



# GLAAD MEDIA REFERENCE GUIDE

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# GLAAD MEDIA CONTACTS

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**Local, National, & International News Media**  
news@glaad.org

**Entertainment Media**  
entertainment@glaad.org

**Spanish-Language Media**  
enespanol@glaad.org

**Transgender Media**  
trans@glaad.org

**Religion & Faith Media**  
faith@glaad.org

**GLAAD Spokesperson Inquiries**  
press@glaad.org

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# INTRODUCTION

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## "Fair, Accurate & Inclusive"

Fair, accurate, and inclusive news media coverage has played an important role in expanding public awareness and understanding of LGBTQ people. However, many reporters, editors, and producers continue to face challenges covering LGBTQ issues in a complex, sometimes rhetorically charged, climate.



Media coverage of LGBTQ people has become increasingly multi-dimensional, reflecting both the diversity of the community and the growing visibility of LGBTQ people's families and relationships. As a result, reporting that remains mired in simplistic, predictable "pro-gay"/"anti-gay" dualisms does a disservice to readers seeking information on the diversity of opinion and experience within the LGBTQ community. Misinformation and misconceptions about LGBTQ people's lives can be corrected when journalists diligently research the facts and debunk the myths (such as pernicious claims that transgender people pose a danger in public bathrooms) that often are used against LGBTQ people.

There continues to be a need for journalists to distinguish between opposing viewpoints on LGBTQ issues and the defamatory rhetoric that fuels prejudice and discrimination. While defamatory comments may be newsworthy, they should not be used simply to provide "balance" in a news story.

Unfortunately, anti-LGBTQ individuals and organizations continue to see their incendiary rhetoric and inaccurate, sensationalistic distortions of LGBTQ people's lives legitimized through news stories, features, and profiles. Such inclusion, despite the best efforts of reporters striving for fair and accurate coverage, devalues the quality of journalism and misinforms audiences.

In an era when LGBTQ people's lives increasingly intersect with mainstream media coverage of family, faith, the economy, health care, politics, sports, entertainment, and a myriad of other issues, we at GLAAD are committed to providing timely and accurate resources for media professionals. GLAAD believes the best coverage allows readers, viewers, and listeners to form their own conclusions based on factual information, compelling stories, and appropriate context. We ask that you help give audiences that opportunity in your coverage of LGBTQ people and issues.

GLAAD's Media Reference Guide is intended to be used by journalists reporting for mainstream media outlets and by creators in entertainment media who want to tell the stories of LGBTQ people fairly and accurately. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive glossary of language used within the LGBTQ community, nor is it a prescriptive guide for LGBTQ people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Kate Ellis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

**Sarah Kate Ellis**  
President & CEO, GLAAD

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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## **Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Queer**

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## **Transgender**

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**Sexual Orientation**

The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and therefore "curable." People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

**Gay**

The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., *gay man*, *gay people*). Sometimes *lesbian* (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.

**Lesbian**

A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as *gay* (adj.) or as *gay women*. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals," a derogatory term (see *Offensive Terms to Avoid*).

**Bisexual, Bi**

A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Do not use a hyphen in the word "bisexual," and only capitalize bisexual when used at the beginning of a sentence.

**Transgender, Transsexual**

(see page 10)

**Queer**

An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g. queer person, queer woman). Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms *lesbian*, *gay*, and *bisexual* are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don't apply to them. Some people may use queer, or more commonly genderqueer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below). Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBT community. When Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it typically means queer and, less often, questioning.

**LGBTQ**

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it can also mean questioning. LGBT and/or GLBT are also often used. The term "gay community" should be avoided, as it does not accurately reflect the diversity of the community. Rather, LGBTQ community is preferred.

**Intersex**

An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female. Those variations are also sometimes referred to as Differences of Sex Development (DSD.) Avoid the outdated and derogatory term "hermaphrodite." While some people can have an intersex condition and also identify as transgender, the two are separate and should not be conflated. (For more information, visit [interactyouth.org](http://interactyouth.org).)

