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The LGBT Great Inclusive Language Guide

Navigating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language in an Everchanging World

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About this Guide

This Guide is intended as an introductory tool to help our Corporate Member community and wider network navigate LGBTQ+ inclusive language across both written and verbal communications. This Guide is a direct response to requests from Members for more comprehensive guidance and best practices and includes:

- An introductory, accessible, and practical set of recommendations on how to approach LGBTQ+ inclusive language at work.
- A series of guiding principles for inclusive language

Limitations
This guide has been written in English and focuses on the use of inclusive LGBTQ+ language in contexts where English – particularly business English – is predominantly used.

Content Warning: *Please note that this guide includes some words and phrases that should be avoided. These have been used sparingly for the purposes of education and information. As such, you may encounter words you may find offensive, discriminatory, or potentially triggering.*

Introduction

"Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation"

-- Angela Carter

Whether we realise it or not, our words carry power. They help communicate our thoughts and emotions to others and have the potential to build bridges, generate influence, and effect change. They also have the potential to tear those bridges down, to marginalise, and to reinforce inequality.

For the LGBTQ+ community, as indeed for many other underrepresented groups, this power and potentiality matters. A wealth of research has documented that the LGBTQ+ community is at a comparatively greater risk of social exclusion[1], discrimination,[2] online and in-person verbal abuse[3], family estrangement[4], and homelessness[5], and has a greater likelihood of developing mental health conditions[6]. There are many stressors that exacerbate these challenges, ranging from structural inequalities to a lack of legal protections and poor understanding of the multi-dimensional, nuanced needs of the community. From using explicitly offensive and derogatory language to using language that covertly excludes, misgenders or assumes, language remains one of these stressors.

Many of these stressors are also present at work. A 2023 study by myGwork found that 70% of LGBTQ+ women and non-binary people reported experiencing discrimination at work in the last 12 months.[7] Moreover, 47% of trans and non-binary employees reported discomfort speaking about their mental health in comparison to only 14% of heterosexual counterparts, according to a 2023 study by Just Like Us.[8] Inclusive language is one important facet of LGBTQ+ diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) and plays a foundational role in offsetting some of the identity-related challenges experienced by LGBTQ+ people in the workplace.

What do we mean by "inclusive language"?

Inclusive language is the mechanism by which we consciously deploy language to centre, acknowledge and celebrate the nuances of someone else's intersectional identity, lived experience and/or culture. In its simplest form, this relates to the words we choose to use and avoid. At its best, inclusive language recognises how communities choose to label themselves and adopts terminology and nomenclature that embraces this diverse range of experiences as articulated by people in their own words. In an LGBTQ+ context specifically, inclusive language refers to the use

[1] See, for example: https://issuu.com/iglyo/docs/socialexclusion-2006?e=1124093/6550683
[2] See, for example: https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_hate_crime.pdf
[3] See, for example: https://www.belongto.org/87-of-lgbtq-youth-report-hate-and-harassment-online
[4] See, for example: https://www.justlikeus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Just-Like-Us-2021-report-Growing-Up-LGBT.pdf
[5] See, for example: https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/about-lgbtqplus-homelessness/
[6] See, for example: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023
[7] Source: https://www.mygwork.com/en/my-g-news/3-4-of-lgbtq-women-still-fear-coming-out-at-work-reveals-new-mygwork-research
[8] Source: https://www.justlikeus.org/blog/2023/05/03/lgbt-mental-health-research/

of language and terminology that respects and acknowledges the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions people have. It is about using words and phrases that avoid discrimination, stigmatisation, or the exclusion of individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, inclusive language goes beyond word choice as it is rooted in the communication practices that organisations and individuals use.

Principles of Inclusive Language

Below, we outline some of the principles of inclusive language as well as some of the specific examples that can be used in both written and verbal communications to centre and empower LGBTQ+ people as interlocutors and audience members.

