

#WriteInclusion Factsheets

Expanded Glossary

Ableism: Practices and beliefs that assign inferior value to those with developmental, emotional, physical/sensory, or psychiatric disabilities. Ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people need to be "fixed." Examples of ableism include institutional discrimination (employment, housing); ableist language; inaccessible streets, buildings, and transportation; lack of or harmful media portrayals; bullying, isolation, and pity.

Abstinence: The decision to and/or practice of not partaking in sexual activity, typically for a limited period of time (e.g., until marriage). Unlike asexuality, which is a sexual orientation that describes a lack of sexual attraction, abstinence is a behavior.

Affirmative action: A set of policies and practices within a government or organization seeking to include particular groups based on their gender, race, religion, or nationality in areas in which they are excluded in the past such as education and employment.

For myths and facts on affirmative action, see the ACLU Racial Justice Program, ACLU Human Rights Program, and the African American Policy Forum's [factsheet](#).

Affirmative consent: A voluntary, affirmative, and conscious mutual agreement among all participants through words or nonverbal actions that create clear permission regarding willingness to engage in the sexual activity (i.e., "yes means yes"). Consent may be withdrawn at any time. Consent cannot be given when it's the result of coercion, intimidation, force, threat of harm, or when a person is incapacitated (e.g., by drugs or alcohol, not awake or fully awake).

African diaspora: The dispersal of millions of people of African origin all over the world, especially in Europe and the Americas. The largest populations descended from those forcibly transported from Africa are in Brazil, which, though not precisely listed in census returns, may be as high as 90 million – about half of Brazil's entire population in

2010. Other similarly descended populations include approximately 40 million in the Caribbean, 40 million in the U.S., and many millions more in other countries. Roughly 4 million more enslaved Africans were taken to Brazil than to any other country. Slavery lasted longer in Brazil than in other countries, not being finally abolished until 1888.

- [Understanding Slavery Initiative](#)

Afro Latinx: Black Latinx people who refer to themselves in varied, nuanced ways. For instance, those from Latin America and the diaspora self-identify using terms including, but not limited to, Black Latinx ("negro(a)/x" in Spanish), Afrodescendant ("afrodescendiente" in Spanish), and Afro Latinx.

Ageism: The stereotyping, prejudice, and/or discrimination against people based on their age (across all ages). Ageism affects all aspects of our society, from the workplace (e.g., being fired from a job because of age) to healthcare (e.g., not being taken seriously by doctors because of age).

Agender: A person who does not experience or express any gender (while most non-binary identities typically do have a gender, just one that isn't binary). For [more](#).

Allah: Arabic word for God. Allah is the same God worshiped by adherents of Christian and Jewish faiths. In dialogue, Muslims speaking English and referring to God should say "God," not "Allah."

Allosexual: The opposite of asexual; someone who regularly experiences sexual attraction toward other people.

Amazigh: The Amazigh people (22-40 million) inhabit a territory spanning most of North Africa, from the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts up to the Sahel. Since the 20th century, it also has had a substantial presence in Europe through the Amazigh diaspora. North Africa's 25 million Amazigh (so-called Berbers) have long struggled to preserve their identity. Originally spread across the south of the Mediterranean, the majority have lived in Algeria and Morocco for thousands of years but have been denied the right to inhabit their culture and speak their language for centuries. Amid a long history of colonial suppression is the desire to no longer be referred to as Berbers but as Amazigh, meaning "free people," and for their language to be known as Tamazight. Though these issues are still being hotly debated between the people concerned and those wielding power, progress has been made. Find more [here](#).

Anchor baby: An offensive term often used to refer to a child born to a non-citizen parent under the assumption the child will provide them a path to securing citizenship or legal residency.

Androgyny: A gender expression that contains physical elements of both masculinity and femininity or neither. Note: Androgyny is a form

of gender expression (how someone outwardly expresses their gender), not a gender identity (their innate sense of gender). While some non-binary people have an androgynous gender expression, others do not; androgyny is not a requirement to be or synonymous with non-binary.

Arab and/or Muslim: Arabs are people who identify as being from one of the 22 Arab League Nations (see below) who share a common language, history and culture. Arabs are also one of many ethnicities that practice Islam. But not all Arabs are Muslim; 7% adhere to other religions (e.g., approximately 5% of Arabs are Christian; approximately 63% of U.S. Arabs are Christian, 24% Muslim, 13% are other or have no religious affiliation).

The Arab League: Comprises 22 members: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen. The term "Arab" morphed in meaning over the centuries. At times, it meant Bedouin tribes from southern Arabia. It was a linguistic marker, meaning anyone whose language or origin was Arabic. Current meaning refers to nationalistic/ethnic kinship. Used here as an expansive category including all those identifying as "Arab."

ART, PrEP, and PEP: Medications that treat or prevent the spread of HIV. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) medication treats and manages HIV in HIV+ people. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) are used by HIV- people at risk of getting HIV through sex or injection drug use. When taken correctly, these medications can make HIV+ people undetectable (i.e., reduce the amount of HIV in the body to untransmittable levels) and prevent the spread of HIV. For [more](#).

Aromantic (aro): A person who experiences little or no romantic attraction. Aromantics might or might not experience sexual attraction. For [more](#).

Asexual (ace): A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction (to people of any gender).

Asexuality: The total or near total lack of sexual attraction to anyone and/or the lack of desire for sexual contact. Asexuality is not a choice; it shouldn't be conflated or confused with celibacy, abstinence, or low sex drive. Asexuality is a spectrum, and there's considerable diversity in the needs and experiences among members of the ace community (e.g., attractions, relationships, disabilities, cultures). It should be noted that while some aces consider "asexual" their sexual orientation, others feel like they have no orientation at all. For [more](#).

Asian American: A term used to describe an American of Asian descent. It's not an ideal term because it collapses countless identities and cultures into one label and often *only* refers to the East Asian American experience. For more on the complexity of this label, as well as the larger "Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI)" label, here is a [helpful video](#).

Asian Latinx: Two of America's fastest-growing ethnic groups are Asian and Latino, and they aren't mutually exclusive. For centuries, Asian immigrants have settled throughout Latin America. There are Korean communities in Mexico and Argentina; Chinatowns everywhere from Santo Domingo to Lima; and there's a major Japanese population in Brazil. The immigrants' descendants carry both Asian and Latin American identities. In the U.S., Asians and Latinos have lived side-by-side in heavily immigrant neighborhoods and have created lives together. See [here](#) for more details.

A-spec: An umbrella term for the the asexual and/or aromantic spectrums. This includes anyone who experiences little to no romantic and/or sexual attraction (e.g., asexuals, aromantics, graysexuals, demisexuals). More on some of the many a-spec identities [here](#).

Assigned Female at Birth/Assigned Male at Birth (AFAB/AMAB): A way of referring to the sex designated to someone at birth. This is preferred language to replace outdated "FTM" or "MTF."

Asylum seekers: Those seeking refugee status to secure protection based on their religion, nationality, political affiliation, or particular social or ethnic group membership.

Baby boomer: "Baby boomer" is a term describing a person born between 1946 and 1964. This generation comprises a substantial portion of the world's population, especially in developed nations. As of 2019, it represents 23.5% of the U.S. population. As the largest generational group in U.S. history (until the millennial generation slightly surpassed them), baby boomers have had — and continue to have — a significant impact on the economy. This often makes them the focus of marketing campaigns and business plans. As of 2021, they're reaching retirement age and face key challenges, including funding their retirements. See [here](#) for more.

Bi+: An encompassing term for people of all genders whose sexual orientation falls outside concepts of straight and gay. This includes bisexual, pansexual, sexually fluid, queer, and other sexual orientations with the capacity to be sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to more than one gender (not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree). "Bi+" itself is not typically a label used to describe an individual, but rather, it's used to capture a community of orientations with related and shared experiences. More on this community [here](#).

Bi erasure: The discriminatory denial of bisexuality's existence by ignoring, removing, falsifying, or explaining away evidence of it (e.g., ignoring historical figures' bisexuality, assuming people in same-gender relationships are both gay). More on the effects of bi erasure [here](#).

Bigender: A term to describe people whose identity encompasses two genders, either simultaneously or varying between the two. For [more](#).

Binder: A item used by some trans men, transmasculine people, or non-binary people for tightly wrapping the chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts. Note: Do not depict characters binding with an Ace bandage, as it is extremely dangerous and can cause long-term harm.

Bindi: Comes from the Sanskrit word "bindu" for point or dot. Worn often in the shape of a dot on the forehead between the brows, it has a rich religious and cultural history and can be seen as a "third eye" warding off bad luck and forging a connection with God. Because of the many languages and dialects spoken throughout India, bindis are known by many names including kumkum, sindoor, teep, tikli, and bottu. Around 3000 BC, the rishi-muni (ancient seers of Hinduism) wrote the Vedas, describing the existence of seven main areas of concentrated energy called the chakras. Chakras run along the center of the body, and the sixth one (called the ajna chakra, the "brow chakra" or "third eye chakra") occurs exactly where the bindi is placed.

Biological clock: In relation to birthing people, the biological clock refers to the sense of pressure people feel to have children during their "peak" reproductive years. While it is true that fertility declines after a certain age, it is still possible for many people to get pregnant later in life. When it comes to storytelling, the biological clock is often used as the *sole* motivator for a woman's character arc, reducing her only to her desire to have children.

Biphobia: Prejudice or hatred directed at bi+ people, including jokes or comments based on stereotypes that seek to undermine the legitimacy of bi+ identity. Biphobia occurs both within and outside of the LGBTQIA+ community. For [more](#).

Birthright citizenship: The right of any U.S.-born person to U.S. citizenship, as established by the 14th Amendment.

Bisexual (bi): A person of any gender who has the capacity to form enduring sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to people of *two or more* genders (e.g., women attracted to women, men, and non-binary people; non-binary people attracted to non-binary people and men) with gender influencing the type of attraction they experience. These attractions can manifest in differing ways and to differing

degrees over a person's lifetime (meaning bi people aren't necessarily attracted to different genders equally). Note: Some people *wrongly* claim bisexual means "attracted to men and women" and is therefore transphobic. This is a misrepresentation of bisexuality, which *never* implies transphobia.

