

Definitions

The following definitions are a starting point for learning about the language of the LGBTIQ+ community.

LGBTIQA+: stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual. The plus represents the many identities that are not represented in that acronym.

Affirming theology: typically refers to theology that is doesn't believe being same-sex attracted, gender non-conforming, queer etc. is a sin, affirms the identities of queer people. Believes that being LGBTIQ+ is an intended and wonderful part of God's created diversity.

Ally/Allyship: Describes the act of supporting a group other than one's own (in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation etc.) Allies acknowledge that other groups face disadvantage and oppression different to their own; take risks and supportive action on their behalf; commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression. "Allyship is a verb not a noun".

Asexual: Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation. (This is a spectrum.)

Aromantic: A person who does not experience romantic attractions.

Biphobia: The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia exists in the LGBTIQ+ community as well as in general society. Common examples of biphobia include the idea that bisexuals are more likely to cheat etc.

Bisexual: A person who has significant romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions to members of multiple genders. The frequency intensity, or quality of attraction is not necessarily directed toward each gender equally. Bisexuality is also a spectrum and sometimes you will see the term "bi+" used to indicate this.

Cisgender: often shortened to "cis". Describes a person who exclusively and unambiguously identifies as the gender they were assigned at birth (by parents/doctors).

Conversion therapy: Therapy that attempts to "fix" or change someone's sexual orientation. Is not grounded in any psychological research and has been shown to be very harmful. Also often referred to as ex-gay or ex-trans therapy. More correctly viewed as part of the conversion movement due to its virtually inseparable connection to evangelical

Demisexual: A demisexual is a person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form an emotional connection. It's more commonly seen in, but by no means confined to, romantic relationships. Comes from the orientation being "halfway between" sexual and asexual. religious culture and ideology.

Dysphoria: refers to "gender dysphoria" which is the experience of often unbearable or nearly unbearable disconnection between (1) how others gender you (social) and (2) how you perceive the gendering of your own body (physical).

Ex-gay/Ex-trans: Someone who no longer identifies as gay, lesbian or trans. They are almost always still attracted to the same sex or experiencing some form of dysphoria, so the label is often about rejecting the identity rather than truly changing on the inside. The idea that people can and should become ex-gay or ex-trans has been shown time and time again to be extremely harmful. While the terms "ex-lesbian" and "ex-bi" make sense, they are almost never used in the ex-gay/ex-trans movement.

Gay: A word describing a man or a woman who is emotionally, romantically, sexually and relationally attracted to members of the same sex.

Gender: The concepts of masculinity and femininity as they are socially constructed. The qualities and social expectations that are 'appropriate' to accompanying biological sex.

Gender Expression: How one expresses their gender identity to others. Such as through behaviour, dress, mannerisms, hair, body and voice characteristics.

Gender Identity: An individual's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, it may not be visible to everyone else.

Gender non-conforming: Used to describe people whose gender expression differs from societal expectations placed upon them regarding gender.

Genderqueer: A term used by some individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to other sexualities. Exists at individual as well as institutional levels.

Homophobia: Negative feelings, attitudes, actions and/or behaviours toward anyone who is gay or thought to be gay.

Homosexuality: Defines attraction to the same sex. Many prefer other terms such as "gay" or "lesbian". Considered offensive to many LGBTIQ+ people.

Intersex: describes a person whose body does not fit the conventional definitions of "male" and "female". This includes hormone imbalances, atypical chromosomes, and physical sex characteristics that reflect the typical sex characteristics of either both male and female or neither male or female. Also known as the more medicalised term "differences of sex development".

Lesbian: A woman whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to other women.

Marginalisation: The process of making a group/class of people less important that is relegating them to a secondary position.

Non-affirming theology: theology that believes that queer people are either broken and/or sinful.

Non-binary: a catch all category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine and thus exist outside the gender binary. Is also an identity in itself.

Pansexual: the sexual, romantic, emotional attraction to people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Patriarchy: A social system of male domination in which males hold the primary power, predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In the family domain men hold authority over women and children.

Privilege: A right, license, or exemption from duty or liability that is granted as a special benefit, advantage or favour.

Queer: Often used as an umbrella term from the LGBTI+ community. Depending on the user it may be derogatory or affirming. It is a word that has largely been reclaimed although its use used to be and sometimes still exists as a slur.

Sex: the category of male and female in which humans and most living things are divided into based on their reproductive functions and biological characteristics.

Sexual orientation: Emotional, romantic, sexual and relational attraction to another person. May be same-sex orientation, bi/pan orientation etc.

Transgender: Is sometimes shortened to trans. Often used as an umbrella term and describes someone who does not exclusively and unambiguously identify as the gender they were assigned at birth (by their parents and/or doctors). Note transgender is correctly used as an adjective and not a noun. So "transgender people" is appropriate but "transgenders" is largely viewed as disrespectful.

Transphobia: The fear, hatred of, or discomfort with people whose gender expression or identity does not conform to cultural gender norms.

EQUAL, AFFIRMED, INCLUDED.

