LOVE ME GENDER

The Guide

CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH
MYRIAM DAGUZAN BERNIER, SEXOLOGIST,
AND GRIS-MONTRÉAL

MUSÉE DE LA CIVILISATION
Québec

Sex, gender expression, gender identity: what do they all mean? What exactly does the acronym LGBTQIA2S+ stand for? What about the term *queer*? Is it a bad thing to misgender someone? How can I be an ally?

These are a few of the questions we hope to answer in *Love Me Gender: The Guide*. The aim is to provide a friendly tool to help you better understand the diverse elements of gender identity—and above all, the diversity of the people who inhabit various gender identities. Because gender is a lot more than just sex!

Here, you'll find a ton of definitions for terms and concepts related to gender identities, a list of organizations that you can turn to for support or to deepen your learning, and tips for being a good ally who stands in kindness and solidarity with people of many genders.

This guide was created as part of the *Love Me Gender* exhibition at the Musée de la civilisation, presented by TD, from May 18, 2023, to April 14, 2024. With this exhibition, the Musée aims to help stimulate dialogue and help people further their thinking and perceptions about gender identities and gender expressions, and to celebrate diversity in all its forms.

The Musée would like to thank Myriam Daguzan Bernier, sexologist, and GRIS-Montréal for their precious collaboration in the production of this guide.

GRIS Montréal

GLOSSARY

*This short guide is greatly inspired by the teaching guide

La transphobie, c'est pas mon genre by GRIS-Montréal.
This guide is available for free at gris.ca (in French only).

THE ABCs OF GENDER

GENDER

Gender is a social concept that categorizes people according to arbitrary and subjective characteristics. Gender can be influenced by psychological, behavioural, social and cultural aspects. A person's gender is not determined by their sex assigned at birth.

GENDER EXPRESSION

Gender expression concerns the way a person affirms their gender identity in social contexts by means of characteristics and behaviours that others can observe, such as physical appearance, codes of dress, codes of language (such as their name and pronouns), personality and other attributes linked to gender.

GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity refers to the private, personal experience

of feeling like a man, a woman, neither, both, or another identity entirely. These are all independent of a person's sex assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity.

SEX

Sex refers to sexual characteristics that are biological, physiological, genetic or physical. These include primary sexual characteristics (external genital organs) and secondary sexual characteristics (the changes that appear at puberty).

SEX OR GENDER ASSIGNED AT BIRTH (AFAB OR AMAB)

Nobody gets to choose their sex assigned at birth, whether they are cisgender or transgender. When a person is born, the social and medical systems classify them into one of two binary categories: man or woman.

The acronyms AFAB and AMAB designate people who are "assigned female at birth" or "assigned male at birth."

INTERSEX

Intersex people are people who have biological characteristics that are not exclusively female or male.

BINARY

Binary describes the dichotomous system that represents the identities of man and woman.

Binary gender identities are the two gender identities that are recognized in the legal, social, medical and language systems that shape Québec's society: woman and man.

NON-BINARY

Non-binary refers to gender identities that fall outside the exclusive man/woman binary. There is a great variety of non-binary gender identities. Non-binary people may feel like neither men or women, like both, or like some other combination of the two. Non-binary identities also include those related to gender fluidity. Non-binary people may identify as trans, but not all non-binary people do.

GENDER IDENTITIES

CIS

The prefix and adjective *cis* means "on the same side." A cis person is a person who has the same gender identity as the one assigned to them at birth. A cis woman is a woman who was assigned *girl* at birth.
A cis man is a man who was assigned *boy* at birth.

CISGENDER (CIS)

The opposite of the term *transgender*, the term *cisgender* refers to people who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth.

TRANS

The prefix and adjective *trans* means “on the other side.” A trans person is a person who has a gender identity different from the one that was assigned to them at birth.

TRANS/TRANSGENDER

The term *transgender*, often shortened to *trans*, is an umbrella term that includes people whose gender identity does not match with their gender assigned at birth. This term includes trans men and trans women, non-binary people, and people who are gender-fluid, gender-creative, genderqueer and more.