Bi visibility: Ways to increase understanding, awareness, and representation of the bi+ community (e.g., choosing to come out, creating bi+ characters, prioritizing bi+ voices and needs in queer conversations and spaces).

Black Lives Matter: Founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. [Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc.](#) is a global organization in the U.S., U.K., and Canada whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, the organization makes immediate improvements in Black lives.

Black Muslim: Anthropologist and Sapelo Square founder Su'ad Abdul Khabeer; "...'Black Islam' [means] all the different and diverse movements of Black people who engage Islam as a religious and spiritual tradition. So, I'm talking about the Moorish Science Temple, Ahmadiyya Community, The Five Percent Nation of Gods and Earths, Sunni, Shi'a, Nation of Islam, a really broad range." The Black Muslim community is the largest Muslim community in America. According to a 2017 [Pew Research Center survey](#), this community makes up 20% of the overall Muslim population.

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD): A body-image disorder characterized by persistent, intrusive preoccupations with perceived flaws or defects with any part of one's body, which, in reality, might be slight or nonexistent. BDD affects 2.2% of men and 2.5% of women in the U.S.

Buddhism: An Indian religion based on a series of original teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha. It originated in ancient India as a Sramana tradition between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, spreading through much of Asia. Buddhism practices in SEA tend to be distinct from their Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan counterparts. The basic tenets include: Nothing is fixed or permanent; actions have consequences; change is possible. Buddhism addresses itself to all people no matter race, nationality, caste, sexuality, or gender. It teaches practical methods to help people realize and use its teachings to transform their experience and take full responsibility for their lives.

Burqa: A garment worn by some Muslim women that covers the entire body from head to toe, with a mesh screen over the eyes.

Butch: In lesbian culture, "butch" refers to a woman whose gender expression and traits present as typically masculine (e.g., clothes, short hair, pursuing more men-dominated careers and roles). For lesbians, being butch challenges society's understandings of gender and what it means to be masculine. The term is sometimes used by other LGBTQIA+ people, particularly non-binary and genderqueer people. For [more](#).

The Butterfly: A racist and sexist stereotype about East Asian women that originated in Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*. This portrayal depicts a dominant white man over the subjugated, submissive East Asian woman who is cast aside and treated as dispensable.

Celibacy: The act of refraining from sexual activity for an extended period of time, often because of a vow or oath. Unlike asexuality, which is a sexual orientation that describes a lack of sexual attraction, abstinence is a behavior.

Chain migration: A term developed by anti-immigration groups to refer to the well-established legal process of issuing "family-based immigrant visas." Preferred term: "Family-based migration."

Chinese Exclusion Act: A U.S. federal law passed in 1882 that prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the U.S. Fueled by anti-Chinese hate in California (where Chinese migrants were working as miners), the Act lasted 10 years. However, it wasn't until 1943, when the U.S. and China were allies in WWII, that Chinese immigration resumed. It's the first law to prevent all members of a specific ethnic or national group from immigrating to the U.S.

Cisgender (cis): The opposite of transgender; someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. (The term "cisnet" refers to someone who is both cisgender and heterosexual/straight.)

Cisnormativity: The belief that being cisgender is the default, natural, or superior by falsely assuming cisgender is the norm and that being transgender or non-binary is "different" or "abnormal." It upholds the *false* gender binary of two distinct, opposite genders (i.e., man and woman).

Civil Affairs: Civil Affairs (CA) units help military commanders by working with civil authorities and civilian populations in the commanders' areas of operation to lessen the impact of military operations during peace, contingency operations, and declared war. CA forces support activities of both conventional and special-operations forces and can assist and support the civil administration in the area of operations. CA soldiers are culturally oriented linguists, and may be tasked with providing functional expertise for foreign

internal defense operations, unconventional warfare operations, and direct action missions.

Code-switching: The practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation. For instance, Latinx Americans who speak a combination of Spanish, Indigenous/Native dialects, and English or Black Americans who speak African American Vernacular English (or Black English) and English. Code-switching is often used at home or among members of the same communities, and people don't necessarily code-switch to someone who doesn't speak their same language.

Colorism: Also called Skin Color Stratification. Prejudice or discrimination against those with dark skin tones, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group. Privileges light-skinned people of color over dark in areas such as income, education, housing, and the marriage market.

Combat veteran: One who deployed to and served in a combat zone *and* received a Combat Action Badge or Ribbon. Because modern wars such as Iraq and Afghanistan are "360 degree battlefields," *everyone* deployed could find themselves in a combat role, and even those who don't officially qualify as a combat veteran might've seen combat.

Community care: Communities using their power, privilege, and resources to help people both in and out of their scope of reach, including friends, neighbors, colleagues, or members of an organization they frequent. It can be activism, practicing anti-racism, calling out injustices, donating to organizations, or simply asking someone, "What do you need and how can I help?"

Confucianism: A way of life cultivated by Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, in the 6th-5th centuries BC. It is a belief system, an all-encompassing way of thinking and living, that focuses on the importance of personal ethics and morality and ancestor reverence. It is sometimes considered a philosophy, worldview, political ideology, or religion, although it is not an organized religion in the traditional sense. Practicers of Confucianism live all over the world, predominantly in East and Southeast Asia. For [more](#).

Coyotes: People who smuggle undocumented individuals across the U.S. border from Mexico, typically for a high fee.

Cultural hybridity: The practice of someone maintaining customs and values of two or more different cultures that make up their identity. In engaging with their separate cultures, someone can create a new hybrid identity that seeks to balance these multiple parts of them. Cultural hybridity is an ongoing, active, and fluid process that is shaped by history and background.

Dalit: An entire population in India and Hindu regions of Nepal, [Pakistan](#), Sri Lanka, and [Bangladesh](#) considered inherently contaminated. Also known as "Untouchables," Dalits are members of the lowest social group, born below the four primary Hindu castes. The word "Dalit" means "oppressed" or "broken" and is the name members of this group gave themselves in the 1930s. Dalits face discrimination and even violence from members of higher castes, or traditional social classes, particularly in terms of access to jobs, education, and marriage partners. For [more](#).

Damsel in distress: A stereotype where a woman character finds herself in a situation where she needs to be rescued, almost always by a man. She is portrayed as helpless and unable to do anything about her own situation. This trope is especially common in fairy tales and/or stories about princesses.

Deadnaming: The use, whether intentional or not, of a trans person's birth name, instead of their chosen name (if they have one). Using a trans person's old name is offensive, a form of misgendering, and can cause trauma, stress, embarrassment, and gender dysphoria. It is seen as disrespectful of the person, and by extension, all transgender people. Note: Not all trans people use the word "deadnaming," as it can imply that a trans person dies when they transition. "Birth name" is a preferred alternative.

Deaf vs. deaf: "Deaf" with a capital "D" refers to people with hearing loss who consider themselves part of the Deaf community, and share a common culture and language. Alternatively, "deaf" with a lowercase "d" simply refers to someone who's medically deaf, but doesn't consider deafness part of their identity or have a connection to the Deaf community. Often, people who identify as Deaf were born deaf, or become Deaf before they acquire spoken language and communicate in sign language, whereas those who identify as deaf are often late-deafened, don't have a strong connection to the Deaf community, and communicate orally.

Deep poverty: The U.S. Census Bureau defines deep poverty as living in a household with income that falls below 50% of the federal poverty line. The United Nations describes it as "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services." Deep poverty is also known as extreme poverty, abject poverty, absolute poverty, or destitution.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): A program that allows those who came to the U.S. as children and meet several requirements to apply for temporary protection from deportation and to work for two years. *Not* a path to citizenship. Though it ended in 2018, it remains in place for those who previously received DACA.

Demisexual: A person who doesn't experience sexual attraction to another person unless or until they've formed an emotional connect with them. Many demisexuals consider themselves ace, but some identify as allosexual, and others in between. For [more](#).

Deployment: Moving troops or equipment into position for military action, which can occur both internationally and stateside.

Deportation: The forced removal of an individual from the U.S. because of unauthorized status, whether or not any criminal laws have been violated.

Desi: A person of South Asian descent. The term once referred to South Asians living abroad but now refers to any South Asian. It's also used as a description – Desi food, Desi music, etc.

Detention centers: Detention centers are where detained immigrants (not incarcerated people) are kept while awaiting a trial, deportation hearing, or some other non-criminal process. According to reporters, non-profits, and politicians, worse conditions exist in U.S. immigrant detention centers than prisons.

Dharma: The eternal and inherent nature of reality, regarded in Hinduism as a cosmic law underlying right behavior and social order. In Buddhism, the nature of reality is regarded as a universal truth taught by the Buddha. For [more](#).

Diaspora: A community of people from the same homeland who have been scattered or have migrated to other lands. While most often associated with the Jewish people expelled from the Kingdom of Israel in the 6th century BCE, the diaspora of many ethnic groups is found around the world today.

1) A diaspora is a group of people who have been forced from or chosen to leave their homeland to settle in other lands; 2) People of a diaspora typically preserve and celebrate the culture and traditions of their homeland; 3) Diaspora may be created by voluntary emigration or by force, as in the cases of wars, enslavement, or natural disasters. For [more](#).

Disabled vs. disabled: "Disabled" with a capital "D" refers to those who are culturally Disabled - meaning they consider their disability part of their identity, and are engaged in the Disabled community whether in person, online, or through art, literature, or activism (keeping in mind barriers to access often prevent Disabled people from gathering together). Alternatively, "disabled" with a lowercase "d" refers to someone who has a disabling condition or illness, but who does not consider disability part of their identity.

Disclosure: The act or process of sharing one's gender history with another person. Trans people should never be forced or coerced to

disclose to anyone, and if, how, and when they do *should* be entirely up to them. Being out as a transgender person can be considerably different than being out as a lesbian, gay, or bi+ person. Sexual orientation typically becomes more public over time, whereas for some trans people, their gender history can become more private over time. A trans person doesn't need to be "out" about their gender history in order to be happy. A trans person may choose to be "no or low disclosure," meaning they only disclose to close friends and family.