Are you a lesbian, gay, bi+, trans, intersex, queer or asexual+ person with Christian faith? We are a community of churches, groups and organisations that affirm, celebrate and support people just like you! Not sure what it means to be LGBTIQ+ affirming? Here's our statement of affirmation:

We believe that LGBTIQ+ people are a loved and essential part of God's intended human diversity.

Here are some groups, organisations and resources that can help you work out more about who you are and how your faith and sexuality work together



www.thebravenetwork.org

Support and advocacy group for LGBTIQ+ people from Christian backgrounds

The primary focus of Brave Network is ensuring the wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people of faith, regardless of their faith journey. Brave Network is fully affirming of LGBTIQ+ inclusive theology and is both sex positive and faith positive.

[BraveNetworkMelbourne](https://www.facebook.com/BraveNetworkMelbourne)

We also have a closed group. Send us a message to learn more.



EQUAL VOICES

www.equalvoices.org.au

National advocacy organisation with branches in most states and territories

"We are a movement of straight and LGBTIQ+ Christians who mourn the silencing and rejection of Christians who are LGBTIQ+ by our churches. We are committed to the cultivation of church cultures in which LGBTIQ+ people are welcomed and accepted on the same basis as anyone whose sexuality is 'straight'."

Visit the website to get the contact details for your area.



www.melbourneacceptance.wixsite.com/home

We are an open and affirming community in Melbourne, Australia that supports Catholics who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer.

Acceptance Melbourne has been providing a safe space for LGBTIQ Catholics to practice their faith since 1973.



Uniting Church LGBTIQ Network

www.unitingnetworkaustralia.org.au

UNA is the national network for LGBTIQ+ people, their families, friends and supporters within the Uniting Church in Australia.

Counsellors with expertise in LGBTIQ identity and Christian faith



www.mgacounselling.com.au



www.equipcounsellingconsulting.com.au



www.queerspace.org.au



[www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

1800 184 527 Webchat 3pm to midnight, 7 days



Produced by Brave Network Melbourne

For more information, visit www.thebravenetwork.org

Have you been told that you're broken?

It is all too common for LGBTIQ+ people of faith to be told that they are "broken" or "damaged" due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Times have changed and almost every organisation, therapist or group focused on changing LGBTIQ+ identity (sometimes called ex-gay therapy, ex-trans therapy or the conversion movement) has now closed, reconciled scripture and sexuality, and become affirming.

Here's the official statement of the Australian Psychological Society on affirming sexuality and gender:

www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/advocacy/Position-Statements/use-of-psychological-practice-sexual-orientation

Brave and Equal Voices regularly send speakers to churches and Christian groups to talk about LGBTIQ+ affirming theology. If you are interested, contact Brave Network Melbourne or the Melbourne Branch of Equal Voices.

Here are some churches in Victoria that are LGBTIQ+ affirming:

Collins Street Baptist Church

South Yarra Anglican Church

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Preston**

Fitzroy North Community Church

West Melbourne Baptist Church

**South Yarra Community Baptist
Church**

Brunswick Uniting Church

**Immaculate Conception Catholic
Parish Hawthorn**

Richmond Uniting Church

Cornerstone Congregation Moreland

**St Cecilia's Catholic Church
Glen Iris**

Melbourne Inclusive Church

**St Joseph's Catholic Church
South Yarra**

Ashburton Baptist Church

Affirming theology/churches

Typically refers to theology and churches that affirm the identity of queer people and do not believe being same-sex attracted, trans or queer is a sin or a form of "brokenness".

Non-affirming / Non-affirming theology

Theology that believes that queer people are either broken and/or sinful. Non-affirming faith communities may propose celibacy, conversion activities (eg. therapy), or even outright rejection. Mandated celibacy is non-affirming as it is based on the same "brokenness" ideology as the ex-gay/ex-trans/conversion movement. Non-affirming theology is damaging as it leads people to believe that they are inferior and that part of who they are is wrong. Celibacy is never spoken of in the Bible as a mandate for an entire group of people, much less the notion of being queer and celibate. It is a new response that has been promoted in recent years as churches realise that they can not change people's sexual orientation or gender identity (and that they may get in trouble if they try).

Welcoming

Most churches would fit into the welcoming but not affirming category. Where churches "welcome" LGBT+ people. However, the welcome is always followed by a "but". You are welcome, BUT... you can't get married here, serve in a leadership position here and we think ideally you would not be queer or at least not "act on it". They don't, however, support same-sex marriage, or queer people who are non celibate being in leadership roles. The slogan "love the sinner, hate the sin" demonstrates this kind of theology well.



www.socesurvivors.com.au

The SOCE Survivor Statement has been written by survivors of the ex-gay/ex-trans/conversion movement - a movement of which conversion therapy is one small aspect - to clearly define the movement, its ideology, and strategies for ending it.