**Asexual**

An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction (e.g., asexual person). A person can also be aromantic, meaning they do not experience romantic attraction. (For more information, visit [asexuality.org](http://asexuality.org).)

**Heterosexual**

An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also *straight*.

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*"Queer" was once considered a pejorative term, but has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves. However, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBT community.*

## Homosexual

(see *Offensive Terms to Avoid*) Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive. The Associated Press, *New York Times* and *Washington Post* restrict usage of the term.

## Homophobia

Fear of people attracted to the same sex. *Intolerance, bias, or prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBTQ people.

## Biphobia

Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. *Intolerance, bias, or prejudice* is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

## Coming Out

A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a LGBTQ identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out.

## Out

A person who self-identifies as LGBTQ in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. For example: *Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico*. Preferred to *openly gay*.

## Openly Gay

Describes people who self-identify as gay in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. Also *openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender, openly queer*. While accurate and commonly used, the phrase still implies a confessional aspect to publicly acknowledging one's sexual orientation or gender identity. See *out* above.

## Closeted

Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Better to simply refer to someone as "not out" about being LGBTQ. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one's job, or other concerns.

## Outing

The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBTQ community.

## Lifestyle

(see *Offensive Terms to Avoid*) Inaccurate term used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people. As there is no one straight lifestyle, there is no one LGBTQ lifestyle.

## Marriage

In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that every American has the constitutional right to marry the person they love. When reporting on marriage for same-sex couples, preferred terminology includes marriage equality and marriage for same-sex couples. Note, the terms "gay marriage" and "same-sex marriage" should be avoided, as they can suggest marriage for same-sex couples is somehow different than other marriages.

## Civil Union

Historically used in the U.S. to describe state-based relationship recognition for same-sex couples that offered some or all of the state (though none of the federal) rights, protections, and responsibilities of marriage. While many Western countries (including the United States) have now legalized marriage for same-sex couples, others only legally recognize same-sex relationships through civil unions.

## Domestic Partnership

Civil/legal recognition of a committed relationship between two people that sometimes extends limited protections to them.

## Sodomy Laws

Historically used to selectively persecute gay people, the state laws often referred to as "sodomy laws" were ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003). "Sodomy" should never be used to describe same-sex relationships or sexual orientation.

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"Out" is preferred to "openly gay." Though both terms are accurate and commonly used, "openly gay" still implies a confessional aspect to publicly acknowledging one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p><b>"homosexual" (n. or adj.)</b></p> <p>Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using “homosexual” except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using “homosexual” as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word “gay.” The Associated Press, <i>The New York Times</i> and <i>The Washington Post</i> restrict use of the term “homosexual” (see <i>AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>).</p>	<p><b>"gay" (adj.); "gay man" or "lesbian" (n.); "gay person/people"</b></p> <p>Please use <i>gay, lesbian</i>, or when appropriate <i>bisexual</i> or <i>queer</i> to describe people attracted to members of the same sex.</p>
<p><b>"homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex," etc.</b></p> <p>Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" is extremely offensive and should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people, couples, and relationships.</p>	<p><b>"relationship," "couple" (or, if necessary, "gay/lesbian/same-sex couple"), "sex," etc.</b></p> <p>As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion, or relationship gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship "straight" if engaged in by someone of another orientation. In most cases, your readers, viewers, or listeners will be able to discern people's sexes and/or orientations through the names of the parties involved, your depictions of their relationships, and your use of pronouns.</p>
<p><b>"sexual preference"</b></p> <p>The term "sexual preference" is typically used to suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured."</p>	<p><b>"sexual orientation" or "orientation"</b></p> <p>Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer people, as well as straight men and women (see <i>AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>).</p>
<p><b>"gay lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," or "transgender lifestyle"</b></p> <p>There is no single LGBTQ lifestyle. LGBTQ people are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrases "gay lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," and "transgender lifestyle" are used to denigrate LGBTQ people suggesting that their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (see <i>Transgender Glossary of Terms</i>) is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured" (see <i>AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>).</p>	<p><b>"LGBTQ people and their lives"</b></p>