Dishonorable discharge: This is the most punitive of all military discharges and is given as the result of a court-martial. Desertion, murder, fraud, and other crimes performed in uniform can result in court-martial proceedings that lead to a dishonorable discharge. No military benefits or future military service is possible with a military discharge characterized as Dishonorable. Contrary to popular belief there are not only the two most well-known discharges characterized as Honorable and Dishonorable; there are many more. See [here](#).

District attorney (DA): The chief prosecutor for a local government area, like a city or county.

Domestic worker: Hired to perform household and caregiving duties in an employer's private home or residence (e.g., housekeeper, nanny, gardener, au pair, chauffeur, in-home aide, babysitter). These professionals (majority women, mostly immigrants and BIPOC) do difficult, skilled work, often without basic labor rights and protections.

Dragon Lady: A stereotype of East Asian and Southeast Asian women that depicts them as strong, deceitful, domineering, and sexually alluring.

DREAMer: Refers to undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children. Those who've since become eligible for DACA are also called "DREAMers."

Druze: As of 2020, there are about one million adherents to the Druze religion worldwide, mostly in Jordan, Israel, Syria, and Lebanon, with approximately 30,000 in the U.S, with the largest American group in California. Druze is a monotheistic religion formed in the 10th and 11th centuries with ties to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It combines Islamic tenets with Greek and Hindu philosophies, and their prophets are Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Mohammed. The most revered religious figure is Jethro, father-in-law of Moses. Though some Druze consider themselves "Muslim," Druze is not a branch of Islam or a sect; it's recognized as a separate religion.

The Druze faith hasn't accepted converts since 1050, and it prohibits marriage outside the faith (find more [here](#)). The adherents believe anyone who wanted to join the religion had a chance to do so in the

first generation after it was started, and that everyone who is alive today is reincarnated from a previous generation. Proselytizing is not allowed under Druze law. Find more [here](#).

Dusky maiden: A colonial, racist, sexist stereotype of Polynesian women as "exotic," passive objects with dark, flowing hair and brown skin. The "dusky maiden" was a common depiction in European colonial paintings that evolved into representations in newer media.

Dwarfism: Per the Mayo Clinic, Dwarfism is short stature that results from genetic or medical condition. Dwarfism is a medical diagnosis. "Dwarf" is the preferred term for many people with Dwarfism. "Midget" is a derogatory term for Dwarfs and should be avoided. There is a new generation of people with Dwarfism who use the word Dwarf instead of "Little Person." They view Dwarfism as a culture. It should never be dwarves, always Dwarf or Dwarfs.

Emotional labor: The process of managing feelings and expressions in order to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job. More specifically, when workers have to regulate emotions to shape the minds of superiors, co-workers, and customers. Emotional labor more often falls on BIPOC people, especially women (e.g., swallowing down feelings about a racist or sexist comment so as not to make things awkward for another individual, having to fake positivity to placate a customer).

Endosex: The opposite of intersex; someone who possesses innate physical sex characteristics (e.g., hormones, genitals, reproductive organs) that match binary concepts of female or male bodies.

Enslaved person vs. slave: Today, most historians refer to "enslaved people" instead of "slaves." This language choice separates a person's identity from his/her circumstance. Likewise, saying "owner" or "master" empowers enslavers and dehumanizes enslaved persons, reducing them to commodities rather than someone who had slavery imposed on them. Using "enslaved" instead of "slave" and "enslaver" instead of "master" are subtle but powerful ways of affirming that slavery was forced upon someone, rather than an inherent condition. - [*Telling the Story: Enslavement of African People in the United States*](#)

For more affirming language to use when writing about slavery, check out [*Writing About Slavery? This Might Help*](#).

Fa'afafine/Fa'afatama: Samoa has historically and continues to recognize four cultural genders: man, woman, fa'afafine, and fa'afatama. **Fa'afafine** people are assigned male at birth, and this term translates to "in the manner of a woman." **Fa'afatama** people are assigned female at birth, and this term translates to "in the manner of a man." Both fa'afafine and fa'afatama people move fluidly between traditional man and woman gender roles and don't fit neatly into western concepts of gay, trans, or queer. In Samoa, fa'afafine and

fa'afatama people tend to take on community caregiver roles for elders and educate men and women about sex, a topic considered taboo for those genders. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with these identities may code-switch and call themselves trans women, trans men, non-binary, or gay in order for their identity to be legible to others. For [more](#).

Fakaleitī: A Tongan "third gender" used to describe someone who was assigned male at birth but who has a feminine gender expression. The term translates to "like a lady." Fakaleitī is one of many culturally specific genders represented across the Pacific Islands and around the world. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with this identity may code-switch and call themselves trans women, gay men, or non-binary in order for their identity to be legible to others. For more on the fakaleitī identity, here is a [personal account](#).

Femme: Used to describe someone who exhibits feminine identity (e.g., physical appearance, clothes, behavior). To some, "femme" should only be used to describe LGBTQIA+ people and is understood as an identity that subverts traditional femininity (i.e., not synonymous with being a straight and/or cis woman). For [more](#).

Femmephobia: Discrimination or hostility toward someone who's perceived to embody or express femininity (including effeminate gay men). Femmephobia can come from both cishet and queer people, often rooted in internalized homophobia and toxic masculinity. More on the effects of femmephobia [here](#).

Filipinx/Filipino: As noted on [VICE](#), whether one identifies as Filipinx or Filipino is an ongoing debate for people of Philippine origin or descent, sparking discussions on identity, colonialism, and the power of language.

In September 2020, Dictionary.com released the word "[Filipinx](#)," meant as an alternative to the "Filipino" and "Filipina" binary terms used to describe those living or who have origins in the [Philippines](#) and living in the U.S. Some, mostly those who grew up in the Philippines, argue that "Filipino" is already a gender-neutral term because the Filipino language itself doesn't differentiate between genders. Meanwhile, others, mostly from the large Filipino diaspora, say "Filipino" and "Filipina" are sexist, holdovers from the gendered Spanish that influenced the country's languages. The debate is highlighting differences between generations, cultures, and nations.

Free association: A free relationship between a political territory (maybe with some degree of statehood) and a nation. It is a somewhat "middle ground" status where associate states can maintain sovereignty and delegate other responsibilities to the major

nation (e.g., financial assistance, defense, currency) under individual compacts. Current "associated states" include Cook Islands and Niue with New Zealand, and Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau with the U.S.

Gay: Men who are only or predominantly sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other men, and boys who are attracted to other boys. This includes *all* men and boys: transgender, intersex, and cisgender. Some non-binary people who are predominantly attracted to men also identify as gay. "Gay" is a sexual orientation, an embodied part of a person's identity, no matter their relationship status or sexual/romantic experience. Note: "Gay" can also be used to describe people of other genders who aren't straight (e.g., some women prefer "gay" to "lesbian").

Geisha: Japanese women who entertain through performing the ancient traditions of art, dance, and singing. Unfortunately, Western portrayals wrongly stereotype geisha as submissive and docile and, sometimes, as sex workers. The geisha girl stereotype is similar to the "Lotus Flower" and "China Doll" depictions.

Gender binary: The *false*, long-held societal and cultural categorization of gender into just two distinct and opposite terms: male or female, man or woman, masculine or feminine. Attached to this classification are gendered traits, behaviors, and appearances attached to these distinctions (e.g., men should be strong, aggressive, and wear masculine clothes; women should be kind, domestic, and wear make-up and feminine clothes). The binary generally assumes someone's gender identity and pronouns all align with the sex they were assigned at birth. However, gender *isn't* binary; it's an infinite spectrum, with people whose gender identities fall between and outside of the man/woman framework.

Gender-diverse: A term to describe gender identities, roles, and expressions that fall outside the binary framework. Gender diversity specifically acknowledges the many ways (e.g., culturally, spiritually) people identify beyond masculine/feminine norms. More on gender diversity [here](#) and a map of gender-diverse cultures [here](#).

Gender dysphoria: Psychological distress that can occur when a person's assigned sex at birth and gender identity are not in alignment. Both psychiatric and medical authorities recommend individualized medical treatment with use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and/or surgeries to treat gender dysphoria, so the necessity of gender dysphoria as a psychiatric diagnosis remains controversial. Note: It's not necessary to have gender dysphoria in order to be transgender. For more on gender dysphoria, here is a [personal account](#).

Gender euphoria: The opposite of gender dysphoria. It is the psychological euphoria experienced when a trans or non-binary person feels their mind, body, and/or gender expression are aligned with their gender, or their gender is recognized, affirmed, or respected by others (e.g., addressed with gender-affirming pronouns, chosen name).

Gender expansive: An umbrella term most often used to describe young children who haven't fully articulated a concrete gender identity (i.e., who are exploring and questioning their gender, but who may not be ready to say they're transgender or who may turn out not to be transgender). This includes people who expand notions of gender expression (e.g., clothing, appearance, mannerisms) and identity beyond expected societal norms.

Gender expression: The way in which any person expresses their gender identity through external manifestations of gender, including name, pronouns, clothing, hair, makeup, mannerisms, or body characteristics. This communication may be conscious or subconscious, and for many people, their gender expression affirms their gender identity, but this isn't always the case (i.e., wearing masculine clothes doesn't necessarily mean that a person is a man or even identifies as "masculine").

Genderfluid: A person whose gender identity is fluid, not consistently adhering to one fixed gender. At different times, they may understand their gender to be aligned with a particular gender identity (e.g., non-binary, man, woman, agender) or a combination of identities. For [more](#).

Gender identity: A person's internal, deeply held core sense of self and gender (i.e., who they are -- man, woman, agender, non-binary, etc.), which they may become aware of at any stage of life, and which might not match the sex assigned to them at birth. It's not visible to others, *nor* is it determined by someone's biology or sex characteristics (e.g., chromosomes, reproductive organs).