TRANS WOMAN/TRANS MAN – TRANSFEMININE/ TRANSMASCULINE PERSON

A trans woman is a person who was assigned male at birth, but who identifies as a woman.

A trans man is a person who was assigned female at birth, but who identifies as a man.

A transfeminine person is a person who was assigned male at birth, but who identifies partially or totally as feminine, whether that means as a woman, as non-binary, or as someone whose multiple genders include the feminine.

A transmasculine person is a person who was assigned female at birth, but who identifies partially or totally as masculine, whether that means as a man, as non-binary, or as someone whose multiple genders include the masculine.

TRANSSEXUAL

This term is less often used today, and some consider it offensive or obsolete. It refers to people who have had, or are aiming to have, certain medical interventions, such as hormone therapy or various gender affirmation surgeries as part of their transition process. Some transsexual people do not identify with the term *transgender*, and vice versa.

TWO-SPIRIT

The term *Two-Spirit* refers to a form of gender diversity present in Indigenous communities in North America.

GENDER-FLUID

Gender-fluid refers to a gender identity that is changeable or fluid.

THE ABCs OF LGBTQIA2S+

LGBTQIA2S+

This acronym refers to a range of sexually and gender-diverse people. It contains many letters because it aims to bring together a lot of people! That includes people who are lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), trans (T), queer (Q), intersex (I), asexual (A), Two-Spirit (2S) and everyone else who doesn't conform to the heterocisnormative model (+). The acronym helps people who have sexual and gender identities that are considered marginal to be visible and find their rightful place in society. A related term is *sexual and gender diversity*.

QUEER

The term *queer* was reclaimed by LGBTQIA2S+ communities to make it a symbol of self-determination rather than an insult. It refers to any idea, practice, person or identity that goes beyond the norms that structure the cisheteronormative (cisnormative and heteronormative) social model.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND ATTRACTION

Sexual orientation is a romantic or sexual attraction

(or lack of attraction) that a person feels toward one or more other people.

Sexual orientation is an important part of each individual's sexual identity and can manifest in different ways throughout a person's life.

GENDER IN TRANSITION

GENDER DYSPHORIA

The concept of gender dysphoria covers a range of negative emotions (anger, disgust, fear, sadness, and so on) that a trans or non-binary person may feel in relation to their gender identity. Gender dysphoria is not required in order for a person to identify as trans or non-binary. Some trans and non-binary people don't feel gender dysphoria. Some prefer to use the term *gender euphoria*, which refers to positive emotions (happiness, joy, and so on) in relation to their gender identity.

GENDER EUPHORIA

Gender euphoria is an intense positive emotion that some people may feel when they express their gender identity in an authentic way. It can manifest in various ways, such as wearing clothing or accessories that correspond to their felt gender, changing their physical appearance, or using the name and pronouns that match their gender identity.

Gender euphoria can be a liberating, empowering feeling for people who may have experienced gender dysphoria. It can also help people to connect better with their bodies and their gender identities and to feel a sense of well-being and authenticity.

QUESTIONING

Questioning is an expression used to describe a period during which a person asks themselves questions about their gender identity or sexual orientation without having found definitive answers yet. This time may involve feelings of confusion, uncertainty and anxiety, but also curiosity and self-exploration.

During this time, a person may explore various gender identities or sexual orientations to better understand their inner felt experience. It's important to remember that every person has their own story and their own pace when it comes to this self-discovery process, and there is no time limit for arriving at answers.

COMING OUT

Coming out is the act of disclosing one's gender identity. Coming out starts with coming out to oneself, and it's an ongoing process. There are varying degrees of coming out; some people tell their close loved ones, others reveal their identities publicly, and some keep it to themselves.

When coming out is voluntary, it's a personal, private decision.

Exposing a trans or non-binary person's identity without their consent is disrespectful and can potentially put them in danger.

TRANSITION (LEGAL, MEDICAL, SOCIAL)

A transition is a long and complex process during which a person aims to harmonize their gender expression with their gender identity.

