

Safeguarding Newsletter for August: LGBTQ+ Awareness & Pride

What Does LGBTQ+ Mean?

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and others. The "plus" represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit. The first four letters of the acronym have been used since the 1990s, but in recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need to be inclusive of other sexual identities to offer better representation.

The acronym is used to represent a diverse range of sexualities and gender-identities, referring to anyone who is transgender and/or same/similar gender attracted. The addition of the plus is better able to fully capture that diversity.



Why Representation Matters

The goal of using more inclusive terms like LGBTQ+ is to improve visibility, recognition, and acceptance. Individuals are connected to a larger community, and these individuals are able to gain greater recognition by society as a whole. Visibility can also help create a greater sense of self-affirmation of a person's identity. Research suggests that despite safety concerns, being visible as a member of the LGBTQ+ community can be an important way to feel a sense of pride in individual identity. Affirming self-identity can help people feel greater self-esteem, self-worth, and boost overall mental well-being.

It is important to remember that while attitudes have shifted towards greater acceptance, LGBTQ+ people continue to face discrimination. Harassment, bullying, and workplace discrimination are not uncommon. One advantage of utilizing a unified terminology is the ability to engage in political advocacy. Social solidarity can be used to improve visibility, combat discrimination, and advance causes including anti-discrimination and equality laws.

Uses

Terms and definitions are always evolving. When it comes to something as personal as sexuality and gender identity, these terms and definitions can mean different things to different people. While working to understanding and use terms such as LGBTQ+ can help increase the visibility of people who have faced marginalization and discrimination, it is important to remember that the most important labels or definitions are the ones that people give to themselves.



PRIDE

In June, Pride Month was celebrated across the world to honour the 1969 Stonewall Uprising which was a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States.

Pride month is about acceptance, equality, celebrating the work of LGBTQ+ people, education in LGBTQ+ history and raising awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. It also calls for people to remember how damaging homophobia was and still can be. Pride is all about being proud of who you are no matter who you love.

Celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, concerts, and LGBTQ Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world. Memorials are held during this month for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS. The purpose of the commemorative month is to recognize the impact that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally.

Useful Resources

If you are interested in learning about LGBTQ+ issues, there are a number of resources available that can help.

- [The Trevor Project](#)
- [Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#)
- [National Center for Transgender Equality \(NCTE\)](#)

If you are interested in learning more about what terms and phrases should be avoided, GLAAD, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, has a reference page that offers helpful information on [LGBTQ terms](#) as well as information on terms that are specific to the [transgender community](#).

References

- [Information and resources | Stonewall](#)
- [What Does LGBTQ+ Mean? \(verywellmind.com\)](#)
- [About | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Pride Month | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)
- [Pride: What is it and why do people celebrate it? - CBBC Newsround](#)