Gender identities are most commonly man/boy or woman/girl, but there are a wide range of non-binary genders and gender-diverse identities from many cultures throughout history. For trans people, their internal gender identity does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. A person can be any gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status, and these identities should not be conflated (i.e., being trans doesn't imply that someone is gay; being intersex doesn't mean someone is trans). A guide to more gender identity terms [here](#).

Gender inequality: How society treats men, women, and non-binary people unequally based on perceived biological, psychological, or cultural differences. It's prevalent in issues of life expectancy, education, careers, etc. See more on the [causes of gender inequality](#),

as well as a [snapshot from the United Nations](#) on the current state of gender inequality around the world.

Gender non-conforming (GNC): An individual whose gender expression does not match the societal norms and conventions associated with their gender (e.g. men wearing dresses, women playing football). Not all transgender or non-binary people are GNC, and not all GNC people are trans or non-binary. For [more](#).

Genderqueer: A person who blurs and/or rejects the boundaries of the man/woman gender binary – seeing themselves as both man and woman, neither, or outside of these categories. Genderqueer people often, though not always, have a queer sexual orientation as well. For [more](#).

Generational trauma: The long-term psychological effects of trauma (both personal and communal) that can be passed down through generations of families and cultures. Beyond psychological, these generational effects are also familial, social, cultural, neurobiological, and possibly even genetic.

G.I. Bill: The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill, was a law that provided a range of benefits for some of the returning World War II veterans (commonly referred to as G.I.s). The original G.I. Bill expired in 1956, but the term "G.I. Bill" is still used to refer to programs created to assist some of the U.S. military veterans. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 further expanded benefits, providing veterans with funding for the full cost of any public college in their state. The G.I. Bill was also modified through the passage of the Forever G.I. Bill in 2017 and is housed within the VA Benefits department, one of three departments within the VA.

Graysexual (gray-A): A catch-all term for someone who identifies somewhere on the asexual spectrum or between "sexual" and "asexual" (i.e., in the "gray area"). Note: Sometimes spelled "greysexual." More on the graysexual spectrum [here](#).

Haka: A ceremonial dance or challenge in Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand) culture performed by a group.

Hapa: In the Hawaiian language, a word that means "half" or "part." Among Hawaiians, the term is used to refer to someone who is of mixed ethnic heritage. There is some debate around who gets to use this word and how it's used, which you can read more about [here](#).

Hawaii vs. Hawai'i: In English, "Hawaii" refers to the U.S. state, and "Hawai'i" refers to the largest island within the state. However, in the Hawaiian language, the spelling of the state is "Hawai'i," a spelling that should be used to honor Native Hawaiians. Because of the Hawaiian Statehood Act of 1959, which used "Hawaii," the spelling of

the state in English cannot officially be changed without an Act of Congress. (Note: "Hawaiian" is always spelled without the 'okina.)

Healthcare disparities (for veterans): In 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated its Health Equity Action Plan to eliminate disparities for veterans. Goals include strengthening leadership to address disparities; increasing awareness of the significance of health disparities; improving racial and ethnic data availability and health care outcomes; and increasing health-related workforce diversity. But the VA has a long way to go. See [here](#).

Heteronormativity: The inaccurate belief that heterosexuality is the default, natural, or normal expression of sexuality. It upholds the false gender binary consisting of two distinct, opposite genders and the notion that sexual and marital relationships should be between people of "opposite" sexes (i.e., a man and a woman who conform to rigid notions of gender, sexuality, and gender roles).

Hijab/Hijabi: Hijab is a head covering or headscarf (in some communities called "khimar") worn in public by some Muslim woman. A Hijabi is a woman who wears a hijab. Muslim women are legally mandated to wear hijabs only in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Indonesian province of Aceh.

Hijra: Officially recognized as a "third gender" in South Asia, Hijra are considered neither male nor female. Traditionally, they were considered divine demi-gods, but colonizers from Islamic and Christian countries have caused them to be marginalized and even criminalized. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with this identity may code-switch and call themselves trans women, trans men, or non-binary in order for their gender to be legible to others. There are also transgender men and women in South Asia who do not consider themselves Hijra. For [more](#).

Hindu / Hinduism / Hindi: A Hindu is a subscriber to Hinduism, which is one of the world's oldest religions originating in India and comprising religious, cultural, and philosophical concepts such as Karma, Dharma, and reincarnation. Hinduism is the world's 3rd-largest organized religion after Islam and Christianity, and India's most practiced religion. Hinduism's fundamental teaching, or Vedanta, is that a human being's basic nature isn't confined to the body or mind. Beyond both is the spirit or the spark of God within the soul. For [more](#). *Hindi* is the *language* spoken by 45% of India.

Hispanic vs. Spanish: "Hispanic" refers to a person of linguistic Spanish origin or descent and, though technically different, "Hispanic" and "Latinx" are now often used interchangeably, especially by the U.S. government. "Spanish" applies only to those from Spain and is

often used incorrectly to describe Latinx people. Avoid this, given the European colonization of Indigenous and Afro Latinx peoples.

HIV/AIDS: HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system and weakens its defense against many infections and some types of cancer. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), a chronic, potentially life-threatening condition. There is no effective cure for HIV, but treatments such as ART, PrEP, and PEP can suppress a person's viral load until it's undetectable and untransmittable, allowing for long, healthy lives and safe sexual intercourse. HIV/AIDS has disproportionately affected queer people in the U.S. with gay and bi+ men making up 70% of all new infections in 2019. For [more](#).

Hong Kong: Considered a special administrative region of China but previously considered a British colony until 1997. The relationship between Hong Kong and mainland China is quite complex, including differences in government and politics (e.g., Hong Kong's limited democracy vs. China's communism).

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT): The use of hormones (e.g., estrogen, testosterone) in medical treatment. For trans people, HRT is an empowering way to medically transition by bringing their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Documented benefits of HRT include improved mental health, physical wellness, and reduced gender dysphoria for trans people. Many intersex people also use HRT to balance the naturally occurring levels of hormones in their bodies.

Identity: An intrinsic, embodied part of who someone *is* (e.g., race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability), not to be confused with the various experiences, ideologies, and preferences they identify *with* (e.g., careers, politics, hobbies). Identity shapes our everyday life, psychology, culture, relationships, behavior, and shared history. Identity is deeply personal and language used to describe it is ever-evolving. We must be open to new language as understanding shifts; it's vital to use the terms, names, and pronouns others use for themselves. Note: Avoid the phrasing "identify as" (e.g. "she is a woman" instead of "she identifies as a woman"; "they are non-binary" vs "they identify as non-binary").

Immigrants: Those who move to take permanent residence in a new country.

Imperialism: "Empire building," or the practice of a nation forcefully imposing its rule and authority over other nations through the acquisition of land and/or the imposition of economic and political domination. Find a brief overview of imperialism throughout history [here](#).

Indochina/Indochina Wars: Originally referred to as French Indochina, which included the current countries of Vietnam, Laos, and

Cambodia. The Indochina Wars refers to a series of wars in Southeast Asia from 1945-1991 between communist Indochinese forces and other ethnic minorities against mainly French, Vietnamese, U.S., Cambodian, Laotian, and Chinese forces. From 1964 to 1973, the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps aircraft dropped 7.6+ million tons of bombs and other ordnance, far exceeding tonnage in World War II and in the Korean War.

Internally displaced residents: Those seeking refuge from a crisis in their own countries.

Intersex: An umbrella term for anyone born with a wide range of sex characteristics (e.g., genitals, chromosomes, hormones, reproductive organs, secondary sex characteristics) that don't adhere to binary male/female bodies. Being intersex simply refers to a person's status (whether someone *is* intersex or not). Some intersex characteristics are identifiable at birth, some at puberty or later, and some people go through life never learning they're intersex. While some people can be born intersex and also be transgender, the two are separate and should not be conflated. Just like everyone else, intersex people can be any gender (e.g., man, woman, non-binary) and sexual orientation (e.g., straight, queer, asexual). For [more](#).

Intimate partner violence (IPV): Physical, verbal, psychological, economic, or sexual violence committed by a current or former partner. While most IPV portrayals feature women in straight relationships, LGBTQIA+ people experience IPV at comparable rates but are less likely to report it due to stigma, lack of resources, and perceived power balance in same-gender relationships.

Ipso gender: A term to describe an intersex person whose gender aligns with their medically-assigned binary sex (i.e., male or female); the opposite of a transgender intersex person, whose gender does not align with their medically-assigned sex.

Iranian/Persian: A person from Iran, with Iranian citizenship, and/or self-identifying as from or connected to the nation of Iran. For political, religious, and cultural reasons, some refer to themselves as Iranian and others as Persian. Iranians/Persians are not Arabs.

Islamophobia: Extreme fear of and hostility toward Islam and Muslims, often leading to hate speech and hate crimes, social and political discrimination.

Jail vs. prison vs. detention center: Jails are locally operated short-term facilities that hold people awaiting trial, sentencing, or both, and incarcerated people serving shorter sentences. However, due to a broken cash bail system, some incarcerated people spend years in jails. Prisons are longer-term facilities for incarcerated people run by the federal or state governments. The term "detention center" commonly refers to facilities where detained immigrants are kept

while awaiting a deportation hearing or where minors serve a sentence or await trial.

Jainism: An ancient non-theistic religion from India that has no gods and teaches salvation through reincarnation and non-injury to living creatures. The three guiding principles, the "[three jewels](#)," are 1) right belief, 2) right knowledge, and 3) right conduct. The supreme principle of living is nonviolence ([ahimsa](#)). Jainism has no priests. Its professional religious people are [monks and nuns](#) who lead strict and ascetic lives. Most Jains live in India, and according to India's 2001 Census there are around 4.2 million living there, although census figures may provide lower than the true number of followers as many Jains identify themselves as Hindu.

Japanese American Incarceration: In response to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor during WWII, the forced relocation and imprisonment of about 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry – including 8,000 American citizens – into concentration camps by the U.S. federal government. (This action is often referred to as "internment," a term that shouldn't be used as it ignores the illegality and immorality of what happened.)

Jihad/Jihadi: Jihad literally means "strive and struggle for God," which encompasses an internal struggle towards personal betterment. A jihadi is one who strives and struggles for God. Jihad is not an order to murder and doesn't mean "terrorism."

