if they should transition their bodies to match their self-image. For example, if someone notices that he's starting to have crushes on men, but isn't quite sure how to make of it, he could be considered "questioning."

**Additional resources:****Print:**

*GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer and Questioning Teens*

By Kelly Huegel

This is a book that discusses the basics of being LGBTQ for a young audience. Although it's targeted towards "teens," it can be useful for young adults, as well. Written in a conversational, friendly style, it is accessible to those who wonder if they are queer, but are confused on how to navigate through the information given them.

**Internet:**

YouthResource

HYPERLINK "http://www.youthresource.com" <http://www.youthresource.com>

A website designed for LGBTQ youth to learn basic information about being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, with articles written by youth.

OutProud

HYPERLINK "http://www.outproud.org" <http://www.outproud.org>

OutProud is a comprehensive resource for LGBT youth, including links to other sites, recommendations for further research and connections to offline and online support groups.