Terminology

**Asexual** – In its broadest sense, is the lack of sexual attraction or the lack of interest in and desire for sex. It is important to note that asexual people can still have romantic and important loving relationships.

**Bisexual** – A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others. Bisexuality operates within a socially constructed gender binary.

**Female-to-Male/Transgender Male/Trans Man** – A person who is assigned female at birth who identifies as a man.

**Gay** – 1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in “homosexual behavior” identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution. 2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQIAAP community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

**Genderqueer** – Genderqueer (GQ; alternatively non-binary) is a catch-all term for gender identities other than man and woman, thus outside of the gender binary and cisnormativity. People who identify as genderqueer may think of themselves as one or more of the following:

- both man and woman (bigender, pangender);
- neither man nor woman (genderless, agender);
- moving between genders (genderfluid);
- third gender or other-gendered; includes those who do not place a name to their gender;
- having an overlap of, or blurred lines between, gender identity and sexual and romantic orientation.

**Lesbian** – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people. The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African Americans and other non-European ethnic groups. That being said, some individual female-identified people from diverse ethnic groups, including African Americans, embrace the term ‘lesbian’ as an identity label.

**Male-to-Female/Transgender Female/Trans Woman** – A person who is assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman.
**Pansexual** – is a sexual orientation, characterized by the potential for aesthetic attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire towards people, regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Generally summed up as “Person-based attraction.”

**Queer** – 1. An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual orientations, and habits or the not-exclusively heterosexual- and monogamous majority. 2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation label instead of ‘bisexual’ as a way of acknowledging that there are more than two genders to be attracted to, or as a way of stating a non-heterosexual orientation without having to state who they are attracted to. 3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been semantically overturned by members of the maligned group, who use it as a term of defiant pride. ‘Queer’ is an example of a word undergoing this process. For decades ‘queer’ was used solely as a derogatory adjective for gays and lesbians, but in the 1980s the term began to be used by gay and lesbian activists as a term of self-identification. Eventually, it came to be used as an umbrella term that included gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive. Similarly, other reclaimed words are usually offensive to the in-group when used by outsiders, so extreme caution must be taken concerning their use when one is not a member of the group.

**Questioning** – Process of self-reflection in which a person questions their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Same Gender Loving / SGL** – A term sometimes used by members of the African American / Black community to express a not-exclusively heterosexual sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent. The term emerged in the early 1990s with the intention of offering Black women who love women and Black men who love men a voice, a way of identifying and being that resonated with the uniqueness of Black culture in life.

**Two-Spirit** – an umbrella term sometimes used for what was once commonly known as berdaches (a derogatory word). Indigenous North Americans who fulfill one of many mixed/third gender roles found traditionally among Native American and Canadian First Nations communities. Third gender roles historically embodied by Two-Spirit people include performing work and wearing clothing associated with both males and females. The presence of male two-spirits "was a fundamental institution among most tribal peoples." Male and female two-spirits have been "documented in over 130 tribes, in every region of North America.

**Straight/Heterosexual** – A person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex.

**Transgender** – 1. An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. 2. A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.