Karma: In Hinduism and Buddhism, the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences. Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and happier rebirths, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and bad rebirths.

Kathoey (or katoey): A gender identity in Thailand that encompasses people who were assigned male at birth but have a feminine gender identity or gender expression. Transgender women in Thailand mostly use other terms when referring to themselves, such as "phuying" or "sao praphet song," which translates to "women in the second category." Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with this identity may code-switch and call themselves trans women, gay men, or non-binary in order for their identity to be legible to others. Writers should always consult with cultural experts when writing about Kathoey.

Latin American: A term used in the U.S. to denote someone born and living in parts of North or South America where Spanish or Portuguese is the main language (including the Caribbean). Outside the U.S., people consider themselves to be *of* their nationality (i.e., not "Latin American" but Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian, etc.).

Latino/Latina, Latine, or Latinx: For context, remember: Spanish is a gendered language where singular nouns are declined male/masculine (Latino) or female/feminine (Latina); plural nouns use the masculine declension (Latinos) even when women outnumber men in a group. "Latinx" (LAT-uhn-eks or luh-TEE-neks) is a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino/Latina/Latin American and is fast growing as the preferred identifier among U.S. Latin American communities.

Though many agree that inclusivity in language is a good thing, the level of facility in pronunciation of one over the other is more the topic of discussion when it comes to Latinx vs. Latine. Most media outlets, [Remezcla](#) included, have opted for Latinx up until now. The problem, many find, is that it's difficult to pronounce Spanish words that have replaced gendered vowels with an "x." For many, it's easier to use the gender neutral "e" instead.

Lesbian: Women who are only or predominantly sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other women, and girls who are attracted to other girls. This includes *all* women and girls: transgender, intersex, and cisgender. Some non-binary people who are predominantly attracted to women also identify as lesbians. "Lesbian" is a sexual orientation, an embodied part of a person's identity, no matter their relationship status or sexual/romantic experience.

Limb difference: There are two main types of limb difference: congenital and acquired. Congenital limb difference is also referred to as "limb reduction" or "congenital amputation" and occurs when someone is born missing all or part of their upper and/or lower limbs. Acquired limb difference is also known as "amputation" and occurs when someone has a limb removed for medical reasons, or accidentally due to trauma.

Long-term care: A number of services that meet the medical and non-medical needs of older adults (as well as others with chronic illness or disability), including but not limited to caretakers, long-term facilities (e.g., assisted-living homes and communities), home accessibility renovations (e.g., handrails and walk-in tubs), and physical and drug therapies. See [here](#) for key stats on long-term care in the U.S., and see [here](#) for more about caregivers.

Macau: Considered a special administrative region of China but operates as an independent city-state with its own money, passport, and legal system. Until 1999, Macau was a Portuguese colony. For [more](#).

Māhū: In Native Hawaiian and Tahitian cultures, a "third gender" of people who embody both a male and female spirit. They are respected healers, caretakers, and teachers. Nearly erased by Christian colonizers in the 1800s, there has been a resurgence among Native Hawaiians and Tahitians to reclaim the māhū identity and their cultural understandings of gender. Māhū gender expression is

considered to be very fluid. **Mahukane** is a newly coined term of empowerment in Hawai'i, representing people assigned female at birth who have a masculine gender expression/identity; **mahuwahine** is another newly coined term of empowerment, representing people assigned male at birth who have a feminine gender expression/identity. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with these identities may code-switch and call themselves trans women, trans men, or non-binary in order for their gender to be legible to others. For [more](#).

The male gaze: A sexually objectifying way of portraying women in media from a masculine perspective meant to pleasure straight men. This can be conveyed through a man behind the camera, as a character in the story, and/or as an audience member. The male gaze empowers men and diminishes women by emphasizing aspects considered interesting, pleasing, or titillating to the assumed straight male viewer (e.g., zooming in or focusing on women's breasts or butt, especially when failing to do the same to male characters). The term was coined by Laura Mulvey in her 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

Mean girls: A stereotype of girls and young women characterizing them as socially aggressive and unkind. These characters are usually "popular" or "cool" and resort to behaviors such as bullying or backstabbing, even among other characters they consider friends. These portrayals not only enforce the bad behavior, but they fail to address the larger social issues girls and women face like insecurity, lack of confidence, and pressure to fit the "feminine beauty ideal."

Medical Model vs. Social Model of Disability: The medical model is a belief long fallen out of favor with the disabled community. It's the idea that disability might reduce quality of life and, therefore, it should be diminished or corrected through medical intervention. The social model holds that society's attitudes, structure, and organization causes a disability rather than a person's impairment or difference causing it (i.e. Someone who is deaf is disabled by a lack of accessible communication, like sign language and captions, rather than their ability to hear. Someone who uses a wheelchair for mobility is disabled by stairs or lack of sidewalks).

Medicare: Medicare is a U.S. national health insurance program started in 1966 under the Social Security Administration (SSA), which is now administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). It primarily provides health insurance for Americans aged 65 and older, but also for younger people with SSA-determined disability status, and people with end stage renal disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease).

In 2018, Medicare provided health insurance for 59.9+ million individuals — 52+ million people aged 65 and older and about 8 million younger people. Medicare covers about half of healthcare costs of those enrolled. See [here](#) for more Medicare details.

Melanesia: A subregion of Oceania in the southwestern Pacific Ocean made up of four independent countries: Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands; as well as a number of islands, archipelagos, and atolls including Admiralty Islands, Bougainville Island, New Guinea, Western New Guinea, Aru Islands, New Caledonia, and Norfolk Island.

MENA (Middle East): The term MENA (for Middle East and North Africa) recognizes differences between two sweepingly large regions. "Middle East" is a colonial designation, comprising a region stunning in its magnitude for diversity of cultures, languages and religions, ethnicities, and races. There are many variations on what the region includes, but it most commonly encompasses the following countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen, along with North African countries of Algeria, Egypt, Libya Morocco, and Tunisia.

MENA ethnicities, languages, and religions: 50+ ethnic groups in the region, the largest being Arabs, Persians, and Turks. Others include Amazigh, Armenians, Druze, Greeks, Jews, Yazidis, etc. Within these ethnic groups, all races are represented. Arabic and Farsi are the most-spoken languages among 60+; there are multiple Arabic dialects, which vary country to country, city to city. The MENA region is also the birthplace of the three Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism), and many other religions are also practiced.

Metis: An officially recognized "third gender" in Nepal with a long history in the Himalayan region. Metis are predominantly feminine-presenting people who were assigned male at birth. Even though their legal recognition on government documents is based solely on self-determination (setting a global precedent), metis people continue to face significant marginalization in Nepal. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with this identity may code-switch and call themselves trans women or non-binary in order for their gender to be legible to others. For more on metis identity, here is a [personal account](#).

Micronesia: A subregion of Oceania in the western Pacific Ocean comprising thousands of islands, including Kiribati, Nauru, the Mariana Islands (e.g., Guam, Rota, Saipan, Tinian), the Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia (made up of 607 islands).

Migrant worker: One who travels seasonally for temporary work. Not all are undocumented (and not all undocumented individuals are migrant workers). As the U.S. border has become militarized, many who once came seasonally now stay and live as undocumented immigrants.

Military Family/MilFam: Military Family (MilFam or Mil-Fam): The spouse, children, and extended family of service members who often move in accordance to their enlisted family's deployments.

Military sexual assault: Sexual assault in the military refers to sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority as well as instances in which the survivor is unable to consent. The definition of sexual assault is consistent with the term military sexual trauma (MST), which was coined by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Both the VA and Department of Defense (DoD) include sexual harassment and inappropriate touching within the category of sexual violence. While military sexual assault is often framed as a women's issue, it impacts both men and women. See [here](#) and [here](#).

Minority stress: Chronically high levels of stress endured by members of stigmatized communities (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, disabled, religious minorities, HIV+) caused by the prejudice, discrimination, and systemic oppression they face. This leads to a number of negative mental and physical health disparities among these groups (e.g., internalized racism, transphobia, homophobia; increased risk-taking behavior; anxiety; high blood pressure).

Misogynoir: Coined by the queer Black feminist [Dr. Moya Bailey](#) in 2010, the term blends concepts that combines "misogyny" (extreme hatred of women) and the French word for black, "noir." Per Ms. Bailey, misogynoir is the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience. As noted by the [Blackburn Center](#), misogynoir comes in many forms in daily life, for instance 1) Black women are viewed as threatening or angry whenever they speak up for themselves, and 2) Maternal mortality rates for Black women are [three times higher](#) than for white women in the United States, with many attributing that to racial bias in the healthcare system.

Misogyny: Hatred, dislike, or distrust of women, girls, and femininity. This manifests in many ways, such as violence against women, violence against feminine men, rape culture, the devaluing of traditionally feminized work, jokes (e.g., "dumb blond," "my wife is a nag," rape jokes), etc.

Mixed-status family: When individuals within a family have different citizenship/immigration statuses.

MLM: Stands for "man-loving man" or "men-loving men." This term has become a unifying label for a man who is attracted to and/or has

emotional, romantic, and sexual partnerships with other men (e.g., gay, bi, pansexual, same-gender-loving men). Often stylized as "mlm."

Model Minority: Refers to the idea that some underrepresented groups in the U.S., especially Asian Americans, are perceived to have certain "positive" traits (e.g., industrious, politically undisruptive, intelligent, inoffensive, successful). This myth erases differences among individuals, while also driving a racial wedge between Asians and other underrepresented groups in the U.S.

Money bail: Also known as cash bail or bail bond; an amount of money determined by prosecutors and judges that must be paid so a suspect can be released from pre-trial detention.

Mohammed, prophet: Mohammed was a prophet and messenger of God, not an intercessor of God. Muslims honor Mohammed only by following his teachings (not by praying to him). There are various acceptable spellings of the Prophet's name (i.e. Muhammed).

