

What Does it Mean?

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Grade Level:

9-12

Objectives:

Define key terms dealing with sexuality and gender identity.

Materials:

The following list of terms and definitions, each cut separately.

Sex

An act, or series of acts, that humans engage in as part of the expression of their sexual nature and their desire for love and affection. Also, the identification of biological gender.

Sexual Orientation

The orientation within human beings which leads them to be emotionally and physically attracted to persons of the opposite sex, same sex, or both sexes, or neither. One's sexual orientation may therefore be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual.

Gay man

A man who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of the same gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Lesbian

A woman who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of the same gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact. Many women prefer the term "lesbian" to "gay" because it connotes a unique identity. Lesbians tend to be more similar to women in general than they are to gay men.

Bisexual

A person who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of either gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Heterosexual

A person who experiences the human need for warmth, affection, and love from persons of the opposite gender. Sometimes this includes sexual contact.

Homosexual

A term coined in 1869 by an early psychiatrist name Kertbery, who used it to describe a person who has "an other than normal sexual urge that renders them physically and psychically incapable." Since the word was originally used to describe a pathology, most gay, lesbian, and bisexual people today do not like to use this term to define themselves. Homosexuality is no longer considered to be pathological by the American

Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and other professional organizations. The word "homosexual" is often used as a descriptor when discussing concrete behaviors (e.g., to describe same-sex sexual behaviors or fantasies.)

Gay

A generic term said to apply to both men and women who are attracted to the same sex, much in the same way that "man," used generically, is meant to encompass both men and women. Some people object to the use of "gay" applied to lesbians as well as gay men, and use the word to mean a homosexual male only.

Gender identity

An individual's basic self-conviction of being male or female. This conviction is not contingent upon the individual's biological gender/sex. The exact process by which boys and girls come to see themselves as male or female is not known; however, research indicates that gender identity develops sometime between birth and three years of age.

Queer

Used by some to refer to themselves, the GLBT community, a person who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or even someone who is supportive of the GLBT community. This term is often as much a political statement as a label. Those who use the term feel it is more inclusive, allowing for the variety in race, class, ability, and gender that is present in the GLBT communities. **WARNING:** Many are offended by this word and view it as a pejorative.

Transgender

A broad umbrella term for persons whose self-image or gender identity is not associated with their biological sex. Some transgender persons wish to change their anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception; others have no such desire. There is no correlation between sexual orientation and transgender issues; transgender persons can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Crossdresser

A person who dresses in the clothing of the opposite biological sex. Crossdressers generally want to relate as, and be accepted as, a person of the gender they are presenting. Crossdressing may be partial or total in amount of time and amount of clothing worn. Because there is no correlation between sexual orientation and transgender issues, crossdressers can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Transsexual

A person whose gender identity is other than their biological gender (sex), and who may wish to change their anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception. Most transsexuals would like to alter their bodies through hormonal therapy, gender reassignment surgery, or other means.

Transvestite

A person who may achieve a sexual pleasure through the use of clothing or personal adornments of the other gender. The term is often incorrectly used to mean "crossdresser." There is no correlation between sexual orientation and transvestite behavior; therefore, a transvestite may be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Student Activities:

1. Explain that we are going to see how much we know about GLBT terms and definitions.
2. Give each participant either a term or definition
3. Instruct each participant to walk around the room, find his/her match, and stand next to him/her.
4. Have pairs read terms and definitions.
5. Explain terms and definitions more thoroughly. The next lesson plan, Sexual Orientation Quiz, is helpful in explaining the difference between sexual orientation and sexual behaviors.

Feedback:

Have students write a 1-2 paragraph assessment of the lesson. What did you learn? Were any of the terms new to you? How are various terms related?