

# HHS Inclusivity Glossary

## Alphabetical

*This is a living glossary that will grow and change as we do, which means that new terms will come and go. Please email Ally Miller at [allysonm@hopehumansvcs.com](mailto:allysonm@hopehumansvcs.com) if you would like anything added or changed. We welcome your polite, engaged feedback as we step forward into a more inclusive future.*

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TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Ally</b>	Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
<b>Able-Bodied</b>	This term is used to describe someone who does not identify as having a disability. Some members of the disability community oppose its use because it implies that all people with disabilities lack "able bodies" or the ability to use their bodies well. They may prefer "non-disabled" or "enabled" as being more accurate.
<b>Ableism</b>	Discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities or who are perceived to be disabled. Ableism comes in all forms, from overt prejudice to more subtle microaggressions.
<b>American Sign Language</b>	American Sign Language is a complete language that utilizes "signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and postures of the body. Many people in North America who are deaf or hard of hearing use it as a primary means of communication.
<b>Asexual</b>	Often called "ace" for short, asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little, or conditional sexual attraction.
<b>Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</b>	ADHD, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, is a relatively common neurodevelopmental diagnosis. Symptoms include restlessness, difficulty in focusing or staying organized and impulsivity. Those with an ADHD diagnosis may also exhibit difficulty sitting still or engaging in quiet activities.
<b>Augmentative And Alternative Communication</b>	These terms refer to a variety of ways that people communicate without speaking. While these often are technological in nature, such as speech-generating devices, interactive touch screens or amplifiers to boost volume, they also may include drawing, gesturing, signing, finger spelling or picture books, among others. They are frequently used by nonspeaking individuals and those with limited vocabulary to aid or replace oral speech.
<b>Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder/Autistic</b>	Autism spectrum disorder is a group of complex disorders related to brain development, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Common symptoms of autism spectrum disorder include difficulties in communication, impaired social interaction and restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities, according to the Institute. However, symptoms vary across the spectrum. Many experts classify autism as a developmental disability. <u>Recommendation:</u> Refer to someone as having autistic spectrum disorder only if the information is relevant to the story and if you are confident there is a medical diagnosis. Ask individuals how they prefer to be described.
<b>Bias</b>	A form of prejudice that results from our need to quickly classify individuals into categories.
<b>BiPoc</b>	An acronym used to refer to black, Indigenous and people of color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier. It is pronounced "buy pock" ("pock" as in "pocket"), opposed to B-I-P-O-C

<b>Biphobia</b>	The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who love and are sexually attracted to more than one gender.
<b>Bisexual</b>	A person emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.
<b>Blind/Visually Impaired</b>	Total blindness is the complete lack of perception of either light or form. However, only about 15% of those with eye conditions are totally blind. “Legally blind” is a broad term for various eye conditions but generally refers to someone whose visual acuity is 20/200 or less even with corrective glasses or contact lenses. Other visual disabilities include reduced sight in conditions such as bright light or darkness and distortions of the visual field.
<b>Chronic Disease/Illness</b>	A chronic illness is defined as a health condition lasting three months or longer and includes conditions such as cancer or heart disease. Many illnesses, such as diabetes or multiple sclerosis, are life-long conditions. There is debate about when someone with a chronic illness is considered to have a disability.
<b>Cisgender</b>	A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
<b>Color Blind</b>	The belief that everyone should be treated “equally” without respect to societal, economic, historical, racial, or other difference. No differences are seen or acknowledged; everyone is the same.
<b>Coming Out</b>	The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others
<b>Cultural Appropriation</b>	The non-consensual/misappropriate use of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment or respect for its value in the context of its original culture.
<b>Dead Name</b>	Deadnaming is the act of referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they used prior to transitioning, such as their birth name. Deadnaming may be unintentional, or a deliberate attempt to deny, mock or invalidate a person's gender identity.
<b>Deaf</b>	The word “deaf” describes a person with profound or complete hearing loss. It is important to understand that many people do not consider being deaf or having hearing loss as a disability. Instead, deafness is often considered a culture.
<b>Decolonize</b>	The active and intentional process of unlearning values, beliefs and conceptions that have caused physical, emotional, or mental harm to people through colonization. It requires a recognition of systems of oppression.
<b>Demisexual</b>	A sexual orientation characterized by only experiencing sexual attraction after making a strong emotional connection with a specific person. A demisexual identity can be an indicator for where a person might fall on the asexual spectrum.
<b>Depression</b>	Depression is characterized by a loss of interest in activities, persistent fatigue, difficulty in concentrating and making decisions, prolonged feelings of emptiness or hopelessness, and abnormal eating habits
<b>Developmental Disabilities</b>	Developmental Disabilities are defined as a group of conditions (that arise) due to an impairment in physical, learning, language or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period of life, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person’s lifetime.
<b>Diversity</b>	Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
<b>Discrimination</b>	The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favors one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class,

	sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories.
<b>Disability</b>	A physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions. Disabilities may be physically visible, or they may be invisible/not necessarily apparent.
<b>Equity</b>	The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups.
<b>Fem/Femme</b>	A term that some queer people use to describe gender expression and/or social and relationship roles that are perceived by many as being feminine.
<b>Gay</b>	A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Men, women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
<b>Gender Non-Conforming</b>	A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do. This may be shortened to "GNC"
<b>Genderqueer</b>	Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.
<b>High/Low Functioning</b>	"High functioning" and "low functioning" are terms used to describe ability levels for people with a variety of conditions, including neurodiversity, intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Many people with intellectual disabilities and their advocates consider these terms to be dismissive or reductive of a person's abilities. For example, "emotional intelligence" also is important when considering a person's overall intelligence.
<b>Homophobia</b>	The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex.
<b>Identity-First Language</b>	Identify-first language contrasts with people-first language. With identity-first language, the disability is mentioned first. For example, "Down syndrome girl" or "autistic boy." An example of people-first language is "a girl with Down syndrome" or "a boy with autism." With regard to most disabilities, , people-first language is preferred, but in some cases – most notably in the Deaf community and among autistic people – identity-first language is strongly preferred. <u>Recommendation:</u> Ask the person with the disability how they would like to be described. If that's not possible, ask a spokesperson for the organization representing the relevant disability for preferred terminology.
<b>Implicit Bias</b>	Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.
<b>Institutional Racism</b>	Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination.
<b>Intellectual Disabilities</b>	An intellectual disability involves "significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills.

<b>Intersectionality</b>	A social construct that recognizes the fluid diversity of identities that a person can hold such as gender, race, class, religion, professional status, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc.
<b>Intersex</b>	Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.
<b>Invisible Disabilities</b>	The majority of people with disabilities have chronic conditions that are invisible or hidden. Although many in the general public associate disability with people using wheelchairs or white canes or who are missing limbs, more people have conditions that can't be seen but are defined as disabilities. For example, millions of Americans are hard of hearing, but most do not use sign language and many do not use hearing aids. Mental illness is a prevalent invisible disability. Many chronic health conditions also are considered invisible disabilities, depending on their severity and impact on daily living. Chronic illnesses such as Parkinson's disease, diabetes, lupus or Crohn's disease may fall into the category of invisible disabilities.
<b>Gender Binary</b>	A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.
<b>Gender Dysphoria</b>	Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.
<b>Gender-Expansive</b>	A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.
<b>Gender Expression</b>	External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
<b>Gender-Fluid</b>	A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.
<b>LGBTQ+ or LGBTQIA+</b>	An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer" with a "+" sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of our community. The longer version includes "intersex and asexual"
<b>Masc.</b>	A term that some queer people use to describe gender expression and/or social and relationship roles that are perceived by many as being masculine.
<b>Mental Illness/Mental Disorder</b>	"Mental illness" is an umbrella term for many different conditions that affect how individuals act, think, feel or perceive the world. The most common forms of mental illness are anxiety disorders, depression, mood disorders and schizophrenia disorders. Severity and symptoms vary widely.
<b>Microaggression</b>	The verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs, insults, or actions, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons based solely upon discriminatory belief systems.
<b>Multicultural Competency</b>	A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.
<b>Neurodiversity/ Neurodiverse</b>	Is "the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of the normal variation in the human population". Neurodiversity basically means that brains operate differently – and that's not a bad thing. There is an advocacy movement around this concept that argues against the idea that there is one 'normal' or 'healthy' type of brain or mind or one 'right' style of neurocognitive functioning.
<b>Neurotypical</b>	"Neurotypical" refers to a person who is considered part of the normal variation in the human population.