Transition may take place socially (presenting with an appearance, name, clothing and so on that match the person's identity), legally (changing name or sex/gender designation on official documents) or physically (hormone therapy and gender affirmation surgeries). These various aspects of transition are independent from one another. For example, a person may undertake a social transition without transitioning medically.

PRONOUNS

A person's pronouns are the pronouns that reflect their gender identity. There are many types of pronouns: he/his, she/hers, they/theirs and more.

CHOSEN FAMILY

Chosen family is a term used to describe a group of people who are not necessarily linked by blood or marriage, but who consider themselves a family. These people may have close, intimate relationships, take

emotional responsibility for one another, and provide mutual support, like a traditional family, but they have chosen to build their own families outside biological and legal ties.

The members of a chosen family may be friends or close friends, romantic partners, colleagues or others with whom a person has an emotional tie and who provide them with significant emotional support. This notion of chosen family is often used by LGBTQIA2S+ people who may have been rejected or excluded from their biological families because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, but it's relevant for anyone who wants to build strong family ties with the people of their choice.

NOT JUST A RAINBOW

CISNORMATIVITY/CISSEXISM

Cisnormativity is the fact of assuming that everyone is cisgender. Cisnormativity contributes to rendering trans and non-binary people invisible. This attitude is part of a system of *cissexism*, meaning the belief that cis people's gender identities and expressions are better, more natural or more real than those of trans and non-binary people.

HETERONORMATIVITY/

HETEROSEXISM

Heteronormativity is the fact or assuming that everyone is heterosexual. This attitude is part of a system of heterosexism, meaning the belief that heterosexual people's orientations are better, more natural or more real than those of non-heterosexual people.

TRANSPHOBIA

Transphobia refers to the systemic violence experienced by trans and non-binary people. Transphobia can take the form of verbal violence (mockery, insults, threats), psychological violence (rumours, blackmail, non-consensual outing), physical violence (physical and sexual assault, hate crimes, murder) or discriminatory and intolerant behaviours (discrimination in the context of job hiring, housing and access to medical care).

MICROAGGRESSION

Microaggressions are behaviours, attitudes and speech that may be perceived as hostile or offensive toward a person based on their belonging to a marginalized group. In the context of trans and non-binary people, this can include actions such as refusing to recognize their gender identity or respect their chosen pronouns, categorizing their gender as a phase or as a choice, or exhibiting unwelcome curiosity about their bodies or personal lives.

Microaggressions can have a cumulative negative impact on the mental health and well-being of trans and non-binary people, as well as on their ability to fully participate in society.

MISGENDERING

Misgendering means referring to a trans or non-binary person using a name, pronoun, form of greeting or other approach that does not reflect the person's gender identity.

DEADNAME OR BIRTH NAME

Once a trans or non-binary person has changed their name, the name that was given to them when they were born is referred to as their *deadname* or *birth name*. Using a person's deadname demonstrates a lack of respect toward the person and invalidates their identity.

BEING AN ALLY

Taking a position as an ally consists of being aware of the challenges that trans and non-binary people face and aiming to support them in a proactive way.

By listening, being respectful, using chosen names and pronouns, and learning, we can become strong, committed allies.

Remember that trans and non-binary people are people first and foremost

Trans and non-binary people are above all human beings, with their own lives, concerns and experiences. As allies, we must always consider each person's humanity and individuality, and not reduce them to their gender identity alone.

Be interested in learning

Be curious and find out about questions relating to gender and trans issues. Admit your mistakes and stay open to constructive criticism. This guide contains resources to help you become familiar with the realities of trans and non-binary people.

Listen and show kindness

If a trans or non-binary person confides in you, listen attentively and with compassion. Try to understand their experience and challenges.

Use the right pronouns

Ask a person how they want to be addressed and what pronouns they use. Use these pronouns appropriately, even when the person is not present.

Avoid misgendering people

Don’t assume a person’s gender based on their appearance or their name. Intrusive questions about people’s private parts or their transition process should also be avoided.

