Terminology and Definitions

Agender: A person without a gender.

Ally: A person who supports a community with which they do not identify/of which they are not a member. (By definition, allies are NOT part of the community they are supporting.)

Aromantic (“arrow”): A person who does not experience romantic attraction (or limited attraction) to any people.

Asexual (“ace”): A person who does not experience sexual attraction (or limited attraction) to any people.

Biological/Chromosomal Sex: An outdated term used to describe the “sex assigned at birth” of transgender people, often with an inference that, while one’s gender expression or identity may change, deep down, they are still a man/woman. This is damaging and should be avoided, as science has shown multiple biological/chromosomal variations in existence.

Bi-Erasure/Biphobia: The (incorrect) assumption that bisexuality does not exist.

Bisexual: A person who has the ability to have sexual relationships with people of the same gender and/or a different gender. (Related: Biromantic)

Cisgender: A person whose sex assigned at birth matches their gender. (Latin prefix “cis” = “on the same side as”.)

Cissexism/Cisnormativity: The assumption or belief that everyone is or should be cisgender (non-transgender).

Coming Out: The never-ending process of revealing one’s sexual orientation or gender, whether to oneself or to others.

GSD: SOJOURN’s preferred acronym (instead of LGBT+) it means, “gender and sexual diversity”.

Genderqueer/Genderfluid: A person whose gender is non-binary; is beyond genders; is multiple genders; or some combination thereof.

Gender Binary: The (incorrect) assumption that there are only two genders, male and female.

Gender Expression: The outward manifestation of one’s gender, including clothing, make-up, and other style choices.

Gender Identity: (1) A person’s internal view or interpretation of their gender; (2) A sometimes micro-agression against transgender people (cis people are said to have a gender while trans people have a gender identity)
Gender Non-Conforming/Gender Variant/Gender Expansive: A person who does not participate in the cultural expectations for gender expression as dictated by society.

Heterosexism/Heteronormativity: The assumption or belief that everyone is or should be heterosexual.

Internalized Homo/Trans/biphobia/Internalized Oppression: Fear or self-hate of one's own (GSD) identity; often occurs in those who grew up hearing negative messages about GSD (or their specific group of) people.

Intersectionality: The understanding that certain cultural oppressions are bound together and influenced by the various systems of society, including race, gender, orientation, and others.

Intersex: A person who is born with discordant external or internal biological sex characteristics or chromosomes. (Formerly: Hermaphrodite, now considered to be offensive/inappropriate.)

Misogyny: The hatred of women. (related: transmisogyny)

Pansexual: A person who has the ability to have sexual relationships/attraction to people of all genders. (Related: Panromantic)

Polyamory: The practice or desire of having more than one intimate relationship at a time, with the consent and knowledge of everyone involved.

Privilege: Unearned resources and advantages available to some based solely on social, racial, or other group membership.

Queer: Anyone who chooses to identify as such. A blanket term for any, all, or none of the alphabet letters (LGBT....) Considered by some to be offensive and by others to be a term that has been “reclaimed”.

Romantic Orientation: The innate romantic or emotional attraction one has to others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between a person and the person to whom they are attracted.

Same Gender Loving/In the Life: A self-identification term often used by POC (people of color) as protest against the typically white-associated terms “gay” and “lesbian”.

Sex Assigned at Birth: The conflation of sex + gender assigned to a person at birth by their doctor, based on assumptions made by the presence of certain external/visible genitalia. “AFAB/AMAB” = “Assigned Female/Male at Birth” (“Biological sex” is often misused here and is inappropriate.)

Sexual Orientation: The innate sexual attraction one has to others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between a person and the person to whom they are attracted.

Sexual Preference: Often misused for “sexual orientation;” the types of sexual encounters and activities one prefers.

Transgender: A person whose sex assigned at birth does not match their gender. (Latin prefix “trans” = across)