



# LGBT+ YOUTH

*Common Issues and Questions*



## Introduction

Many people aren't sure why the visibility of the LGBT+ community is important. Likewise, it is difficult for a big amount of people to understand that many young people are struggling with their identity and sexual orientation. Therefore supporting these minorities and giving them a trustworthy space, where they can inform themselves and talk to others experiencing similar feelings, is very important. Young individuals need a safe and confidential environment to realize who they are.

The purpose of this document is to organize and answer the most common questions young LGBT+ individuals and their relatives might have.

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# Definitions

## LGBT+

LGBT+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. The plus symbol stands for the inclusion of other sexual and gender-related minorities.

## Sexual orientation

The word sexual orientation describes a person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted. Therefore the fact of being heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, etc. is a person's sexual orientation.

## Heterosexual

Being heterosexual (*straight*) means that you are romantically and/or sexually attracted to members of genders other than your own, but not for those of the same gender as you.

## Homosexual

Being homosexual (*gay*) means that you are romantically and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and you don't have sexual or romantic feelings for the opposite sex.

## Bisexual

Being bisexual means you are romantically and/or sexually attracted to two or more genders. Bisexuals can have a preference. Some argue that bisexual means attraction to exactly two genders, such as men and women (but not nonbinary people), but this is not a common definition.

## Asexual

Being asexual means you have no sexual attraction for any genders. Asexual people may still want a romantic or sexual relationship, and may even still enjoy sex, but do not experience sexual attraction.

## Polysexual

Similar to bisexual and pansexual, however, poly-sexuals like two or more genders, but not all genders. For example, noma-sexuality, which is the attraction to all people but men, is under the polysexual umbrella.

## Pansexual

Being pansexual means you are attracted to all genders. Pansexuals are attracted to men, women, and those outside of the gender binary. A common part of pansexuality is being "gender

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blind”; attracted to people regardless of what their gender is. For example, a bisexual person might be more sexually attracted to men than non-binary people, and not attracted to women, but a pansexual person would not consider gender relevant to their sexual attraction at all.

## **Aromantic**

Aromantic people experience no romantic attraction. They may still experience sexual attraction.

## **Biological sex**

Biological sex is a physical condition, identified by one's primary physical sex characteristics.

## **Gender identity**

Gender identity is a combination of one's personal internal recognition of the gender that is one's own, the degree to which that internal recognition conforms or fails to conform to one's biological sex, and how one desires to be recognized by others: as male, female, or genderqueer.

## **Intersexual**

Intersexual people are people who are intermediate in sexual characters between a typical male and a typical female.

## **Transgender**

Transgender is an umbrella term referring to people whose gender identity differs from the social expectations for the biological sex identified as theirs at birth (using primary sex characteristics). Since these social expectations include gender roles (feminine women and masculine men), people who do not conform to prescribed gender roles may be considered part of the transgender community. A transgender person may or may not ever choose to become transsexual.

## **Transsexual**

Transsexual refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the body and the brain and sometimes undergoes medical treatment, including hormone therapy and sexual reassignment surgery, to change physical sex to match gender identity.

## **Crossdressing**

Crossdressers also known as transvestites are people who like to dress in the clothing of the gender identity opposite to that considered socially appropriate to their biological sex. Most crossdressers are content with their own biological sex and gender identity. Therefore they do not want to be the other biological sex or to be another gender.

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## Homophobia

Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+). It has been defined as contempt, prejudice, aversion, hatred, or antipathy, may be based on irrational fear, and is often related to religious beliefs.

Homophobic attitudes are observable in critical and hostile behavior such as discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientations that are non-heterosexual. Recognized types of homophobia include institutionalized homophobia, e.g. religious homophobia and state-sponsored homophobia, and internalized homophobia, experienced by people who have same-sex attractions, regardless of how they identify.

## Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the assumption that everyone is heterosexual. It is a form of oppression that targets gays, lesbians, and bisexual people. Heterosexism confers rights and privileges to heterosexual people that are denied to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. This is revealed through personal behaviors (telling 'faggot' jokes, putting up graffiti, and/or offering verbal and physical harassment), and discriminatory policies, such as denial of health, retirement, and housing benefits. In addition, mainstream media provide few characterizations of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people, and these few are usually stereotypes.

## Pride

Gay pride (also LGBT+ pride) is a worldwide movement and philosophy that wants lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) individuals to be proud of their sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBT+ pride advocates work for equal rights and benefits for LGBT+ people.