Inclusive language:

Is respectful and neutral
Inclusive language is grounded in respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity. It avoids discriminatory or offensive terms that might perpetuate stereotypes or marginalise certain groups. By using respectful and unbiased language, we ensure that our communication fosters a welcoming environment for everyone, where acknowledging diversity comes without bias.

Prioritises asking over assuming
Inclusive language prioritises accuracy by relying on facts and information rather than making assumptions. It avoids generalisations that might misrepresent the experience(s) of an individual or community. By seeking out accurate information, we then communicate effectively without perpetuating misconceptions.

Strives to be clear and jargon-free
Inclusive language is clear and accessible to a wide range of audiences. It avoids unnecessary jargon, technical terms, or complicated language that might exclude or confuse people. By using language that is easy to understand, we make sure our message reaches and resonates with everyone.

Centres on the person where possible
At the heart of inclusive language is a focus on the individual. Such language recognises and respects people's preferences in how they identify themselves. By using language that aligns with how people and communities describe their own experiences, we show that we value their identities and perspectives.

Is sensitive to context
Inclusive language is adaptable and considers the context in which it is used. It recognises that different situations may require different approaches to language use. By tailoring communication to specific contexts, we ensure our words remain appropriate, respectful, and inclusive.

Acknowledges cultural nuances
Inclusive language is mindful of cultural differences and diverse backgrounds. It avoids language that could be culturally insensitive or dismissive of certain traditions. By using language that acknowledges and respects various cultural paradigms, we demonstrate our commitment to understanding and broadening our perspective beyond our own frame of reference.

Remains flexible
Inclusive language is flexible and open to change. It evolves alongside language itself and societal norms. It also aims to be descriptive, using words that accurately represent a situation without assuming anything about the people involved. Similarly, in using language as a tool for inclusion, it is important to recognise that labels and their definitions are not intended to be a straitjacket. By staying adaptable and descriptive, we create communication that reflects the diverse world we live in.

"A great many **well-intended mistakes** makes for great learning."

Matt Cameron, CEO and Founder, LGBT Great

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE RELATING TO GENDER IDENTITY		
Element of LGBTQ+ inclusive communication	**Creates a barrier to inclusion**	**Promotes inclusion**
Avoid using explicitly gendered terminology, particularly when speaking about people		
Use of non-gendered collective nouns/terminology	*Mankind; Chairman; Salesman*	**People; Chairperson; Salesperson**
	Ladies and gentlemen; you guys	**Everyone; folks; colleagues; team; all**
	Wherever possible, gender-neutral terminology should be preferred. Androcentrism (the practice of placing a masculine point of view at the centre) excludes people who do not identify as men, such as women and non-binary people. When referring to roles or occupations, non-gendered terminology is preferred. *In internal communications (verbal or written), non-gendered terminology remains preferable. Colloquially in English "guys" is often used with a non-gendered intention. For example, a speaker may use "guys" to refer to a group of people they know to all identify as women. In formal communications, this should be avoided where possible.*	
Avoid stereotypical and misogynistic commentary		
Use of non-gendered commentary	*Women are good cooks*	**A person's gender does not determine their cooking skills**
	Man up	**Be strong***
	If ever unsure whether the language used is problematic, consider shifting the phrase to centre on another gendered voice. Saying 'woman up' or 'men are good cooks' can help the speaker realise that these statements don't carry any meaning once the stereotypical gendered notion is replaced/omitted. **Note that inclusive terminology does not guarantee that the message being conveyed is appropriate. Allyship and microaggressions are topics beyond the scope of this guide, but telling a person with a mental health condition to 'be strong' could constitute a microaggression regardless of the form of words adopted.*	

