

Helpful Definitions for Understanding Queer & Trans* Experiences

Sex: The assignment and classification of people into a binary category as male or female based on imprecise perceptions of their physical anatomy. Sex is not fixed or immutable, and no single criterion (e.g. genitals, chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics, hormones, fertility, etc.) definitively describes one's bodily shape or configuration, so such a classification is arbitrary and irrelevant outside specific medical contexts where a single aspect of anatomy is important. A binary classification for sex is inaccurate as evidenced by intersex people whose anatomy and/or physiology does not fit the culturally accepted categories. Sex does not determine one's gender.

Gender Identity: an individual's own internal and personal sense of gender, whether it be a woman, a man, a combination of both, neither, another, none at all, etc. For transgender individuals their gender identity does not match with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Gender Expression: The external manifestation of an individual's gender through clothing, hairstyle, body characteristics, mannerisms, voice, etc. It is typically referred to as masculinity, femininity, or gender variance.

Gender Binary: A system of understanding gender as having only two categories: man and woman, where no other possibilities for gender or anatomy are believed to exist. This system is arbitrary, inaccurate, and oppressive.

Transgender: umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex or gender they were assigned at birth, and for those whose gender expression differs from what is culturally expected of them. It can include identities such as transgender woman, transgender man, genderqueer, etc. however not all people with those identities might use the term transgender. The term transgender does not indicate sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

Genderqueer: A non-binary gender identity. Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither male nor female, may see themselves as outside of or in between the binary gender boxes, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels. Some genderqueer people do identify within the binary (e.g. "genderqueer woman"), but reject the conventions and expectations associated with that gender.

Trans*: Prefix or adjective used as a simultaneous abbreviation of either transgender or transsexual, derived from the Latin word meaning across from or on the other side of. Because it avoids the political connotations of both those terms, many consider trans to be the most inclusive and useful umbrella term, as there are transgender people who do not identify as transsexual, and transsexual people who do not

identify as transsexual, and transsexual people who do not identify as transgender. Many non-binary and other gender non-conforming individuals use **trans*** (with the asterisk, pronounced tran-star) to indicate that they're definitely not cisgender, but not necessarily a trans woman/man either.

Cisgender: Term used to describe individuals whose gender identity does not differ from the sex assigned to them at birth. Not trans, it is derived from the Latin word for being on the same side (as opposed to across from). Cis is not a slur, and is not intended to "label" anyone; consider trans and cis neutral descriptors analogous to homo and hetero, a pair of Greek-derived prefixes used in discussing sexuality.

Queer: An identity that varies in definition from individual to individual, although academically it is most often defined as "non-heteronormative". It usually also signifies that one embraces progressive politics and is not heterosexual. Can also indicate an orientation that explicitly includes attraction to people of all genders, including non-binary ones. The word queer has long been used as a hateful slur towards gay people, so although many have reclaimed it from their oppressors, be careful with its use.

Pansexual: Describes an individual's orientation who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to individuals regardless of their gender identity. (Rejects the gender binary.)

Polyamorous: Not monogamous. A romantic and/or sexual relationship model that involves more than two people who know about and agree to everyone else's involvement.

PGPs: Stands for Preferred Gender Pronouns. In grammar these are called third-person pronouns and are used to replace a person's name in a sentence when speaking about them. E.g. he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, ey/em/eirs, co/cos, etc. Frequently used as part of group introductions along with names. Many people, both trans and cis, do not consider their pronouns to be a preference, but rather the only respectful manner of reference besides their name. Pronouns imply gender, but are not necessarily indicative of a person's gender identity.

Thanks to Erin Houdini for some of these definitions, in whole or in part. <http://www.erinhoudini.com/transgender->

SafeZones@SDSU & SafeZones@Wits Present



Intersectionality & Advocacy
in SOGI & LGBTQIA Communities



The First Annual Transnational
Conference April 16, 2014



www.facebook.com/skypecon14

Conference Theme and Format

Through bringing together a diverse group of activists and scholars from the U.S. and South Africa, as well as online participants, this conference proposes to create discussions across borders that divide the LGBTQIA/SOGI community. We hope that by examining the intersectional nature of identities and communities, including interlocking oppressions and systems of privilege, we will strengthen our ability to work together. The format will be four small panels of activists and academics from San Diego State University and the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and its allied organizations who will engage in collaborative reflection on various aspects of intersectionality.

Conference Program

Introductions and Welcome (9:00-9:10 a.m.)

- ❖ Dr. Mary Kelly, Director of LGBT Resource and Program Development, College of Arts and Letters, SDSU
- ❖ Dr. Paul Wong, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, SDSU
- ❖ Tish White, Project Coordinator, SOGI Advocacy Programs, Transformation and Employment Equity Office, Wits University

Language and Intersections (9:10-9:30 a.m.)

- ❖ Anzio Jacobs, SafeZones@SDSU Intern and Co-Creator of SafeZones@Wits
- ❖ Dr. Tommaso Milani, Associate Professor of Linguistics, Wits University
- ❖ Thomas Negron, Jr., LGBT Studies Major and President, Queer Student Union, SDSU

Race, Gender and Class in SOGI Advocacy (9:30-9:50 a.m.)

- ❖ Dr. Hugo Canham, Director of the Transformation and Employment Equity Office, Wits University
- ❖ Dr. Susan Cayleff, Co-Chair, SafeZones@SDSU and Professor of Women's Studies, SDSU
- ❖ Dr. Huma Ghosh, Chair, Department of Women's Studies, SDSU

Q & A (9:50-10:00 a.m.)

Break and Refreshments (10:00-10:10 a.m.)

Transgender and Queering Gender (10:10-10:25 a.m.)

- Leigh Ann van der Merwe, Founder, S.H.E. (Social, Health, Empowerment) Feminist Collective of Transgender and Intersex Women of Africa
- Jo Marsden, student activist and President of

- CrtAltGender, Wits University
- Wesley Paláu, LGBT Major, Assistant, Transgender Programs and Resources, Affairs Chair, Pride Center, SDSU
- Amber Tiffany-Furuya, Graduate Assistant, The Pride Center, and M.A. Candidate in History, SDSU

Age, Youth and Ability/Disability (10:25 -10:50 a.m.)

- ❖ John Meletse and Cherae Halley, Deaf Project Officers, Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA)
- ❖ Gabriel Hoosain Khan, LGBTI Youth and Education Program Officer, GALA
- ❖ Fumani Mabogoane, student activist and Vice President of ACTIVATE, Wits University
- ❖ Patricia Ruiz, Chicana lesbiana activist and Gerontology Major, SDSU

Q & A (10:50-11:00 a.m.)

Extended Conference Hour for Additional Dialogue (11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

For those who are able to stay longer or want to participate online using [facebook.com/skypecon14](https://www.facebook.com/skypecon14), we have this venue until noon. Possible additional topics for conversation could be religion's role in sexual orientation and gender identities, the invisibility of bisexuality in SOGI/LGBTQIA discussions and the addition of other sexualities and identities to the list of letters—such as adding a "P" for Pansexuality or another "A" for Asexuality.

This conference has been co-sponsored by:

LGBT Studies, LGBTQ Research Consortium, The Pride Center, College of Arts and Letters, Office of Diversity, Office of Intercultural Relations