The movement has three main premises:

- that people should be proud of their sexual orientation and gender identity
- that sexual diversity is a gift
- and that sexual orientation and gender identity are inherent and cannot be intentionally altered

Pride parades, also known as pride marches, pride events, and pride festivals, are events celebrating LGBT+ culture and pride. The events also at times serve as demonstrations for legal rights such as same-sex marriage. Most pride events occur annually, and many take place around June, which is also called Pride month, to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, a pivotal moment in the modern LGBT+ social movements.

## Coming out

“Coming out of the closet” is a process of accepting oneself and communicating being LGBT+ with friends and relatives that happens within the lives of many LGBT+ individuals.

For some, this process takes place at the age of eleven, while others are only clear about their sexual orientation when they are 40 or older. Most LGBT+ people though have their coming-out at school age, around the time of puberty. At this age, many do not dare to ask for help from others, especially when they realize that their affection isn't socially accepted.

While some people easily accept LGBT+ life settings, for others, it can be a long and arduous journey.

## Gender spectrum

Traditionally, gender has meant either male or female. Today the so-called gender spectrum allows for more genders outside the binary of male and female.

Gender is the collection of behaviors, dress, attitudes, etc., culturally assigned to people according to their biological sex, which also can't necessarily be defined to male or female.

However, there is really a range of genders, including male and female, but also including genderqueer or gender ambiguous, butch (man or woman), femme (man or woman), transgender (sometimes considered a gender), and many others.

## Rainbow flag



Usually, the LGBT+ community is represented by the rainbow flag, a symbol of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity.

Each color also has its own individual meaning: red = life, orange = healing, yellow = sunlight, green = nature, blue = harmony, violet = spirit.

There are also other versions of the rainbow flag. Additionally, many sexual orientations (e.g. bisexuals) have their own respective flag. For more information regarding flags corresponding to sexual orientations or gender identities, please refer to the corresponding [Wikipedia page](#).

# Figures

## Demographics

There are many different studies and guesses regarding this question. Most suggest a number between 3% and 10% of the overall population.

### Global

Currently there is an ongoing discussion about the fraction of people who are LGBT+. According to a study by the Williams Institute about 3.5% or 9 million US citizens would self-identify as LGBT+.

Extrapolated to the global population, this would give us a number around a quarter billion LGBT+ people in the world.

$$7,600,000,000 * 0.035 = 266,000,000 \approx \frac{1}{4} \text{ billion}$$

### Country

As previously mentioned, in the US the estimate for the fraction of LGBT+ people lays at around 3.5%. In Germany, for example, this number is much higher with an LGBT+ population of about 7.4%. With that, Germany is also above the European Union's average of 5.9%.

### City

Exemplary, we have taken a look at several big cities in the US and have found out that San Francisco has the biggest percentage of LGBT+ people with 15.4% (which equals 94,234 people). San Francisco is followed by these cities: Seattle (12.9% or 57,993 people), Atlanta (12.8% or 39,805 people), Minneapolis (12.5% or 34,295 people) and Boston (12.3% or 50,450 people).

## Homophobia

### Worldwide

- Between 2008 and 2014, 1,612 trans people were murdered across 62 countries - equivalent to a killing every two days.
- A quarter of the world's population believes that being LGBT+ should be a crime, that equals about 1.9 billion people.
- 37% of all countries (72 of 193) criminalize same-sex relationships. In eight of 193 countries people are even being murdered for their sexual orientation.
- All over the world, even for example in the US or Germany, so-called youth protection laws which violate human dignity by arbitrarily generalizing maturity and mental state by age, are in place and endanger the confidential and secure access to information for



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LGBT+ youth. Also they for example try to prevent youth from online meeting and dating which is of big importance, especially for young LGBT+ people.

### **Healthcare**

- 24% of patient-facing staff have heard colleagues make negative remarks about lesbian, gay or bi people.
- 20% have heard similar disparaging remarks about trans people.
- 9% health and social care staff are aware of colleagues experiencing discrimination or poor treatment because they are trans.
- 26% of lesbian, gay and bi staff say they have personally experienced bullying or poor treatment from colleagues in the last five years as a result of their sexual orientation.

### **Hate crime**

- 20% of LGBT+ people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the last 12 months.
- 40% of trans people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.
- The number of lesbian, gay or bisexual people who have experienced a hate crime or incident in the last year because of their sexual orientation has risen by 78% since 2013.
- 80% of LGBT+ people who have experienced a hate crime or incident didn't report it to the police.
- 10% of LGBT+ people have experienced anti-LGBT abuse online directed towards them personally in the last month. This increases to 25% for trans people directly experiencing transphobic abuse online in the last month.