TRANS AND NON-BINARY INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE		
Element of LGBTQ+ inclusive communication	**Creates a barrier to inclusion**	**Promotes inclusion**
Avoid using negative and dated terms around transgender identities		
Use inclusive terms around transitioning	*Biological male/female; born a man/woman*	**Assigned [or designated] male/female at birth**
	MTF; FTM	**Trans woman; trans man**
	Transman; Transwoman	**Trans man; trans woman**
	Sex-change	**Transition; gender-affirming [treatment/care/surgery]**
	*Tranny; transsexual**	**Trans person**
	Transgendered	**Trans (adjective)**
	It is non-inclusive vernacular when medicalisation is used as a determining factor for transgender folks and their identity. Inclusive phraseology acknowledges a transgender person's process of embracing their true identity which can be through a sociocultural and/or medical transition. "Trans" or "transgender" is an adjective, so there should always be a space between them and the following noun. In labelling a trans person as a man or woman, the term reflecting their gender (not the sex they were assigned at birth) should be used. A trans man is a man who was assigned female at birth but identifies as a man, not someone assigned male at birth who is transitioning away from being perceived as a man. **Note that, depending on context, these words can be regarded as slurs and highly derogatory. Historically "transsexual" was used to denote a trans person who had undergone medical treatment (particularly surgery) and was also used in legislation. In discussing historical context, the use of "transsexual" may be unavoidable, but should be caveated and the reasoning for the language choice explained. This can be a complex undertaking and should not be done without extreme caution and sensitivity reading by trans and non-binary folks.*	
Avoid assuming binary pronouns when referring to an unknown individual		
Use of gender-neutral pronouns	*She writes books*	**They write books**
	He cleaned the house	**They cleaned the house**
	When referring to an unspecified person, or a person who is a stranger, using 'they' instead of the binary pronouns 'he' or 'she' helps (1) remove stereotypical vernacular that unconsciously assigns either a role to a gender ('is he working?', 'is she at home?') and (2) consciously includes non-binary folks who use other pronouns. *Note: A combination of 'he', 'she', 'they' is used by many (but not all) non-binary folks. Other non-binary pronouns (also known as neopronouns) are also in usage, although they are not as common. The easiest way to navigate this is by asking people their pronouns where possible. If you are unsure how to use their pronouns in a sentence it is permissible to ask for examples to clarify.*	

Avoid using language that reduces gender identities to a binary		
Use phrases that encompasses all genders	*People of both genders* *Men and women*	**People of all genders** **Everyone**
	Instead of adhering to a binary understanding of gender (male/female), embrace language that acknowledges that a full spectrum of gender identities exists and try using specific terms like 'non-binary', 'genderqueer', 'genderfluid' and 'agender' where appropriate	
Avoid using inappropriate language for trans people around 'deadnames'		
Be respectful	*What was your previous name? / What is your real name?*	**Use the name that someone wishes to use, and reassess whether you need to know this information**
	Respect individuals' privacy and their chosen names. Avoid asking about a transgender person's previous name (often referred to as a 'deadname') as it can be intrusive and disrespectful. Focus on their current name and identity, using it consistently and correctly.	
Avoid assuming honorifics		
Use of honorifics	*Dear Mr Smith*	**If the person has not provided their honorific (such as in a data capture form) consider whether use can be avoided, e.g.** **"Dear Member"** **"Dear John"** **"Dear Smith & Co"**
	Honorifics tend to create a binary of the 'Mr' and the 'Ms/Mrs/Miss' which most non-binary people don't use. It can also be a source of embarrassment if the wrong choice is made in the case of 'Ms', 'Mrs' and 'Miss', making it preferable to avoid taking an "educated guess". If a person indicates that their honorific is 'Mx' then the explicit usage of 'Mx' for serves as a linguistic acknowledgement of the gender spectrum.	
Avoid using dated terms for intersex folks		
Use of appropriate terminology	*Hermaphrodite (noun)*	***Intersex (adjective)***
	Disorder of Sex Development	***Intersex variation / Intersex identity*** ***Differences of sex development***
	Intersex people represent 1.7% of the global population, and yet terminology for addressing them is shrouded in medical fallacy. Understanding, acknowledging, and respecting intersex identities through the use of correct language remains of utmost importance. 'Hermaphrodite' is a term with scientific relevance in the context of animal and plant biology, rendering its application to people	

dehumanising. 'Disorders of sex development' frames the intersex experience as a medical 'problem' and should also be avoided.

