



## Pride not prejudice DVD

# Glossary of Non-Legal Terms

Not all of the terms below are referred to in the DVD but may be relevant to workshop and diversity training.

### **Being Out**

Means not concealing one's sexual orientation.

### **Being outed**

Refers to having one's sexual orientation made public either deliberately or by default and against one's wishes or without one's consent.

### **Bigot**

Is a prejudiced person who is intolerant of opinions, lifestyles or identities differing from his or her own. Bigot is often used as a pejorative term against a person, or group, who is obstinately devoted to his or her prejudices even when their views are challenged or proven to be false. Forms of bigotry may have a related ideology or world view.

### **Bisexual**

Bisexual refers to a person who is aesthetically, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of both genders.

### **Coming Out/ "Coming out of the closet"**

Describes the voluntary public announcement of one's sexual orientation. Coming out is a process, and often a gradual one. It is common to come out first to a trusted friend or family member, and wait to come out to others. Some people are out at work but not to their families, or vice-versa. People must continue to 'out' themselves with every new acquaintance and in most new situations. Coming out is often seen within gay and lesbian communities as politically healthy, arguing that the more out gay people there are, the harder it will be for bigots to misrepresent, marginalize and oppress.

### **Coming Out To Oneself**

To admit to oneself that one is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. This is the very first step in the coming-out process; it often involves soul-searching or a personal epiphany of some sort. Coming out to oneself often ends a period of ambiguity or uncertainty about one's own sexual orientation and begins the process of self-acceptance.

Studies have found that the degree to which a person can be out in a large number of life situations seems strongly to correlate with lack of stress.

### **Diversity**

Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference in the broadest sense. It is about creating a working culture and practices that recognize, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and individuals.

### **Equality**

Is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination based on membership of a particular group.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Equal Opportunities emphasises the structures, systems and measures of groups within society to provide equal and fair access and conditions in employment, education, institutions and organisations. A key element of equal opportunities is addressing representation and balance.

### **Gay**

In modern usage is usually used, as either a noun or adjective to describe homosexuals; persons sexually orientated towards members of their own gender.

Gay as an adjective sometimes describes traits associated with both gay men and lesbians, their culture or perceived lifestyle. The term 'gay' used in this context usually has negative connotations.

### **Gender**

A classification of masculinity and femininity linked to both identity and biology.

### **Heterocentrism**

An assumption, often unconscious, that everyone is heterosexual and the attitudes associated with that assumption. Heterocentrism often shows up in unintentional ways in everyday life e.g. always referring to a woman's partner as he/him. These people may not have anything against same gender partners but their heterocentrism serves to exclude members of LGB communities.

### **Heteronormativity**

Used to describe the manner in which many social institutions and social policies are seen to reinforce heterosexist beliefs and belief systems. These include the belief that human beings fall into two distinct and complementary categories, male and female; that sexual and marital relations are normal only when between two people of different sexes; and that each sex has certain natural roles in life. The norms this term describes or criticises might be overt, covert, or implied. Those who identify and criticise heteronormativity say that it distorts discourse by stigmatising alternative concepts of both sexuality and gender and makes certain types of self-expression more difficult.

### **Heterosexism**

Is a belief, argument and/or belief system based on an assumption of innate superiority that male-female sexuality is the only natural, normal and moral code of sexual behaviour. It is also used to refer to the effects of that cultural ideology.

### **Heterosexuality**

Primarily refers to aesthetic, sexual and romantic attraction exclusively between two individuals of opposite genders. It is classified as a sexual orientation, contrasted with homosexuality and bisexuality.

### **Homophobia**

Homophobia is an extreme and irrational aversion to homosexuality and homosexuals. It can also mean hatred or disparagement of *LGB* people, their lifestyle, their sexual behaviour or culture and is used to assert bigotry. Opposition to same gender attraction on religious, moral or political grounds is also generally referred to as homophobic.

## **Homosexuality**

In the original sense it describes a sexual orientation characterised by lasting aesthetic attraction, romantic love or sexual desire exclusively for others of the same gender. There is considerable debate within the lesbian and gay communities about the label of homosexual. It is considered by many that the term is too clinical and dehumanizing, a sentiment that derives from the fact that homosexuality was once defined as a mental illness. Lesbian and gay people often prefer to be referred to as 'lesbian' or 'gay' because these terms denote more than sexual activity and indicate other aspects of being lesbian or gay such as those related to culture, politics and community.

Some same gender oriented people prefer the term 'homosexual' rather than 'gay' as they may perceive the term 'gay' as describing a cultural or socio-political group with which they do not identify.

## **Lesbian**

A lesbian is a woman who is aesthetically, sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to other women. The word lesbian is derived from Lesbos, a Greek Island in the East Aegean Sea where the ancient Greek lyric poet Sappho lived.

## **Outing**

Is the process of deliberately disclosing the sexual orientation of another who presumably wants to keep this information private.

## **Sexual Orientation**

Describes the direction of an individual's sexuality, often in relation to their own sex and gender. Common terms of describing sexual orientation include bisexual (bi), heterosexual (straight) and homosexual (lesbian or gay). This definition also reflects the definition used within The Equality Act 2006.

## **Transgender**

Transgender is used as a very broad term to include all sorts of transpeople. It includes cross dressers, people who wear a mix of clothing, people with a dual or no gender identity, and transsexual people. It is also used to define a political and social community which is inclusive of transsexual people, transgender people and cross-dressers (transvestites). The definition of transgender in terms of employment law is much more restrictive - please see the legal glossary for more information.



Thanks to Wendy Dree and Simon O'Corra for giving their permission to use this glossary which is mostly taken from their 'Core Training Standards for Sexual Orientation'. Email: Socorra@mac.com