Use inclusive language

Use gender-neutral language when you’re speaking to groups of people or when you write documents or emails. Avoid using expressions or stereotypes that may exclude or hurt trans and non-binary people.

HELPFUL RESOURCES OF ALL KINDS

Many organizations provide essential support to LGBTQIA2S+ people and their loved ones. Whether you're seeking resources for yourself or to support someone you care about, these groups are here to help.

AIDE AUX TRANS DU QUÉBEC

An organization with a mission to provide aid to and break the isolation of trans, non-binary and questioning people.

atq1980.org/en/

LE NÉO

An independent community organization in the Lanaudière region, Le Néo works to support people's well-being and healthy romantic and sexual life habits.

le-neo.com

INTERLIGNE

A 24/7 help and information service that provides support to LGBTQIA2S+ people, their loved ones and staff in various fields.

interligne.co/en

ALTERHÉROS

Organization that works to break down prejudices and demystify sexual and gender diversity.

alterheros.com/en

TEL-JEUNES

A space for confidential conversations for youth age 20 and under who want to ask questions about various subjects, including sexuality, relationships and social life, as well as psychological health.

www.teljeunes.com/Home

DIVERGENRES

A non-profit organization in the Québec City region whose mission is to educate the population about the issues and realities affecting gender diversity, provide support services for people who are questioning their gender identity or undertaking transition, and provide accessible safer spaces for trans, non-binary, queer and gender-nonconforming people.

divergenres.org

TRANS ESTRIE

A community organization that aims to support and represent trans and non-binary people in Estrie.

transestrie.org/en/home/

MAINS BSL

A community organization based in Bas-Saint-Laurent whose mission is to provide support and prevention services in areas related to sexual and gender diversity, STBBIs and HIV.

facebook.com/mainsbsl/

CONSEIL LGBT

The Conseil LGBT has a mission to consolidate the rights of LGBT people in Québec and to undertake activism toward gaining rights so that nobody is left behind when it comes to the recognition of sexual and gender diversity.

conseil-lgbt.ca

LGBT+ FAMILY COALITION

An organization that is working to build a world free of homophobia, transphobia, heteronormativity and cisnormativity, where all families are celebrated and valued without regard for their composition, ethnic origin or nationality.

familleslgbt.org/en/

RÉZO

A non-profit community organization in Montréal, active since 1991, working with gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men (MSM), both cis and trans.

rezosante.org

ASTT(E)Q

(Action Santé Traversti(e)s et Transexuel(e)s du Québec)

ASTT(e)Q fosters the health and well-being of the trans population. The project supports people in their everyday lives, providing support services and weekly group meetings.

cactusmontreal.org/en/programs/astteq-en/

CLINIQUE MAUVE

The clinic aims to provide integrated medical, psychological and sexual health care to immigrant and racialized LGBTQIA2S+ people living in Montréal.

sherpa-recherche.com/en/sherpa/partner-projects/clinique-mauve/

LE JAG

Le JAG provides services for anyone in Montérégie Ouest, Centre and Est who is directly or indirectly affected by romantic, sexual and gender diversity, and those who are questioning.

lejag.org

GRIS-MONTRÉAL

GRIS-Montréal (Groupe de Recherche et d'Intervention Sociale) is a non-profit community organization that demystifies sexual orientations and gender identities by means of personal narrative.

Over the years, additional groups have been founded, including iGRIS-Québec, GRIS-Chaudière-Appalaches, GRIS-Mauricie/ Centre-du-Québec
and GRIS-Estrie.

gris.ca

ASTÉRISK

A bilingual, non-commercial safer space located in Montréal's Gay Village for LGBTQIA2S+ youth age 14 to 35.

coalitionjeunesse.org/l-asterisk

JEUNESSE LAMBDA

Organization created by and for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, queer and questioning people.

www.jeunesselambda.com/en/home

PROJECT 10

An organization that promotes the personal, social, sexual and mental well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, Two-Spirit, intersex and questioning adolescents and young adults age 14 to 25.