Avoid conflating gender identity with sexual orientation		
	When interacting with a non-binary person	
Deploy the correct terminology where possible	*As a straight person, I cannot...*	**As a cisgender person, I cannot...**
	In this context gender identity and sexuality are not the same thing, so 'straight' is not the correct antonym for 'non-binary' or non-trans.	

"Gender-neutral language isn't about replacing an old norm with a new one. People have the right to self-determine their gender whether it be a man, woman, or a nonbinary gender. **The goal of gender-neutral language is to get rid of gender normativity, not everyone's gender.**"

— Alok Vaid-Menon, *Beyond the Gender Binary*

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE RELATING TO SEXUALITY		
Element of LGBTQ+ inclusive communication	**Creates a barrier to inclusion**	**Promotes inclusion**
Avoid assuming heterosexuality as the normative or "default" sexual orientation		
Use of neutral language to address relationships and familial structures	*Where is your husband from? / Where does your wife work?*	***Where is your partner from? / What does your partner do?***
	Where do your mum and dad live?	***Where does your family live?***
	Presuming that all couples/family structures are heterosexual excludes other forms of sexualities and reinforces heteronormativity. There are multiple sexual orientations that exist beyond the traditional man-woman relationship. Asking about specific roles ("mum" and "dad") in the context of family also excludes people who were raised by relatives from their extended family, or who regard important non-biological/marital relationships as part of their chosen family. *This subtle shift to neutrality helps acknowledge LGBTQ+ relationships and LGBTQ+ culture around family structures.*	
Avoid using biphobic language and patterns		

Be mindful of language that erases or invalidates the identities of bi and pan people.	*They are experimenting / It's a phase / You're greedy / You've chosen a side then!*	***Rather, acknowledge and celebrate their sexual orientation.***

Biphobia and bi erasure is an unfortunate, all too common occurrence. Even some within the LGBTQ+ community can be guilty of perpetuating this. Note that a person's sexuality or identity label subsists regardless of their behaviour, including the gender of any partner they are in a relationship with or the sexual activity they choose to undertake.

Avoid referring to someone's sexuality as a choice

Referring to sexual orientation as a non-choice	*She chose to be gay*	***She is gay***
	Sexual preference	***Sexual orientation***
	Lifestyle choice	***Sexuality / sexual orientation***

Multiple studies have shown that sexual orientation is not a choice but rather is largely determined through genetic factors. Labelling someone else's sexuality as a choice perpetrates a fallacy that has been long used to justify discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. Respect each person's self-identification and use language that acknowledges their experiences as authentic.

Note that some LGBTQ+ people may say that they 'chose to be [gay]' in a humorous way to refer to the facets of their sexuality they choose to express at a given time. For example, "as a newly-out bisexual woman who'd just divorced my husband, I thought, 'why not try being gay [and dating women] for a while?'". As with reclaimed slurs, a person's use of problematic language in a subversive manner to refer to their own identity or experiences should not be regarded as licence for others to adopt the same usage.

Avoid using stereotypes that may cause harm

Use language that breaks down stereotypes	*That's so gay / That's a very dykey outfit*	***Inadvisable due to the potential for offence or misunderstandings by third parties, even if not the recipient of the remark***

Stereotypes can be harmful, perpetuate bias, and exclude. Even when banter or jokes that assume stereotypes are meant in good faith, this can be harmful in creating an environment where such comments are accepted as the norm and challenge is then seen as "anti-banter" . Whilst such comments can be made humorously (often by other members of the LGBTQ+ community, who are more likely to be regarded as joking in good faith), this is a highly risky technique for building rapport which has the potential to alienate others if misjudged.

LGBTQ+ Glossary

This glossary provides a working explanation of the terminology used throughout this Guide and LGBT Great's reports, training and wider materials. It is not meant as comprehensive or definitive list, but as a general starting point. As terminology and definitions continue to evolve, particularly in relation to someone's identity, new terms and updated definitions will undoubtedly need to be added.