Muslim Ban: The deadly San Bernadino, CA, shooting in December 2015 led to Trump's Muslim Ban. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of permanent visas given every month to Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen nationals fell by 72%. In June 2018, the Supreme Court upheld an amended version of Trump's ban. Immigrants and many travelers from Iran, Libya, Somalia, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen are still banned. President Biden rescinded the ban in 2021, but [its effects still remain](#).

Muslim/Islam: A Muslim adheres to the religion, Islam, as a Christian adheres to Christianity. Islam means "the submission to the Oneness of God" and a Muslim who practices and a person who is "culturally" Muslim generally adhere to the same belief. Muslims worship and only pray to God; not to the Prophet Mohammed. Note that the "s" in both is a soft "s" as opposed to a "z," i.e., MUS-luhm and ISS-luhm.

Muxe: A "third gender" and Zapotec ethnic identity on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. Muxe (pronounced mu-shay) includes a spectrum of people who were assigned male at birth but don't inhabit traditionally masculine gender norms. They have been recognized, celebrated, and played an important part in their community since pre-colonization times. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with this identity may code-switch and call themselves trans women, gay men, or non-binary in order for their identity to be legible to others. For [more](#).

MVPFAFF: An acronym to describe gender-diverse Pasifika identities: māhū (Hawai'i and Tahiti), vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji), palopa (Papua New Guinea), fa'afafine (Samoa), akava'ine (Rarotonga), fakaleiti (Tonga), and fakafifine (Niue). The abbreviation is gaining prominence and is used to signify the existence of different Pacific cultures. Other terms

include fakaleiti, fa'afatama, and rae-rae. Note: When living in another country or visiting other states that don't have the same cultural genders, people with these identities may code-switch and call themselves trans or non-binary in order for their gender to be legible to others.

National Guard: Part of the U.S. Reserve Component, comprising soldiers and airmen from each state and the territories of D.C., Guam (Saipan included), Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. All are also U.S. organized militia members. Most have full-time jobs while serving part-time, and all can be activated by their states' governors and mobilized to support federal response to humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

Native Hawaiians: The indigenous people of the Hawaiian islands (called Kānaka Maoli). Throughout history, Native Hawaiians have had their sovereignty and culture dominated and challenged by the U.S. and other Asian and European colonizers. "Native Hawaiians" does not refer to everyone who lives on or who is born in Hawai'i.

Neopronouns: A category of singular third-person pronouns created to be specifically gender-neutral (e.g., xe/xem, ze/zir, fae/faer). Neopronouns can be used by anyone but are most commonly used by non-binary and gender non-conforming people. For [more](#).

Neurodiversity: Variations in the brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood, and other mental functions in a non-pathological sense. Developmental and psychiatric disabilities often fall under this umbrella.

Niqab: A face veil worn by some Muslim women that leaves the eyes uncovered.

Non-binary: Both an umbrella term *and* a specific, individual identity for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression doesn't fit within the man/woman gender binary. Most but not all non-binary people use gender neutral pronouns. Also referred to as "enby" (a phonetic pronunciation of "n-b," short for "non-binary"). For a variety of perspectives on what it means to be non-binary, see [here](#).

Non-binary lesbian: A non-binary person who is predominantly attracted to women and femme non-binary people. For [more](#).

Nubians: Indigenous Black tribe in Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt.

Oceania: A region made up of thousands of islands across the Central and South Pacific Ocean. While the exact geography isn't agreed upon, it usually includes the subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, and Australasia (made up of Australia, and sometimes New Zealand and the islands of New Guinea). While Australia is part of

Oceania, it's not generally considered a Pacific Island nation (though this is debated).

Omnisexual (omni): A person who experiences sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attraction toward people of any gender in which gender plays a part in the attraction. Omnisexual is distinguished from pansexual, which describes attraction to all genders *regardless* of a partner's gender. For [more](#).

Othering: A pattern of exclusion and marginalization based on having identities that are different from the perceived "norms" of a community, social group, nation, etc. It relies on an "us vs. them" mentality.

Pacific Islands Forum: An intergovernmental organization that aims to enhance cooperation between countries and territories in the Pacific Islands. Founded in 1971 as the "South Pacific Forum," it eventually expanded to include all of Oceania. For more, see "Small Island Developing States" below.

Page Act of 1875: The precursor the Chinese Exclusion Act, a U.S. law that effectively blocked immigration of Chinese women to America because they were perceived as a dangerous, sexual threat due to their work as sex workers in the mid-19th century. For [more](#).

Pansexual (pan): A person of any gender who has the capacity to form enduring sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of *any* gender or *regardless of* gender. For [more](#).

Pansexual vs. Bisexual: Some people are comfortable identifying as both bi and pan and may use them interchangeably, while other people only identify with one. (Neither term excludes attraction to trans people – both terms are trans-inclusive.)

Parole: The release of an incarcerated person temporarily (for a special purpose) or permanently before the completion of a sentence, on the promise of good behavior. Many parole agreements include stringent conditions (i.e. strict surveillance by a parole officer, maintaining employment and residence, and not leaving a geographic area without permission).

Passing: The ability for a person in an oppressed group to move through the world as a more privileged identity than the one they are. In BIPOC communities, passing refers to a person, often mixed-race, with features that adhere to Eurocentric beauty standards (e.g., light skin, straight hair) who may be mistaken for being white. For trans people, this means being perceived as cisgender by others. (Note: trans women perceived as women are not "passing as women" – they *are* women. The same is true for trans men – they *are* men.) Passing is not a goal for all trans people but can aid in a trans person's safety. Passing is also sometimes used to describe gay, lesbian, bi+, or ace

people who are perceived as heterosexual until they disclose their sexual orientation.

Patriarchy: A form of mental, social, economic, and political organization of society where men, individually and collectively, oppress people of other genders. Unlike sexism, the term "patriarchy" names the social power dynamic involved. This dynamic plays out individually (e.g., street harassment, talking over women, policing children's gender expression), institutionally (e.g., segregated bathrooms, the wage gap, caretaking work relegated to women), and culturally (e.g., women depicted as sex objects in media, myth of the gender binary). See [more](#) on the levels of patriarchy.

Pension: An employer-sponsored retirement plan that provides income in retirement or upon the termination of a worker's employment. Pensions are offered in both the public and private sector, though are becoming less common in the private sector. Employees receive a set income in retirement related to how long they worked at a company. Employers, not employees, fund the income. Since the 1980s, they've been gradually phased out and replaced with 401(k) plans.

Perioriented: A person whose sexual orientation and romantic orientation are toward the same gender or have "matching" prefixes (e.g., a person who is both bisexual and biromantic, a person who is both gay and homoromantic).

Person-First Language vs. Identity-First language: "Person with a disability" is the term taught in academic settings and often used by non-disabled caregivers, educators, and/or medical professionals. Identity-First language, e.g., "Disabled Person" is the term often preferred by disabled people, especially those involved in or with access to disabled culture. The Autistic community overall strongly supports this language, contrary to what has been the practice of "Person-First language."

Police militarization: The use of military equipment (e.g., armored tanks, grenade launchers, and assault rifles) and tactics by police officers, often doing "normal" police work.

Polyamorous: A term used to describe someone who has the desire for multiple intimate relationships at the same time with the informed consent of all partners involved (sometimes referred to as consensual and/or ethical non-monogamy). Polyamory should not be conflated with any type of open relationship that may include more casual sex partners. For [more](#).

Polynesia: A subregion of Oceania covering the southern and central Pacific Ocean made up of over 1,000 islands, archipelagos, and atolls, including Hawai'i, New Zealand, Easter Island, Samoan Islands, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu, Tonga, Wallis and Futuna, Rotuma Island, and Pitcairn Islands.

Prison: Institutional facilities under the jurisdiction of the state or federal government where convicted persons serve longer sentences. These facilities are sometimes privately operated, usually by a corporation whose bottom line depends on locking up more and more people. While private prisons are supposed to save governments money, the evidence of this is mixed at best. Private prisons have also been linked to numerous cases of violence and atrocious conditions.

Prison abolition: A movement to reduce or eliminate the prison system and replace it with systems of rehabilitation and community safety.

Prison-industrial complex: The rapid expansion of U.S. prisons and incarcerated people driven by the political influence of private prison companies and businesses that supply goods and services to federal prison agencies for profit.

Pronouns: Words used to refer to a person without using their name (e.g. she/her, he/him, they/them, ze/zir). Because pronouns imply the gender of the person being referred to, they are a form of gender expression. A person's pronouns should never be assumed based on appearance; when a person is misgendered, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, and dysphoric.

Protected veteran: A protected veteran has earned status that prohibits discrimination against them and provides Affirmative Action-type requirements for certain employers. Protected veterans include: disabled veterans; veterans who served on active duty during a war, campaign, or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized; veterans with an Armed Forces Service Medal "pursuant to Executive Order 12985 (61 FR 1209)"; and recently separated veterans. Protected veteran status begins on the date of discharge or release from active duty and continues for three years afterwards. See [here](#).

Puberty blockers: Medications that temporarily postpone puberty by halting the production of sex hormones (e.g., estrogen, testosterone). In addition to various other medical uses, puberty blockers are frequently used by transgender and gender expansive children to delay the development of secondary sex characteristics (e.g. breast growth, facial hair, body hair, deepening voice) that do not align with their gender identity. Because puberty is irreversible, this delay allows trans and gender expansive youth more time to explore their identity, live in the experienced gender, and decide if they will begin hormone replacement therapy.

All legitimate research proves that puberty blockers are safe, effective, and lead to [optimal outcomes](#) for trans people (e.g., improved mental health, decreased gender dysphoria, reduced need for expensive gender-affirming operations as adults). Puberty blockers have been used for several decades by youth experiencing precocious

(early) puberty, and are the standard of care in treating transgender youth according to leading international health organizations. See [more](#).

Queer: A word that has multiple meanings that typically express identity outside of "heterosexual" and/or "cisgender": 1) An umbrella term inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community, recognizing solidarity among these identities. 2) A way for some to explain they aren't straight but don't feel words like "gay," "lesbian," or "bi" describe their *sexual orientation*. 3) A way for some to describe their non-binary *gender identity* (e.g., queer, genderqueer). 4) As a verb, "queering" describes the application of queer theory (e.g., interpreting media with a queer lens) or challenging the heteronormative and/or cisnormative standards of a discourse, institution, situation, or text.