<b>Non-Binary</b>	An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.
<b>Nonspeaking/ Nonverbal</b>	Some disability advocates are beginning to shift away from the word “nonverbal” in favor of “nonspeaking,” arguing that “nonverbal” implies that someone doesn’t understand language, while “nonspeaking” does not invite the same judgment. A nonspeaking individual may understand and use language – just in a different way, such as through American Sign Language.
<b>Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)</b>	Obsessive-compulsive disorder is an anxiety disorder characterized by unreasonable thoughts and fears that lead to repetitive and often ritualized behaviors or compulsions. OCD may present as a fear of contamination, disarray or intrusion. People with OCD usually exhibit both obsessions and compulsions but sometimes exhibit only one or the other. OCD is often treated with pharmaceutical drugs, psychotherapy methods, or a combination of the two.
<b>Oppression</b>	The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures.
<b>Outing</b>	Exposing someone’s lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, or gender non-binary identity to others without their permission. Outing someone can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety or religious or family situations.
<b>Pansexual</b>	Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.
<b>People Of Color</b>	A collective term for people of Asian, African, Latinx and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective “White”.
<b>People-First Language</b>	People-first language avoids defining people in terms of their disability. In most cases, this entails placing the reference to the disability after the reference to a person, as in “a person with a disability,” or “a person living with a disability,” rather than “the disabled person.” People-first language is not preferred by all people with disabilities. Specifically, some members of the autism and Deaf communities prefer identity-first language. <u>Recommendation:</u> Ask the person with a disability how they prefer to be described; if that’s not possible, ask a spokesperson for the organization representing the relevant disability for preferred terminology.
<b>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</b>	Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder usually caused by an extremely emotional traumatic event. Such events may include assault, war, sexual assault, natural disasters, car accidents or imprisonment. Symptoms may include reliving the traumatic event, avoidance of certain behaviors, negative emotions, or physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea.
<b>Prejudice</b>	A preconceived judgement or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes, that denies the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized.
<b>Privilege</b>	Exclusive access or access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.
<b>Queer</b>	A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.
<b>Questioning</b>	A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

<b>Race</b>	A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly race), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time
<b>Safe Space</b>	Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience.
<b>Same Gender Loving</b>	A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay or bisexual to express attraction to and love of people of the same gender.
<b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b>	The sex, male, female, or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. Note: an individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity.
<b>Social Justice</b>	Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others.
<b>Stereotype</b>	A form of generalization rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions, a product of processes of categorization that can result in a prejudiced attitude, critical judgment and intentional or unintentional discrimination. Stereotypes are typically negative, based on little information and does not recognize individualism and personal agency.
<b>Structural Inequality</b>	Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted, and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.
<b>Suicide</b>	The World Health Organization recommends avoiding language that sensationalizes or normalizes suicide or presents it as a solution to problems. For example, the terms "failed attempt" or "successful" or "completed attempt" depict suicide as a goal, project, or solution. Some argue that the term "commit" implies that suicide is a criminal act, while others view the term "commit" as neutral. Recommended: Avoid using "committed suicide" except in direct quotations from authorities. Alternate phrases include "killed himself," "took her own life" or "died by suicide." The verb "commit" with "suicide" can imply a criminal act. Laws against suicide have been repealed in the U.S. and many other places. Do not refer to an "unsuccessful suicide attempt." Refer instead to an "attempted suicide."
<b>Systems Of Oppression</b>	Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups. Sometimes is used to refer to systemic racism.
<b>Tokenism</b>	Performative presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for themselves.
<b>Transgender</b>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-binary people may or may not identify as transgender. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
<b>Transitioning</b>	A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all, or none of these processes.

<b>Triggers/Content Warnings</b>	Psychological triggers are words, images or sounds that activate phobias, panic attacks or flashbacks to unpleasant events or trauma. News reports covering sensitive topics, such as abuse, assault, addiction, suicide, combat and violence, frequently contain descriptive scenarios that can deeply affect audiences. Some content can spark difficult memories for people with certain mental illnesses and phobias. Trigger warnings communicate that upcoming content may produce unpredictable and unwelcome reactions for some readers. They give audiences a choice on whether or not to proceed with consuming the information. However, some readers object to trigger warnings and view them as patronizing and stifling to academic freedom.
<b>Victim Of/Suffers From</b>	These terms carry the assumption that a person with a disability is suffering or has a reduced quality of life. Not every person with a disability suffers, is a victim or is stricken. It is preferable to use neutral language when describing a person who has a disability, simply stating the facts about the nature of the disability. For example: "He has muscular dystrophy," and avoiding characterizing those conditions as afflictions.
<b>Wheelchair/Bound/Confined</b>	People who use mobility equipment such as a wheelchair, scooter or cane often consider the equipment part of their personal space. People who use wheelchairs have widely different disabilities and varying abilities. <u>Recommendation:</u> It is acceptable to describe a person as "someone who uses a wheelchair," followed by an explanation of why the equipment is required. Avoid "confined to a wheelchair" or "wheelchair-bound" as these terms describe a person only in relationship to a piece of equipment. The terms also are misleading, as wheelchairs can liberate people, allowing them to move about, and they are inaccurate, as people who use wheelchairs are not permanently confined to them but are transferred to sleep, sit in chairs, drive cars, etc.

Definitions sourced from:

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadnaming>, <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

<https://pizzaklatch.org/resources/1851-2/#:~:text=Masc,or%20assignment%20of%20being%20male.>

<https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/>