Agender: Agender refers to people who identify as being without a gender, or do not relate to the concept of having an innate sense of gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral or genderless.

Ally: A person (or increasingly an organisation) who actively supports the rights of a marginalised or underrepresented community despite not being a member of that community. An example would be a cisgender person campaigning externally for transgender rights and protections.

Androgyny/Androgynous: Androgyny refers to when a person presents as both masculine and feminine at the same time. This could be in presentation, sex, or gender identity. People who are androgynous may be nonbinary, trans, or cisgender.

Aroace: Aroace refers to someone who is both aromantic and asexual.

Aromantic/Aro: Describes someone who experiences little to no romantic attraction to others. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions.

Asexual/Ace: An asexual person is someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction. Much like other sexualities, asexuality exists on a spectrum, and some asexual people may be interested in sexual activity despite their lack of attraction, whereas others will not. Many asexual people will still seek romantic relationships, and may choose to participate in sexual activity with others to bond emotionally or because they enjoy seeing their partner's pleasure.

Assigned female at birth/Assigned male at birth: Refers to the sex that is assigned to an infant, most often based on the infant's genital and chromosomal characteristics. Commonly abbreviated as AFAB (assigned female at birth) or AMAB (assigned male at birth).

Bicurious: A curiosity towards experiencing attraction to people of the same or similar gender. See also, questioning.

Bigender: Bigender, sometimes dual-gender, is an umbrella term covering identities which entail someone identifying as two genders. This could be at the same time, or they may fluctuate between the two. Their gender expression may change, or it may stay the same. Such gender identities may form part of indigenous communities' societal structures, which are outside the scope of this guide.

Binding: Typically done by some AFAB trans folks, binding is flattening a person's chest to create the external appearance of a flat or 'masculine' torso. It is usually done by wearing a purpose-made compression garment.

Biphobia: Discrimination towards bisexual people or people who are perceived to be bisexual.

Bisexual: Bisexual is used to describe romantic and/or sexual attraction towards more than one gender. Many people use "bi" as an umbrella term.

CAFAB: Coercively Assigned Female at Birth. A term often used to refer to intersex people whose sexual anatomy has been surgically altered (typically during childhood without their consent) to resemble 'female' genitalia.

CAMAB: Coercively Assigned Male at Birth. A term used to refer to intersex people whose sexual anatomy has been surgically altered to resemble 'male' genitalia. This is typically done while the individual is too young to offer consent.

Chosen family: a term often used by LGBTQ+ people to denote individuals who do not constitute "family" within the societal definition as entailing ties through biology or marriage. People who experience familial rejection may choose to surround themselves with like-minded LGBTQ+ individuals with whom they form new bonds analogous to those often experienced by non-LGBT folks with their families.

Cisgender: Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. If you were assigned male at birth and identified as a man, for example, you would be cisgender. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender.

Cisnormativity: The assumption (present at the individual or institutional level) that everyone is cisgender by default and that cisgender identities are, therefore, "normal" and superior to trans identities and people.

Cissexism: Behaviour that affords preferential or biased treatment to cisgender people, reinforcing the cisnormative

(see cisnormativity) idea that being cisgender is somehow better than being trans.

Coming out: The ongoing process of sharing one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others.

Deadnaming: Deadnaming is when a person is referred to by the name given to them at birth, and not the name which aligns with their identity. It is used commonly, though not exclusively, by the trans and non-binary community.

Demisexual: Demisexual refers to people who only experience sexual attraction after forming a close emotional connection with a person.

Differences of Sex Development (DSD): A term that has replaced the term intersex within some medical spheres and refers to congenital conditions in which the development of chromosomal, gonadal, or anatomical sex is considered 'atypical'. Individuals will have different preferences as to whether they prefer the term intersex or DSD.

Dysphoria: A sense of distress caused by a person's body or outward appearance not being in line with their gender identity. In the context of medical treatment, "gender dysphoria" as a diagnostic term is being replaced with "gender incongruence", which is less negatively framed.