Historically, "queer" has been used pejoratively (and may still be considered a slur to some, especially older LGBTQIA+ people) until activists began to reclaim it in the 1980s as a politically radical alternative to assimilationist politics within the community. The term is now widely used and accepted by younger generations.

Queerbaiting: A marketing technique in which creators allude to the presence of queer characters or relationships in their content in order to attract LGBTQIA+ audiences but fail to include *actual* representation so as to not lose discriminatory straight and cisgender audiences.

Queer coding: The subtextual coding of a character as queer by using recognizable LGBTQIA+ traits, stereotypes, and tropes (e.g., exaggerated femininity or masculinity, vanity, hypersexuality, intimate same-gender friendships and/or rivalries) without explicitly confirming it in the story. Queer coding stems from censorship regulations like the Hays Code, which banned most onscreen portrayals of queer characters (unless they were evil and/or punished) for several decades. Despite these negative representations and the harm they have caused, queer coding itself isn't inherently negative; it's often used by queer creators to express their identity and experience when they are restricted by industry censorship, and queer coded characters have historically been the only form of representation for many LGBTQIA+ people. Note: Queer coding is *never* an acceptable replacement for explicit, authentic representation, and is typically only used in modern storytelling due to anti-LGBTQIA+ censorship. For more, see [here](#) and [here](#).

Queerplatonic: An umbrella term for a partnership/relationship that defies the divide between romantic and "just" friends. It may involve a greater degree of intimacy or commitment than platonic friendship but doesn't often include sexual or romantic elements. For [more](#).

Race-related stressors on aging: A race-related stressor is something that causes psychological or emotional distress that an individual or group of people experience as a result of being a target of a racial discriminatory action (e.g., microaggressions, hate crimes, institutionalized racism). These stressors impact how individuals or racial and ethnic populations age (e.g., African Americans have higher rates of dementia and Alzheimer's due to chronic stress; Arab Americans report high levels of depression and anxiety due to bias-motivated violence; Asian Americans' health conditions often go untreated due to a lack of culturally and linguistically accessible care; Latinx Americans have high rates of negative mental health outcomes due to bigotry and prejudice; Native Americans and Alaskan Natives have a lower life expectancy because of disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, and cultural differences).

Overall, older people among ethnic minorities report poorer health outcomes than white older people no matter their social and economic conditions. More on African Americans [here](#) and [here](#), and more on Arab Americans [here](#).

Racial profiling: A longstanding and deeply troubling national problem, per the [ACLU](#). It occurs every day, in cities and towns across the U.S., when law enforcement and private security target people of color for humiliating and often frightening detentions, interrogations, and searches without evidence of criminal activity and based on perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. Racial profiling is patently illegal, violating the U.S. Constitution's core promises of equal protection under the law to all and freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. It's not just patently illegal but also ineffective: alienating communities from law enforcement, hindering community policing efforts, and causing law enforcement to lose credibility and trust among people they're sworn to protect and serve.

Recidivism: A person's relapse into criminal behavior that results in re-arrest, reconviction, and return to prison after their release.

Refugees: Those forced to flee their home countries due to war, political persecution, natural disaster, famine, or poverty.

Reservists: Often former active-duty service members providing and maintaining trained units for active duty in Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard reserve forces. Reservists are stationed near their homes and only deployed internationally if called up for active duty. They can be deployed as individuals or units (every three years, on average).

Same-gender-loving (SGL): A term coined by activist Cleo Manago in the 1990s to describe African Americans or Black people with same-gender attractions. SGL is used as a culturally affirming identity

without relying on Eurocentric terms and symbols of attraction and orientation.

Sanctuary city: A city that limits its cooperation with national government efforts to enforce detention and deportation of residents. Allows migrants of any immigration status to report crimes without fear of deportation.

Sapphic: A term to describe women and non-binary people who are attracted to women, especially those assigned female at birth. This can include women and non-binary people of any sexual orientation (e.g., lesbians, bisexual non-binary femmes, pansexual women, wlw, etc.). The term is derived from the name of the Greek poet Sappho of the Greek Island, Lesbos, whose writing famously portrays love and desire among women. For [more](#).

School-to-prison pipeline: The tendency for non-white, poor, and disadvantaged youth and young adults to become incarcerated because of harsh disciplinary and over-policing practices within schools.

Senior citizen: Synonym for an older person, typically one who is retired or living on a pension.

Sex characteristics: Biological traits such as genitals, gonads (i.e., ovaries, testes), hormone production, hormone response, chromosomes, and reproductive organs. Secondary sex characteristics are features that may appear during puberty or exposure to hormones, including breast growth, deepening voice, facial hair, and body hair.

Sexual fluidity: When one's sexual orientation isn't fixed, meaning who they are sexually attracted to can change over time (sometimes influenced by their relationship, situation, or environment). Sexual fluidity is not the same as bi+ identity and doesn't negate sexual orientations. Instead, it captures the idea of a spectrum or *fluidity* among the orientations.

Sexual orientation: An identity or embodied part of a person that describes how someone experiences romantic and/or sexual attraction, if they do at all. A person's sexual orientation is a part of who they are, no matter their relationship status or sexual/romantic experience(s).

Sharia: Sharia literally means "the clear, well-trodden path to water." It's a code of conduct for all aspects of Muslim life, derived from the Quran and Hadiths (Islamic text about the Prophet Mohammed's life). Sharia is not a set of laws to infiltrate America.

Sheik: An honorific title in the Arabic language. It commonly designates a tribal chief or royal family member, also can often refer

to a Muslim religious scholar. Transliterations include shaik, shaikh, shayk, shaykh, sheekh, sheikh, shekh, and sheyikh.

Shia: The smaller of Islam's two main branches, followed especially in Iran, that rejects the first three Sunni caliphs and regards Ali, the fourth caliph, as Muhammad's first true successor. Shia Muslims believe that just as God alone appoints His prophet, only God can appoint the *successor* to His prophet. They believe God chose *Ali* to be Muhammad's successor, Islam's infallible, first caliph (khalifah, head of state). Sunni Muslims believe that human beings' redemption depends on faith in Allah, His prophets, acceptance of *Muhammad* as the final prophet, and belief in righteous deeds as explained in the Koran.

Sikh: A subscriber to the world's 5th-largest organized religion Sikhism and a word meaning "Seeker of Truth." Sikhism teaches all paths lead to one God, *all* people are equal, and all can experience freedom through loving and serving others. More than .5 million Sikhs live in the U.S. and 99% of those wearing turbans in America are Sikhs. Sikhs have lived in the U.S. for 150+ years, helping to build the Transcontinental Railroad, serving in every major world war, standing at the forefront of civil rights, and were among the first responders on 9/11. For [more](#).

Small Island Developing States (SIDS): A group of small island countries that share many of the same sustainable development challenges (e.g., poverty, climate change, justice). There are three SIDS regions with their own cooperation bodies: the Caribbean Community (the Caribbean), Pacific Islands Forum (the Pacific), and the Indian Ocean Commission (Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea).

Social Determinants of Health (SDoH): The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. Conditions (e.g., social, economic, physical) in these various environments and settings (e.g., school, church, workplace, neighborhood) have been referred to as "place." In addition to the more material aspects of "place," patterns of social engagement and sense of security and well-being are also affected by where people live.

Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on population health outcomes (e.g., safe and affordable housing, availability of healthy foods, toxin-free environments). How population groups experience "place" directly impacts the specific *social* components of SDoH (e.g., access to educational, economic, and job opportunities; public safety; language and literacy) and *public* components of SDoH (e.g., natural environments, built environments). See [here](#) for more details.

Social Security: An insurance program that provides retirement, disability, and survivors benefits run by the U.S. Social Security Administration. Find more about Social Security [here](#) and [here](#).

Special Operations Forces: Units of armed forces that undertake covert, counterterrorist, and other specialized operations (including but not limited to Delta Force, Navy SEALs, Army Green Berets, Rangers, and Marine Force Reconnaissance, among other elite units).

Split attraction model: The idea that romantic attraction and sexual attraction are separate from one another, meaning someone's romantic orientation and sexual orientation can be different (e.g., someone *romantically* attracted to multiple genders but not *sexually* attracted to anyone might identify as "panromantic asexual"). While anyone can use this model to describe their attraction(s), it's most commonly used by asexuals, aromantics, and bisexuals (e.g., homoromantic asexual, aromantic asexual, heteroromantic bisexual). For [more](#).

STEM: A term used to group the academic disciplines in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math in education, the workforce, and recreational hobbies (e.g., computer coding, NASA, science fair projects).

Here's a [creator's toolkit](#) from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media for those looking to tell stories about women and girls in STEM.

Stud: A term originating in the African American lesbian community to describe a dominant gay or bi+ woman who is also masculine and usually African American. More on its usage [here](#).

Student veterans: Veterans who pursue higher education post-service via the G.I. Bill or tuition assistance and are more likely to be 4-8 years older than typical college-aged students, married, have children, work part- or full-time during the school year, graduate with a higher GPA, and move into a higher paying job than civilian counterparts. 1+ million veterans a year access the G.I. Bill funds for higher education, and post-9/11, are increasingly women, LGBTQIA+, more likely to be Black or Latinx, and have a disability. Two third of students are first-generation students. See [here](#).

Sunni: The larger of Islam's two main branches, which differs from Shia in its understanding of the Sunna, its conception of religious leadership, and its acceptance of the first three caliphs. Sunni Muslims strongly believe human beings' redemption depends on faith in Allah, His prophets, acceptance of *Muhammad* as the final prophet, and belief in righteous deeds as explained in the Koran. Shia Muslims believe that just as God alone appoints His prophet, only God can appoint the *successor* to His prophet. They believe God chose *Ali* to be Muhammad's successor, Islam's infallible, first caliph (khalifah, head of state)

TERFs: Stands for "trans-exclusionary radical feminists." First recorded in 2008, the term was originally applied to a minority of women who were espousing transphobic sentiments (e.g., the false assertion that trans women are men who don't belong in "women's spaces"). The term has since expanded to refer more broadly to people with trans-exclusionary views (e.g., support transphobic legislation, spread scientifically debunked misinformation about gender-affirming care). See [more](#) on the term and the impact of trans-exclusionary beliefs and policies.

