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North Bay Positive Spaces Research Project

## North Bay Positive Spaces Research Survey Glossary

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**2-Spirit/Two Spirit** - A term used by some Indigenous communities to describe people with diverse gender identities, gender expressions, gender roles, and sexual orientations. This term reflects Indigenous understandings of gender and sexuality that can refer to cross, multiple, and/or non-binary gender roles; non-heterosexual identities; and a range of cultural identities, roles, and practices.

**Agender** - A person who is agender sees themselves as neither man nor woman, has no gender identity, or no gender to express. *Similar terms to agender include genderless, gender neutral, and neutrois.*

**Asexual** - Someone who does not experience sexual desire for people of any gender. Some asexual people desire romantic relationships, while others do not. Asexuality can be considered a spectrum, with some asexual people experiencing desire for varying types of intimacy. This desire may fluctuate over time. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate refraining from sexual activity. Asexual people experience high levels of invisibility and trivialization.

**Assigned at Birth** – refers to the sex and/or gender that was assigned to a person, usually at birth, by a doctor, nurse, or midwife. This assignment is usually based on the genitalia of the infant, and sometimes includes an assessment of the infants hormones, chromosomes, and other characteristics related to reproduction. Infants are typically assigned to one of three categories: male, female, or intersex. Those who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth are “cisgender” and those who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth are “transgender”.

**Biphobia:** Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against bisexuals and bisexual behaviour. Biphobia exerts a powerful, negative force on the lives of bisexual people. Some examples of biphobia in action are disparaging jokes, verbal abuse or acts of violence targeted at bisexual people, or the dismissal of bisexuality as an inferior, invalid or irrelevant expression of sexuality. Bisexual people often face biphobia and discrimination in both queer and non-queer communities.

**Bisexual** - An individual who is attracted to, and may form sexual and romantic relationships with “both”/all genders. *“Both” appears in quotation marks to reference the root of bi as meaning two, but also to acknowledge that there are more than two genders.* A bisexual person may feel equally attracted to each gender, or may experience stronger attractions to one gender while still having feelings for another; this ratio of attraction may vary over time.

**Cisgender** - Identifying with the same gender that one was assigned at birth. A gender identity that society considers to match the biological sex assigned at birth.

**Cisgender Man** – A person who was assigned male at birth and who continues to identify as male.

**Cisgender Woman** – A person who was assigned female at birth and who continues to identify as female.

**Coming Out:** Coming out or, ‘coming out of the closet,’ is the process of becoming aware of one’s queer sexual orientation, one’s 2-Spirit or trans identity, accepting it, and telling others about it. This is an ongoing process that may not include everybody in all aspects of one’s life.

**Discrimination** – Refers to a broad range of practices, policies, and actions that unjustly treat people or are prejudice against people based on some aspect of their identity (e.g. sexual orientation, ability, etc.) Discrimination can exclude people, deny people of benefits and/or rights, or impose burdens. Discrimination exists when rules, standards or requirements that appear to be neutral have a discriminatory impact on people identified. Discrimination can take many forms, including systemic discrimination and direct or interpersonal discrimination. Systemic discrimination refers to policies or practices that appear to be neutral on their surface but that may have discriminatory effects on individuals or communities of people. Direct or interpersonal discrimination involves an individual act of discrimination against another person or community of people.

**Gay** - A person who is mostly attracted to those of the same gender; often used to refer to a man who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to or involved with other men. Gay is also sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual + community.

**Gender Expression** - How one outwardly manifests (shows) gender; for example, through behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, makeup, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender.

**Gender Identity** - Each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along or outside the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person’s sexual orientation. A person’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to other people.

**Genderfluid** - Conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may change, even from day to day. In other words, a genderfluid person may feel they are a woman some days and a man on other days, or a combination, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately.

**Heterosexual** - Men who experience sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to women. Women who experience sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to men. *Also known as 'straight.'*

**Homophobia** - Fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behaviour. There are many levels and forms of homophobia, including cultural/institutional homophobia, interpersonal homophobia, and internalized homophobia. Many forms of homophobia are related to how restrictive binary gender roles are (see '*oppositional sexism*'). An example of this might be a lesbian who is harassed with homophobic language for being perceived to be masculine. Many of the problems faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, including health and income disparities, stem from homophobia and heterosexism.