Enby: An abbreviation for non-binary, also seen as "NB". "Enby" was adopted by the non-binary community so as not to generate confusion as NB (non-Black) is also used when talking about non-Black people of colour (POC). Note that some non-binary people regard "enby" as a cutesy term which can be infantilising, so it should be used with care.

Femininity: Femininity refers to a set of behaviours, presentations and roles which are/were culturally associated with being a woman. People of any gender identity or sexual orientation can be feminine, but those who are assigned female at birth often experience societal pressure to be so.

Femme: Femme is a term referring to the broad, dynamic representations of femininity/feminine characteristics regardless of gender. Femmes claim a relationship to femininity without, necessarily, claiming a relationship to womanhood.

Gay: Gay refers to when one is romantically attracted exclusively to people of the same gender as them. The term "gay" is often used for men, however women who like women may also identify as gay.

Gender binary: The idea that there are only two genders (men and women) and that everyone falls into one or the other.

Gender euphoria: The joyful experience and sense of self when a person's authentic gender is acknowledged and affirmed by themself and/or by others. This can be done through language, clothing, makeup or medical treatments such as hormones and surgery.

Gender expression: Gender expression refers to the way someone outwardly presents their gender. This may include (but is not limited to) clothing, hair, make-up etc.

Gender identity: Gender identity refers to a person's internal perspective of their own gender. This may be the gender usually associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (eg people assigned male at birth usually identify as men), or may be different. Some people identify as men, some as women, some as a combination of both, and some as neither.

Gender neutral: Referring to something that is not designated as belonging to or for use by a particular gender, including facilities (e.g. gender-neutral bathrooms) or language that does not carry male/female or other gendered associations.

Gender non-conforming: Someone who is gender non-conforming does not align with traditional ideas of how someone of their gender should behave or look. They may be cisgender or transgender, but their presentation or identity may be outwardly different to others who identify as their same gender. For example, society often teaches children that boys have short hair and girls have long hair, so a boy who chooses to wear his hair long could be regarded by his peers as gender non-conforming.

Gender-affirming: An umbrella term that encompasses a range of actions and aspects (social, psychological, behavioural, medical) that support and affirm someone's gender identity.

Genderfluid: Someone who is genderfluid fluctuates in their feelings regarding how they experience their gender and wish to present it over time. These changes can happen daily, weekly, monthly, or whenever. Their presentation, pronouns, or style may change, or it may not. However, unlike with transition (where someone identifies as one gender and then as a different gender), genderfluid people consistently maintain an identity as genderfluid regardless of presentation and expression.

Genderqueer: Refers to someone whose gender identity does not correspond to conventional (binary) gender distinctions.

Heteronormativity: Heteronormativity, much like cisnormativity, is the presumption that all people are heterosexual/straight or that being straight is the "norm".

Heterosexual: Straight, or heterosexual, refers to people who are romantically attracted to people who are the opposite sex to them.

Homophobia: The umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes that one may have towards the LGBTQ+ community, or to those who are perceived to be LGBTQ+.

Hormones: Hormones are medications which alter the body's secondary sex characteristics. Some trans people use them to affirm their gender identity. Both trans and cis people may use hormones to change their body's characteristics; when this is done as part of a trans person's transition they may be referred to as "cross-sex hormones"."

Indigenous: An adjective used to refer to a group of people with shared ancestral ties to a particular area of land. This may be where they live, or an area from where they have been displaced (often as a product of colonialism). Indigenous people frequently have cultural practices or worldview paradigms specific to their community, and these may be forcibly eradicated by incoming colonisers.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding the interconnected nature of various social identities and how multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with more than one marginalised identity. Intersectionality considers how the overlapping vulnerabilities created by various forms of discrimination, disempowerment and inequity create specific challenges, which cannot be fully addressed by combatting different kinds of oppression separately.

Intersex: Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the medical definitions of female or male.

Lesbian: Lesbian refers to when a woman is romantically attracted to other women. Some members of the community who identify with womanhood to some degree (but whose gender identity is not exclusively 'woman') may use this term more broadly to describe the nature of their attraction. For instance, a person who identifies partially with womanhood and is attracted to women may describe themselves as a "non-binary lesbian".