Websites/blogs/twitter

austenhartke.com

Particularly worth checking out for Austen's 'Trans Faith'

believeoutloud.com

transfaithonline.org

Multi faith website

queergrace.com

"...an encyclopaedia for LGBTQ and Christian Life"

manyvoices.org

A Black Church movement for LGBT+ justice

qchristian.org

Q Christian Fellowship, formerly Gay Christian Network. QCF also has a fabulous YouTube channel.

reformationproject.org

The Reformation Project. Also has a wonderful YouTube channel.

canyonwalkerconnections.com

The website of champion ally and advocate Kathy Baldock

elielcruz.com

Eliel is a bisexual Christian activist

thekevingarcia.com

Blog of internationally celebrated gay Christian advocate and writer Kevin Garcia

www.transspirit.org

Blog from trans leader, Anglican priest and theologian Jo Inkpin

Read, listen and learn

Podcasts

INSIDE EX-GAY

www.insideexgay.org

A series of podcasts featuring survivors of the ex-gay/ex-trans conversion movement, major Australian church leaders and theologians, and straight allies.

Visit Inside Ex-gay radio podcasts at www.insideexgay.org/radio.

Articles

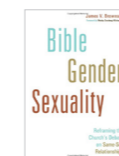
The SOCE Survivors Statement page lists nearly every article about the ex-gay/ex-trans conversion movement (sometimes called gay conversion therapy).

www.socesurvivors.com.au.

Articles from ABBI (Ambassadors and Bridge Builders International). www.abbi.org.au/resources.

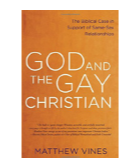
ABBI was founded by noted Sydney-based speaker, former church leader, and conversion movement survivor Anthony Venn-Brown.

Books



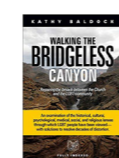
Bible, Gender, Sexuality
by James Brownson

Brownson's book is one of the most thorough academic texts on LGBTIQ+ identity and theology. It deeply explores all affirming arguments. While it does discuss affirming arguments for trans and gender diverse people as well, it largely focusses on theology around same-sex relationships.



God and The Gay Christian
by Matthew Vines

Vines' book is one of the most comprehensive and accessible books that explores many of the key affirming theological arguments for same-sex relationships. If you are only going to read one book this would be a great choice.



Walking the Bridgeless Canyon
by Kathy Baldock

Kathy's book is a wonderful resource and she expertly examines how theology around queer people has been shaped by social, political, psychological and historical factors. This would also be an excellent choice if you were only to read one book.



Changing our Mind (3rd Ed)
by David Gushee

In Changing Our Mind, leading evangelical ethicist Dr David Gushee takes the reader along his personal and theological journey as he changes his mind about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender inclusion in the Church.



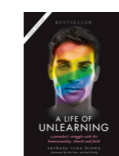
Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the God vs Christian Debate
by Justin Lee

If you are beginning to think about the relationship between LGBTIQ+ people and the church, Justin Lee's book is a wonderful introduction. Justin's book is very accessible and warmly written. It's a great taste of affirming theology but is more of an accessible introduction than a thorough academic offering. A great place to start!



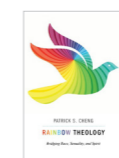
Undivided
by Vicky Beeching

Former Christian worship music icon Vicky Beeching shares her powerful story. While her story is her own, it is one that many LGBTIQ+ Christians will relate to.



A Life of Unlearning
by Anthony Venn-Brown

The story of a former pentecostal leader from Sydney who came out after many years of marriage and ministry. Anthony is now an LGBTIQ+ rights advocate.



Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality, and Spirit
by Patrick S. Cheng

Cheng's book masterfully explores the theological work of LGBTIQ+ people of colour. Cheng's book demonstrates the importance of considering the intersections of race and queerness.



Sex and the Single Saviour
by Martin Dale

Dale's work is a collection of academic essays. It contains particularly good essays on several New Testament passages that are frequently used to condemn queer people.



Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians
by Austen Hartke

A wonderful book. If you know a trans person then read this book. It's a great introduction and Austen is a wonderful scholar of the Hebrew Bible.



Sex Difference in Christian Theology: Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God
by Megan K. DeFranza

This is a great resource for those who want to look at gender from an academic perspective. A challenging read but one of the best books about gender.



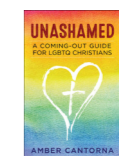
This is My Body: Hearing the Theology of Transgender Christians - edited
by Michelle O'Brien and Christian Beardsley

A great book that explores people's relationship between gender and faith. Written by trans Christians this book is important because too often they are written about and poorly consulted. Here they share their own stories and theology and we are the richer for their wonderful contribution.



Trans-gender: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith
by Justin Tanis

Tanis' book demonstrates how important it is that our communities are inclusive, particularly for trans people. It offers a strong biblical case for the inclusion and celebration of trans Christians in communities of faith.



Unashamed: A Coming-Out Guide for LGBTQ Christians
by Amber Cantorna

A great guide for those who are navigating the tricky experience of coming out. It's filled with stories that remind you that many other people have navigated this too and you are not alone.

Other books for the super keen:



Queer Bible Commentary and Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible.



Ancient Laws and Contemporary Controversies
by Dr Cheryl B. Anderson