**Identity** – Refers to how you see/understand/think about yourself as a person. This can include aspects of self, such as: beliefs, values, personality, individuality, life experience, etc. It can also include other elements of self, such as: sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, ability/disability, language, culture, place of origin, religious or spiritual beliefs, age, mental health status, citizenship, relationship status, ancestry, education, income, etc.

**Intersex** - a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit medical definitions of female or male. This can be because of body parts, chromosomes, hormones, or all three.

**Lesbian** - A woman who is primarily romantically and sexually attracted to women. Although not as common, sometimes the term 'gay woman' is used instead.

**LGBTQ2S+** - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/trans, queer, 2-Spirit. The plus sign is meant to represent and acknowledge other identities not explicitly represented in this acronym, such as: pansexual, bisexual, etc.

**Non-Binary** – An identity that can fit under the umbrella term of trans, though people who identify as non-binary may not also identify as trans. Non-binary specifically refers to people whose gender identity does not fit in the male-female binary.

**Not Out** – A term that is used to describe a person who is personally aware that their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is within the LGBTQ2S+ community, however has not disclosed or told other people about their identity. Some people choose to not be out due to safety or privacy reasons.

**Out** – A term that is used to describe a person who is open about/does not hide their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. This typically refers to those who are part of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Many people who are out continue to “come out” many times in their life. ‘Coming out’ usually occurs in stages and is a non-linear process. An individual may be ‘out’ in only some situations or to certain family members or associates and not others. Some may never ‘come out’ to anyone beside themselves.

**Outing** - Is the act of disclosing an LGBTQ2S+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Outing a person can put them at risk of harm, discrimination, and a lack of privacy.

**Pansexual** - An individual who is attracted to and may form sexual and romantic relationships with men, women, and people who identify outside the gender binary. *Omnisexual is another term that can be used.*

**Queer** - An identity that refers to a person who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of all gender identities. Queer can also be used as an umbrella term to refer to the LGBTQ2S+ community. Historically the word queer has been an insult, however some people have reclaimed the word, while some are still opposed or uncomfortable with using it.

**Questioning** - A term sometimes used by those in the process of exploring personal issues of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Safe** – When you feel as though you can share your identity without any negative consequences. A place or a person could be considered safe if your identity is understood, recognized, and accepted. A safe place or person will support and respect your identity and where you will be free from discrimination because of your identity.

**Sexual Orientation** - Refers to a person’s deep-seated and personal feelings of emotional, sexual and/or romantic attraction to groups of people (e.g. men, women, all genders, etc.) a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions; for example: bisexual, gay, heterosexual, etc. Many people experience sexual orientation fluidly, and feel attraction or degrees of attraction to different genders at different points in their lives. Sexual orientation is defined by feelings of attraction rather than behaviour.

**Socioeconomic Status/Class** – refers to combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Can also be understood as a status hierarchy in which individuals and groups are classified on the basis of esteem and prestige acquired mainly through economic success and accumulation of wealth. Social class may also refer to any particular level in such a hierarchy. For example: Upper class, Middle class, Working class, etc.

**Transgender Man** - a person who identifies as both transgender and a man. For example, this could include people who were assigned female at birth and now identify as a man. Some, but not all, people also identify with the term “F-to-M” (female to male).

**Transgender Woman** – a person who identifies as both transgender and a woman. For example, this could include people who were assigned male at birth and now identify as a woman. Some, but not all, people also identify with the term “M-to-F” (male to female).

**Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella term that describes a wide range of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Some of the many people who may or may not identify as transgender/trans include: people on the male-to-female or female-to-male spectrums, people who identify and/or express their gender outside of the male/female binary, people whose gender identity and/or expression is fluid, and many more. Identifying as transgender/trans is something that can only be decided by an individual for themselves and does not depend on criteria such as surgery or hormone treatment status.

**Transphobia:** The fear and dislike of, and discrimination against, trans people. Transphobia can take the form of disparaging jokes, rejection, exclusion, denial of services, employment discrimination, name-calling and violence. Trans people often face transphobia and discrimination in both queer and non-queer communities.

**Unsafe** – when you feel as though sharing your identity may put you at risk of experiencing harm, harassment, exclusion, danger, etc. A place or a person could be considered unsafe for you to share your identity if, for example: negative comments are made about your identity, your identity is not taken seriously, you’re threatened or harmed because of your identity, etc.