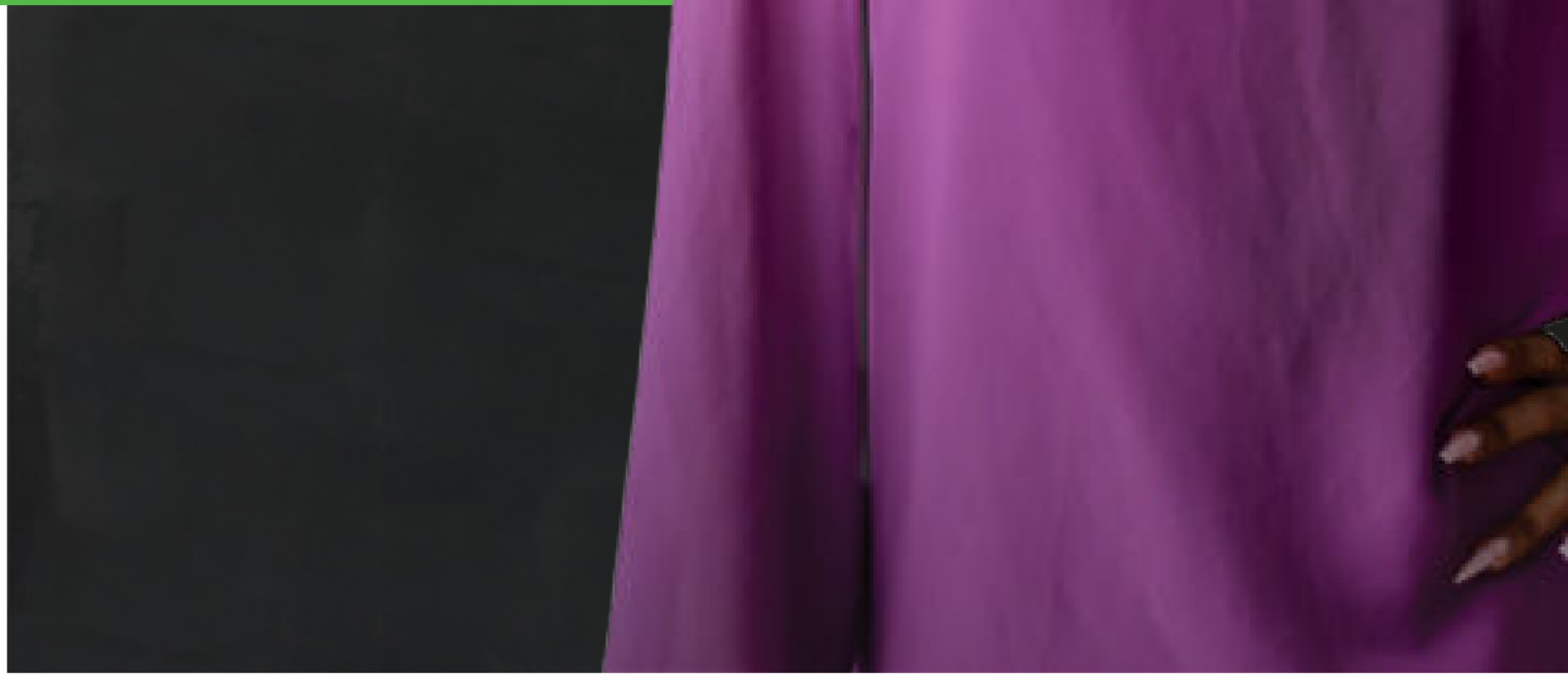
p10.qc.ca

Toujours fiers.
Toujours de l'avant.

Fier partenaire de l'exposition *Unique en son genre* du Musée de la civilisation.

Les progrès réalisés pour la communauté 2SLGBTQ+ sont grands, mais ce n'est pas fini. C'est pourquoi nous appuyons, durant l'année, des initiatives et programmes 2SLGBTQ+ axés sur l'accès au logement abordable, la littératie financière ainsi que le bien-être physique et social.

Renseignez-vous à
td.com/toujoursdelavant



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