



To ensure shared language for the purpose of the LGBTQI+ Endorsement Pilot and our related work, OPDV will be using the following terminology. OPDV recognizes that language is important and ever-evolving, particularly around experiences of violence, as well as intersectional identities and experiences. Please note that some of the terminology was identified with the assistance of the LGBTQI+ Endorsement Project Working Group.

Gender-Based Violence Terminology

Bias: A set of negative beliefs about a group of people with an actual or perceived shared identity.

Discrimination: The denial or interference with accessing services or resources, on the basis of individual or institutional bias.

Gender-Based Violence: Violence or threats that happen because of someone's sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other related characteristics.

Domestic Violence: A pattern of behavior used by someone to control their intimate partner, or a family member. The behavior includes abusive threats and actions that may or may not be criminal. The behaviors may include physical, emotional, financial and sexual abuse.

Intimate Partner Violence: A term often used in LGBTQIA+ communities to refer to power and control dynamics in relationships, similar to domestic violence, but recognizing that term often only applies to traditional cisgender heterosexual relationships.

Rape: A type of sexual assault with actual or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus, or mouth without the consent of the victim.

Sexual Abuse: An ongoing pattern of unwanted sexual contact with the goal of establishing power and control. Sexual abuse usually occurs when the victim has less power than the abuser, such as a caretaker of a person with disabilities or an adult and a child.

Sexual Assault: Unwanted sexual contact through physical force, threats, guilt, manipulation, or coercion with the goal of establishing power and control. Some victims are assaulted by a stranger, but most know their attacker. It may be a current or former intimate partner, a friend, an acquaintance, or a family member.

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted verbal or physical sexual advances, sexually explicit statements, or discriminatory remarks because of the victim's sex. Examples include requests for sexual favors, sexual comments or questions, offensive remarks about a person's sex or gender identity and expression, and unwanted messages or images that are sexual in nature.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence includes sexual acts or activities that happen without consent. This may include rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse. Sexual violence includes different types of unwanted physical contact including rape, molestation, groping, sexual abuse by an intimate partner and child sexual abuse, which may or may not be criminal.

Identity Terminology

LGBTQI+: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and the + holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of very diverse gender and sexual identities.

Gender identity: The way people experience, understand, and identify their own gender.

Transgender: An individual whose gender identity differs from what society expects from someone who was assigned a particular sex at birth; an umbrella term for those identifying outside the traditional context of gender = sex assigned at birth.

Queer: An individual who identifies outside a binary man-woman identity for their gender; an umbrella term. Queer is a reclaimed slur, and as an identity, it may connote connection to the tenets of queer theory, which is a way of thinking that dismantles and disrupts traditional assumptions about gender and sexual identities, and binaries in general.

Questioning: An individual who is actively exploring how they identify their gender and/or sexual orientation

Non-binary: a term often used by those who identify outside the binary of man/masculine and woman/feminine.

Gender non-conforming: a term often used by those whose gender expression may not conform to what is expected of someone with their gender identity.

Intersex: a term often used by people who may experience a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Intersex is a socially-constructed category that reflects biological variation.¹

Agender: a term often used by people who identify as outside the binary man/woman sex and gender categories, or who decline to define themselves in terms of gender at all.

Cisgender: a term that refers to people whose gender identity corresponds to what society expects from someone who was assigned a particular sex at birth.

Plus (+): Including “+” at the end of an acronym that refers to gender identity and/or sexual orientation acknowledges that language and terminology is ever evolving, and that identities are as infinite as the individuals and groups who use them.

Gender expression: the way people outwardly express their gender identity, which can vary from situation to situation, depending on safety and social location.

Gender pronouns: the pronoun a person chooses to use for themselves that may correspond to their gender identity. Gender pronouns are the pronouns we use to refer to people in sentences and conversation.²

¹ Intersex Society of North America https://isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex/

² For more on pronouns: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/lgbtqi/Gender%20Pronouns%20final%20draft%2010.23.17.pdf>
LGBTQI+ Terminology—2

Sexual Orientation: Describes people's attractions (e.g. sexual, romantic, emotional, spiritual, etc.)

Lesbian: a term often used by people who identify as women and are attracted to other women.

Gay: a term often used by people who are attracted to people who share their gender identity. Gay is also used as a modifier frequently for "gay men," and can be used as an umbrella term for broader LGBTQI+ communities, e.g. "gay rights, gay liberation, gay issues."

Bisexual: a term often used by people who are attracted to people of their own and other genders, not limited to a binary understanding of gender. The "Bi" in bisexual refers to the person and someone else.

Pansexual: a term often used by people who are attracted to people of all genders.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Terminology

BIPOC: BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color as a term to honor the diverse experiences of racially-oppressed groups in the U.S. with different proximity to power, privilege, and oppression.

Experience terminology

Person causing harm: A person whose behavior, including emotional or physical violence, has caused harm to someone else. The term has been popularized in restorative justice practice.

Person receiving harm: A person who has experienced violence from a person or a system. The term has been popularized in restorative justice practice.

Trauma: An event or set of circumstances that is physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and has long-lasting adverse effects on an individual's functioning and wellbeing.

Survivor: A term used by some people who have experienced violence or other trauma.

Victim: A term used by some people who have experienced violence or other trauma.

Program and Service Terminology

Anti-Oppressive: An approach recognizing the impact of structural oppression on those who receive harm/survivors, on the people who have caused that harm, and on communities in which survivors and people causing harm live, work, and spend time. Anti-oppressive gender-based violence services address the traumatic impact on the safety, health, and wellness of survivors related to the gender-based violence itself in the context of their unique and intersecting identities, and in relation to bias, discrimination, and identity-based hate violence they may have experienced when attempting to access safety, support, and services, as well as in their daily lives.

Consent: Fully, formed, freely given, and enthusiastic permission for what someone is okay with in relation to their body. A person cannot give consent if they are being physically forced, guilted,

manipulated, threatened or coerced. Consent can be taken back at any time and is not based on relationship status or consent given in the past. Consent cannot be given if the person is underaged, incapacitated, sleeping, physically helpless, or has certain disabilities.

Survivor-Centered: A survivor-centered approach recognizes survivors' rights to make decisions about their safety and future. It's strengths-based and recognizes that survivors with different backgrounds have different needs and experiences.

Trauma-Informed: Being trauma-informed is realizing that trauma is common, recognizing the signs, triggers, and symptoms of trauma, and using this knowledge in practices, policies, and procedures. It promotes compassion and healing instead of retraumatizing individuals.

Culturally Responsive: Survivors' experiences and needs are different depending on their class, race/ethnicity, culture, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, geography, and many other lived experiences and identities. Culturally responsive services respond to these differences to actively meet the needs of all survivors and communities.

Rape culture: An environment with cultural norms, stereotypes and institutions that contribute to sexual violence, while ignoring the realities of sexual violence. The impact of rape culture is different for everyone but occurs across sex and gender.