### **Work**

- 19% of lesbian, gay and bi employees have experienced verbal bullying from colleagues, customers or service users because of their sexual orientation in the last five years.
- 13% of lesbian, gay and bi employees would not feel confident reporting homophobic bullying in their workplace.
- 26% of lesbian, gay and bi workers are not at all open to colleagues about their sexual orientation.
- 42% of trans people are not living permanently in their preferred gender role stated they are prevented from doing so because they fear it might threaten their employment status.
- 10% of trans people experienced being verbally abused and 6% were physically assaulted at work. As a consequence of harassment and bullying, a quarter of trans people will feel obliged to change their jobs.

### **Education**

- 45% of LGBT+ people - including 64% of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT+. This is down from 55% of lesbian, gay and bi pupils who experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation in 2012 and 65% in 2007.
- 50% of LGBT+ people hear homophobic slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school.

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- 70% of LGBT+ pupils report that their school says that homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong, up from 50% in 2012 and 25% in 2007.
  - However, just 40% of LGBT+ students report that their schools say that transphobic bullying is wrong.
  - Just 20% of LGBT+ pupils have been taught about safe sex in relation to same-sex relationships.
  - More than 80% of trans young people have self-harmed, as 60% of lesbian, gay and bi young people who aren't trans.
  - More than 40% of young trans people have attempted to take their own life, as have 20% of lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans.

### **Sports**

- 70% of soccer fans who've attended a match have heard or witnessed homophobia on the terraces.
- 10% of LGBT+ people who attended a live sporting event in the last year experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- 60% of fans believe anti-gay abuse from fans dissuades gay professional players from coming out.
- Over 50% of football fans think the soccer associations are not doing enough to tackle anti-gay abuse.
- 17% of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people have experienced and 49% have witnessed homophobia or transphobia in sports.
- 66% of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people felt that there were problems with homophobia and transphobia in sports and that this acted as a barrier to LGBT+ people taking part.
- 12% of LGBT+ people avoid going to the gym or participating in sports groups because of fear of discrimination and harassment.

### **Religion**

- There are many religious people who say that being LGBT+ is a choice (science has proven it's not) or a sin.

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## Causes

“Terror doesn't change people from gay to straight. It just hurts innocent people.”

— *DaShanne Stokes*

The causes of being LGBT+ haven't been totally uncovered up to this point in time, but most studies suggest a biological component. We can also be quite sure that your sexual and gender identity are established early in the life cycle and can only be discovered rather than chosen.

Studies suggest that sexual orientation has a biological and genetic component, and may also be influenced by prenatal factors, such as endocrinological levels in the womb. Some advanced research on the roots of sexual orientation includes studies of brain anatomy, animal studies, fingerprint studies, hormonal (androgen) studies, cochlea studies, DNA studies, and studies of twins, siblings, and extended family.

Furthermore homosexual behavior is very common among many species of animals like penguins or giraffes. Actually no species has been found in which homosexual behaviour has not been shown to exist, with the exception of species that never have sex at all. One known theory is that homosexuality exists as a way to make up for missing parents in the raising of orphans.

Like heterosexuals, people of other sexual orientations do not choose, but rather discover it in the process of maturing. Acceptance of LGBT+ people and information about homosexuality and other identities do not cause any heterosexual to become gay, just as oppression of and discrimination against gay people does not cause them to become any more heterosexual.

A famous theory was the belief that homosexuality was caused by a dominant mother and a weak or absent father. But research has found this to not be anything more than a theory. While a deeper understanding of the biological reasons for being LGBT+ could help acceptance, it shouldn't be necessary for inclusion and respect towards people feeling different regardless of why they are the respective way.

Therapy aimed at changing sexual orientation is referred to as reparative, conversion or aversion therapy. The American Psychiatric Association states that there is no published scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of reparative therapy to change sexual orientation, and that there is no evidence that any treatment can change a homosexual person's deep seated feelings for others of the same sex. Their publication continues by saying that groups who try to change the orientation of people through so-called conversion therapy are misguided and run the risk of causing a great deal of psychological harm to those they say they are trying to help. They ensure readers that homosexuality does not require treatment and is not changeable.

Furthermore, research has shown that children of lesbian or gay parents are no more likely to become gay or lesbian than children of heterosexual parents.

## Coming out

*See Definitions: Coming out*

For some people it is relatively easy to accept LGBT+ life settings for themselves, due to their social surroundings, political views and other parts of their identity. For others, the same aspects can cause the process of accepting oneself to become a long and arduous journey.

Nevertheless it is important to prevent people from being reduced to their sexuality. The fact of being LGBT+ is one among many things that make up a human identity.

