

Words across cultures for people of diverse sexualities and genders

In the booklet ‘Loving your child when they are different’ there is a Glossary, which is reproduced below, with some extra respectful and affirming terms added.

Many LGBTQA people have been told that their language may not even have a word for different sexualities or genders. But within every culture across the world, there are people of diverse sexualities and genders. Some of the terms used in this booklet are listed below, alongside some others. These terms may change over time and in different places.

- In (simplified) Chinese there are words for 女同性恋 *nǚ tóng xìng liàn* / 女同 *nǚ tóng* / 拉拉 *lā lā* (lesbian), 同性恋 *tóng xìng liàn* / 男同 *nán tóng* / 同志 *tóngzhì* (gay), 双性恋 *shuāng xìng liàn* (bisexual), 无性恋 *wú xìng liàn* (asexual) and 跨性别 *kuà xìng bié* (transgender).
- Across Polynesia, individuals assigned male at birth but who embrace and express a feminine identity and/or gender role are *fa’afafine* (Samoa) and *fakaleitī* (Tonga).
- In Vietnamese some words are *đồng tính nữ* (lesbian), *đồng tính nam* (gay), *song tính* (bisexual), and *chuyển giới* (transgender).
- Modern Arabic terms include *mithli* / *mithliyy* *مِثْلِي* (gay), *mithli al-jins* *مِثْلِي الْجِنْس* (homosexual), *mithlya* *مِثْلِيَا* (lesbian), *muzdawij almayl aljinsii* *مُذَوِّج المائل الجنسي* (bisexual) and *aabir al-jindar* *أبِير الجندار* (transgender).

For many more terms, and those used throughout history, please visit:

www.agmc.org.au/publications-lovingyourchild

Here, we have compiled a longer list of terms, which has been gathered by community members from different cultures. We will add to these terms over time. Please contact us if you have suggestions for additions.

Terms for sexuality and gender

Simplified Chinese

Lesbian 女同性恋/女同 / 拉拉

Gay 同性恋/男同/同志

Bisexual 双性恋

Asexual 无性恋

Transgender 跨性别

Rainbow community 彩虹群体

Arabic

Gay يِلثم

Homosexual سنجلا يِلثم

Lesbian قِيلثم

Bisexual ايسنج لوجتمل م

Transgender ردنجلل رباع

Asexual اللاجنسي (غير جنسي)

LGBT community مجتمع الميم

Vietnamese

Lesbian Đồng tính nữ

Gay Đồng tính

Bisexual Song tính

Asexual Vô tính

Transgender Chuyển giới

LGBTQIA+ community Cộng đồng LGBTQIA+

Other terms in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan

In Hong Kong:

基 = gay

Gay = gay

Lesbian / les = lesbian

TB = tomboy / masculine lesbian

TBG = Tomboy's girl / the feminine-presenting lesbian who dates a TB

Pure = femmes who likes femmes

不分 = a lesbian who might be feminine or tomboyish, doesn't mind her role in the relationship

不分 = a gay male who doesn't mind being top/bottom

Bi / 雙性戀 = bisexual

Cis / 順性別 = cisgender

性小眾 = sexual minority (formal / written)

同志 = LGBTIQA persons / queer persons

跨性別 = transgender

非二元 = non-binary

In China and Taiwan:

男同 / gay / 同志 = gay

女同 / 拉拉 = lesbian

T = tomboy / masculine lesbian

P / 婆 = feminine counterpart to T

不分 = a lesbian who might be feminine or tomboyish, doesn't mind her role in the relationship, or

不分 = a gay male who doesn't mind being top/bottom

雙性戀 / 雙 = bisexual

酷兒 = queer (more common in Taiwan)

Cis / 順性別 = cisgender

同志 = LGBTIQA persons / queer persons

彩虹群体 = rainbow community (more common in China)

多元性別 = diverse gender and sexuality (more common in Taiwan)

跨性別 = transgender

跨性別人士 = transgender persons

Pasifika terms

The acronym **MVPFAFF+** is frequently used to encompass various identities:

M (Māhū): A term for third-gender individuals in Hawai'i and Tahiti.

V (Vakasalewalewa): A Fijian third-gender identity, assigned male at birth who take on feminine expressions and roles.

P (Palopa): A term used in Papua New Guinea for gender-variant or third-gender individuals.

F (Fa'afafine): A widely recognized identity in Samoa, American Samoa, and the diaspora. It refers to people assigned male at birth who embody feminine traits.

A (Akava'ine): A third-gender identity in the Cook Islands.

F (Fakafifine): A term for gender-diverse or third-gender individuals in Niue.

F (Fakaleiti / Leiti): A recognized gender-diverse identity in Tonga.

Other queer identities are **Fa'afatama** (Samoa), **Rae rae** (Tahiti), and **Takatāpui** (New Zealand/Māori).

You can find additional language resources on this website:

<https://www.rainbowterminology.org/>