Masc: Masc is a term referring to the broad, dynamic representations of masculinity/masculine characteristics regardless of gender. Mascs claim a relationship to masculinity without, necessarily, claiming a relationship to manhood.

Masculinity: Masculinity is a set of behaviours, presentations and roles which were/are culturally associated with being a man. People of any gender identity or sexual orientation can identify as masculine, whereas those who are assigned male at birth often experience societal pressure to be so.

Misgender: The act of misgendering is when someone purposefully refers to a trans person by the pronouns associated with their birth sex and not the ones they use. Misgendering is often hugely upsetting to a trans person and can be a form of discrimination.

Neopronoun(s): A category of third-person pronouns beyond he/she/they, often used by non-binary people. Common terms include "xe/xem" and "ei/eir."

Non-binary: Non-binary is the term used when someone identifies as neither gender identity on the binary. Non-binary people identify as neither male nor female and may use the same or differing pronouns to the one applied to their assigned gender at birth.

Non-monogamy: Ethical non-monogamy is an approach to relationships where romantic or sexual connections with others outside of one's main romantic partner are permitted. Everybody involved is aware and enthusiastically consents to the dynamic, which may include open relationships or sexual play as a couple with others. Ethical non-monogamy (ENM) is not the same as "cheating" or affairs, which are regarded by the ENM community as unethical due to the other party's lack of knowledge and consent to their partner's activity.

Omnisexual: Omnisexuality is the sexual attraction to people of all sexes and gender identities, wherein gender plays a role in one's attraction. This could be a preference or a recognition, and the attraction may feel different depending on the gender or sex.

Pansexual: Pansexual refers to people who have the potential to be attracted to people any gender, male, female, or other. Pansexual people do not experience this attraction as gendered (eg "I like men with body hair because it makes them look masculine").

Passing: Being perceived by society as cisgender or heterosexual

Polyamory: Polyamory is a form of ethical non-monogamy where people are regarded as autonomous individuals free to have more than one romantic or sexual partner at a time, with commitments to others being seen as mindful positives rather than negative obligations. This means that polyamorous people can be romantically or sexually involved with more than one person at once. Each of their relationships may take a different form to the others.

Pronoun: A pronoun is a type of noun commonly used in place of someone's name (a proper noun). Common pronouns used in English include he/him, she/her, they/them, xe/xir, per/perself, ey/em. Whilst pronouns often correlate with gender (eg society expects "He/Him" to apply to men), they are not inherently gendered. Some people choose to use a combination of pronouns, such as "He/They".

QPOC/QTPOC:/QTIPOC Initialisms that stand for Queer, Trans and/or Intersex Person of Colour.

Queer: Queer can be a gender/sexuality label in its own right, or an umbrella term for those who identify as LGBTQ+. Originally a slur against such people, the term has now been reclaimed by many and is widely used by the community. Some LGBTQ+ people, however, find it offensive due to its historical connotations and use against them as an insult.

Questioning: Questioning, in sexuality, refers to when someone is exploring their sexuality and questioning whether they are straight.

Stealth: When a trans person chooses not to reveal their trans status to others in a particular aspect of their life, usually in circumstances where they 'pass' as the gender they identify with. This can be expressed as "I'm stealth" or "he's going stealth at work".

Straight: Attracted exclusively to people of the opposite sex. See also: heterosexual.

Transgender: Adjective and umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity is not the same as the sex they

were assigned at birth. It is often shortened to “trans”. The opposite is cisgender.

Transitioning: Transitioning is the act of taking steps to affirm one’s gender identity. It could be changing your name, pronouns, presentation, or surgery. It is a gradual process and can take different amounts of time for everyone.

Two-spirit: Term that references historical multiple-gender traditions in some indigenous North American cultures. Two-Spirited people fulfil a traditional third-gender role within their culture and in Western terms, many who might be considered lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender non-conforming, identify as Two-Spirit.