Before a person can communicate their sexuality with others, they must understand and be able to admit to themselves their feelings and sexual attractions. Therefore much has been accomplished if a person can admit to themselves without hesitation:

e.g. "I'm gay"

To get an idea of this issue's extent, we have created an estimate of how many teenagers are struggling with their sexuality. Due to a study this is true for about 14% of the ~11.2% of all people who are teenagers. That means there are about 120 million teens who aren't sure about their sexual orientation:

$$7,600,000,000 * 0.112 * 0.14 = 119,168,000$$

As an effort to help people struggling we have created a list of questions to ask oneself in order to find out one's sexual orientation.

### Part I:

- Are you aware that fantasizing about members of the same gender does not *necessarily* mean you are homosexual?
- Did you know that having a homosexual encounter does not necessarily mean you are gay either?
- Is it on your mind that not liking people of genders other than your own doesn't mean you're sexually attracted to those of the same gender?
- Do you understand that there might not be a word matching how you feel?

### Part II:

- Who do you think is more attractive, guys or girls - who do you rather gaze after?
- Do you rather catch yourself crushing on guys or girls?
- When masturbating, who do you think of? Guys or girls?

**Part III:**

- Would you say you are rather attracted to people of your own gender than to people of another gender?

After one has come to a conclusion for the above questions, it is important to remember the following things when talking about one's sexuality to others:

- Your sexual orientation isn't a choice: *you are that way.*
- The person who really is your best friend will remain precisely that even after coming out.

Furthermore a coming out can come as a big surprise to a person's parents, which can cause them to be completely overwhelmed with it. They can then easily be very hostile and hurtful or react with grief and reproach.

In this case, it is important to give parents time to get used to this unexpected side of their child. Unfortunately, there is no standard recipe, but any information helps to correct prejudices and stereotypes.

There are, however, also to be mentioned here, quite a few parents who react with absolute ease, and have no problem with the gay or lesbianism of their own child.

One's parents' reaction can be best assessed by oneself. Sometimes, general responses to the subject of LGBT+ topics are an indication of how they might respond.

e.g. *"Again, these gays on TV!"*

On the other hand, the reaction can also be quite different (namely, unexpectedly positive) when their own child is suddenly affected and the parents become aware of what they have been saying - sometimes for years - and how their son or daughter must have felt about it.

In cases where the reaction is completely unknown, it can be a good idea to rather do one's coming out in a less direct form, e.g. in a letter, allusions or similar.

## Safe sex

*19th-century erotic interpretation of Roman emperor Hadrian and Antinous engaged in anal intercourse*

Édouard-Henri Avril (1849 - 1928),  
[Wikimedia Commons](#)



In this paper we will not presume to explain human sexuality in its entirety, however we will list a few common sex practices and their risks.

First we like to point out, that in 72 of 193 countries same-sex relationships and sex are illegal. In eight countries, the death penalty is either allowed by law or evidence of its existence occurs.

Also it is important to stress, that meeting people online for sex or dating on apps and websites like Grindr doesn't come without risks. While we don't want to tell people not to use these services, it is of high importance to not *"let one's guard down"* when doing so.

The most common homosexual practices ([Wikipedia](#) on MSM, [Wikipedia](#) on WSW) involve:

- Oral Sex is sexual activity involving the stimulation of the genitalia of a person by another person using the mouth (including the lips, tongue or teeth) or throat. [Wikipedia](#)
- Mutual masturbation, also called manual intercourse, usually involves the manual stimulation of genitals by two or more people who stimulate themselves or one another. [Wikipedia](#)
- Anal Sex is generally the insertion and thrusting of the erect penis into a person's anus and rectum. [Wikipedia](#)
- Frottage, translated "to rub" is a non-penetrative form of male to male sexual activity that usually involves direct penis-to-penis contact. [Wikipedia](#)
- Intercrural sex is a type of non-penetrative sex, in which a male places the penis between the receiving partner's thighs and thrusts to create friction. [Wikipedia](#)
- Nipple stimulation or breast stimulation is a common human sexual practice, either by oneself or as part of other sexual activities. The practice may be performed upon, or by, people of any gender or sexual orientation. It often initiates and enhances sexual arousal. [Wikipedia](#)

These different sexual activities aren't completely risk-free. The non-penetrative forms of sex, like frottage or masturbation come with a low risk of STD infection, though. Practices like anal sex, however, come with much higher risks of infections. Therefore we recommend watching out for visible symptoms of STDs. The use of safe contraception methods (e.g. condoms) is of incredible importance.

In all situations, one should rely on medical professionals and their recommendations above online resources.

FAQ.lgbt, operated by RunStorage.com (help@faq.lgbt)

This paper is based on various studies and online resources.  
All statements without guarantee.

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- <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/how-many-people-are-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender/>
- Dalia Research ([http://www.queer.de/detail.php?article\\_id=27318](http://www.queer.de/detail.php?article_id=27318))
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