Third gender: A category of people whose gender doesn't fit within the limiting and inaccurate notion of a gender binary within a particular culture. "Third gender" is used to describe some people whose gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth (e.g. non-binary, intersex, bigender, agender, hijra, metis). Some countries officially recognize a "third gender" on legal documents (e.g., an "X" gender or sex marker in lieu of the typical "F" or "M"). Note: Some societies widely recognize fourth, fifth, and more genders. Because gender is a spectrum, there are actually infinite genders. The term "third gender" is not used in everyday life by the communities that are labeled as such. The term mostly originates from the antiquated, academic notion that only three genders exist (i.e., woman, man, "other"), and therefore can be offensive and even invalidate someone's gender identity.

Tiger parenting: Or "tiger mother/mom" refers to a strict and demanding East Asian parent who pushes their child to high levels of academic and scholastic achievement. This portrayal often involves "Confucian child rearing techniques" that damage a child's social, physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Tiki culture: A motif of restaurants and bars that caters to a longing for tropical regions, especially in the South Pacific. Tiki culture is marked by complex, fruity drinks (e.g., mai tais), fake tiki idols and carvings, cabana sets, and "Hawaiian" shirts. This "culture" is built on an [appropriation and caricaturization of Polynesian identity and traditions](#).

Toxic masculinity: How the promoted "norm" of masculinity and "manliness" perpetuates negative and violent behaviors like aggression, domination, devaluation of women, and homophobia. Adherence to traditional male gender roles also stigmatizes and limits the emotions, traits, and behaviors that men and boys feel comfortable expressing for fear of being perceived as weak or feminine.

Transfeminine: A person assigned male at birth who is closer to femininity than masculinity but is not a binary woman. Often abbreviated as "transfem" or "transfemme."

Transgender (trans): Someone whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Like cisgender, trans isn't a gender itself; there are trans women, trans men, and trans non-binary people. When a trans person transitions, they are not "becoming" a man or woman, rather they are bringing their gender expression and/or bodies into alignment with the gender identity they've always been. Being transgender is not dependent on physical appearance or medical procedures. Note: Always use "a trans/transgender person," never "transgendered." For [more](#).

Transition: When a trans person transitions, they are not "becoming" a different gender, rather they are aligning their gender expression and/or body with the gender identity they've always been. This is a complex process that can occur over a long period of time and varies from person to person.

Transitioning *can* include: **social transition** (e.g., telling family, friends, and co-workers; dressing differently; using a new name/pronouns); **legal transition** (e.g., changing name and/or sex marker on legal documents and bank accounts); **medical transition** (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, surgical procedures). Some trans people choose not to, don't want to, or are unable to transition in one or all of these ways for many reasons (e.g., financial barriers, don't feel like they're in the "wrong body"). Being transgender is not dependent on physical appearance or medical procedures.

Transmasculine: A person assigned female at birth who is closer to masculinity than femininity but is not a binary man. Often abbreviated as "transmasc."

Transmisogyny: An intersection of transphobia and misogyny as expressed through negative attitudes, cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women, transfeminine people, and other feminine-presenting non-binary and gender-diverse people (especially those who are BIPOC).

Transphobia: Discrimination rooted in the fear, hatred, disbelief, and/or mistrust of transgender people and others whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional gender roles within the male/female gender binary. This includes explicit discrimination (e.g, slurs and derogatory language; physical and sexual assault; familial rejection; anti-trans legislation; housing, employment, and healthcare discrimination), microaggressions (e.g., misgendering, mocking pronouns, interrogation of medical history), and more passive forms of discrimination (e.g., unconscious bias, internalized negative attitudes and beliefs about trans people).

Trauma porn: Refers to art or media that exploits the pain, suffering, and brutalization of marginalized people for the sake of entertainment. These depictions cater to non-marginalized viewers

and characters rather than exploring the experience, situation, or POV of the person(s) being victimized. These kinds of depictions are harmful for all viewers as they deny the life and livelihood of those being victimized, devaluing their existence in our communities and society, granting no opportunity for empathy and deeper understanding.

Two-Spirit (2S): Created in 1990, an umbrella term intended to describe Indigenous people who do not fit into colonizers' binary understanding of sexual orientation and gender. "Two-Spirit" is a direct translation of the Ojibwe term "Niizh mandidoowag," but it's used by many U.S. Native American/First Nations Indigenous peoples. Many Native cultures have specific words in their language to refer to people with diverse genders and sexual orientations; Two-Spirit is not intended to replace those specific words. While it is not a synonymous term for "queer," "bi," or "trans," people who are 2S may also identify as such. Note: This term should *only* be used by First Nations/US Native American Indigenous peoples, and writers who are not Two-Spirit should always consult experts on this subject. For more, see [here](#) and [here](#).

Undetectable: When antiretroviral treatment (ART) reduces the amount of HIV in the body to such low levels that the virus is no longer detectable in normal blood tests and becomes untransmittable to sexual partners. For [more](#).

Undocumented immigrant: An individual residing in any given country without legal documentation. In the U.S., this includes people who entered without inspection and/or proper governmental permission and those who had a legal visa that's no longer valid.

Unnecessary intersex surgeries: Some intersex children and babies undergo unnecessary, irreversible surgeries without their consent for no other reason than to make their bodies conform to traditional, *false* notions of what it means to be male or female. The vast majority of these surgeries are not medically necessary, lead to complications (e.g., physical pain, loss of genital sensitivity, poor mental health), and could instead be delayed until the intersex person can decide whether surgery is right for them. See [here](#) for more on this issue.

U.S. Census: The U.S. Constitution mandates that America gets only one chance every 10 years to count its population. The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States. The data collected determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives (a process called apportionment) and is also used to distribute billions in federal funds to local communities. Find more [here](#).

U.S. Refugee Act of 1980: Amendment to previous U.S. immigration and refugee assistance acts that established a more uniform basis for

assisting refugees. Due in part to this resettlement Act, U.S. SEA communities include large, diverse populations not only in coastal cities, as commonly assumed, but throughout the U.S. including in Chicago and Las Vegas, and in Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Texas, and Washington.

Veterans Affairs (the U.S. Department of): A Cabinet-level executive branch department of the federal government charged with integrating life-long healthcare services to eligible military veterans at the 1700 VA medical centers and outpatient clinics across the U.S. Also charged with administering veteran benefits such as education benefits, disability compensation, pension payments, education benefits, home loan certificates, and aide and attendance benefits. Veterans Affairs has two branches: Veteran Health Administration (VHA) and Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA). The VHA oversees hospitals, clinics, and retirement homes. The VBA oversees compensation benefits, pension, death, and education benefits. The VA also encompasses the VA National Cemetery Administration, which operates national cemeteries and provides burial benefits.

Visa: A visa is an official document that indicates that the holder has permission to enter and stay in a requested country for a specified period of time.

Wage gap: Refers to the difference in wages earned between men and women and non-binary people in the workforce. Women and non-binary people consistently make less than men (and Black, Indigenous, and Latinx women earn less than their white and Asian counterparts, with disabled women earning less than non-disabled women). Also known as the "gender pay gap." Read more about how the wage gap impacts [Black women](#), [Indigenous women](#), and [Latinx women](#).

WASH inequality: Stands for water, sanitation, and hygiene. Women and girls face disproportionate inaccessibility to WASH; less likely to have access to hygiene products, clean water, and safe, enclosed bathing facilities. This makes them more vulnerable to disease, violence, and poverty.

WLW: Stands for "woman-loving woman" or "women-loving women." This term has become a unifying label for a woman who is attracted to and/or has emotional, romantic, and sexual partnerships with other women (e.g., lesbians, pansexual women, sapphics, same-gender-loving women). Often stylized as "wlw." For [more](#).

Womxn: An alternative spelling of "women/woman" (pronounced the same) to remove the use of "men/man." This term is particularly used by intersectional feminists to show inclusion of trans, non-binary, BIPOC, and disabled women. However, it should be noted that many transgender and non-binary people find the term exclusionary and

even offensive, as it implies that the word "woman" is not already inclusive of transgender women. Use with caution.

Yazidi: Yazidis are predominantly ethnically Kurdish and have kept their religion alive for centuries, despite many years of oppression and threatened extermination. There are an estimated 700,000 Yazidis worldwide -- the vast majority in northern Iraq. The ancient religion is rumored to have been founded by an 11th century Umayyad sheikh, and is derived from Zoroastrianism (an ancient Persian faith), Christianity, and Islam. The religion has taken elements from each, ranging from baptism (Christianity) to circumcision (Islam) to reverence of fire as a manifestation from God (derived from Zoroastrianism), but remains distinctly non-Abrahamic. This derivative quality has often led the Yazidis to be referred to as a sect.

They're often marginalized because they worship a fallen angel, Melek Tawwus, or Peacock Angel, one of their seven primary angels. Unlike Satan's fall from in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Melek Tawwus was forgiven and returned to heaven by God. This has erroneously given Yazidis an undeserved reputation for being devil-worshippers — a notoriety that, in the climate of extremism in Iraq, turned life-threatening. For example, Al-Qaida denounced Yazidis in Iraq as infidels and sanctioned their indiscriminate killing.

Yellow Peril: A racist fear in Western countries and cultures that East Asians, particularly of Chinese descent, will invade their lands and disrupt white Western values, power, and culture. While often dismissed as 19th-century history, racist anti-Asian fears, microaggressions, and violence persist and have been revitalized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Find more on its history [here](#).

Zoroastrianism: A pre-Islamic religion of ancient Persia (now Iran) founded by the prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) in the 6th century BCE. Zoroastrians believe in one God (Ahura Mazda), and that one day the forces of good will defeat the forces of evil and restore the world to the state of perfection it was originally. For [more](#).