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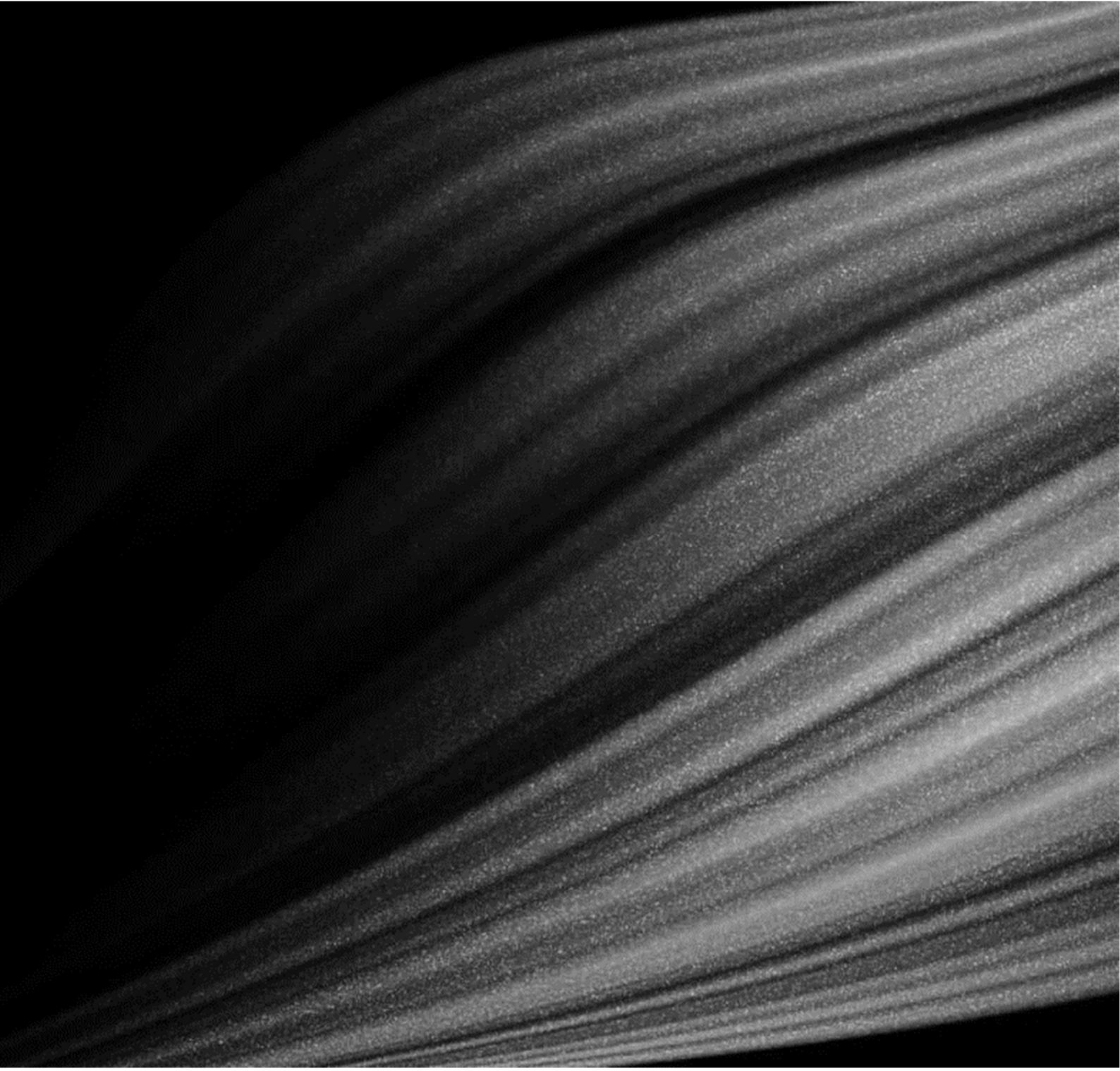
Do you have questions about the guide?

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