<p><b>"admitted homosexual" or "avowed homosexual"</b></p> <p>Dated terms used to describe those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.</p>	<p><b>"out gay man," "out lesbian," or "out queer person"</b></p> <p>You may also simply describe the person as being out, for example: "Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico." Avoid the use of the word "homosexual" in any case (<i>see AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>).</p>
<p><b>"gay agenda" or "homosexual agenda"</b></p> <p>Notions of a so-called "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBTQ extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal opportunity for LGBTQ people as sinister (<i>see AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>).</p>	<p><b>Accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., "inclusion in existing nondiscrimination laws," "securing equal employment protections")</b></p> <p>LGBTQ people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as other everyday Americans. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, serve their country, and take care of the ones they love. Their commitment to equality and acceptance is one they share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBTQ.</p>
<p><b>"special rights"</b></p> <p>Anti-LGBTQ extremists frequently characterize equal protection of the law for LGBTQ people as "special rights" to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive nondiscrimination laws (<i>see AP, Reuters, &amp; New York Times Style</i>). As such, the term should be avoided.</p>	<p><b>"equal rights" or "equal protection"</b></p>

## Defamatory language

### **"fag," "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "sodomite," and similar epithets**

The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, "The person used a derogatory word for a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer person."

### **"deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," "destructive" and similar descriptions**

The notion that being LGBTQ is a psychological disorder was discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Today, words such as "deviant," "diseased" and "disordered" often are used to portray LGBTQ people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about the LGBTQ community. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that clearly reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

### **Associating LGBTQ people with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest**

Being LGBTQ is neither synonymous with, nor indicative of, any tendency toward pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest. Such claims, innuendoes and associations often are used to insinuate that LGBTQ people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such assertions and insinuations are defamatory and should be avoided, except in direct quotes that clearly reveal the bias of the person quoted.

**Sex**

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

**Gender Identity**

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

**Gender Expression**

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Sexual Orientation**

Describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman.

**Transgender (adj.)**

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including *transgender*. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term

preferred by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

**Transsexual (adj.)**

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike *transgender*, *transsexual* is **not** an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word *transgender*. It is best to ask which term a person prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

**Trans**

Used as shorthand to mean *transgender* or *transsexual* - or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means. Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term's meaning in the context of your story.

**Transgender man**

People who were assigned female at birth but identify and live as a man may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans man. (Note: *trans man*, not "transman.") Some may also use FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male. Some may prefer to simply be called *men*, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term a person prefers.

**Transgender woman**

People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans woman. (Note: *trans woman*, not "transwoman.") Some may also use MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called *female*, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term a person prefers.

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For additional resources on how to fairly and accurately report on transgender people, please see "[In Focus: Covering the Transgender Community](#)" and visit [glaad.org/transgender](http://glaad.org/transgender).

## Cross-dresser

While anyone may wear clothes associated with a different sex, the term *cross-dresser* is typically used to refer to men who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with women. Those men typically identify as heterosexual. This activity is a form of gender expression and not done for entertainment purposes. Cross-dressers do not wish to permanently change their sex or live full-time as women. *Replaces the term "transvestite."*

## Transition

Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one's family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. **Avoid the phrase "sex change."**

## Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)

Also called Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS). Refers to doctor-supervised surgical

interventions, and is only one small part of transition (see transition above). Avoid the phrase "sex change operation." Do not refer to someone as being "pre-op" or "post-op." Not all transgender people choose to, or can afford to, undergo medical surgeries. **Journalists should avoid overemphasizing the role of surgeries in the transition process.**

## Gender Identity Disorder (GID)

*outdated, see Gender Dysphoria*

## Gender Dysphoria

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association released the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) which replaced the outdated entry "Gender Identity Disorder" with *Gender Dysphoria*, and changed the criteria for diagnosis. The necessity of a psychiatric diagnosis remains controversial, as both psychiatric and medical authorities recommend individualized medical treatment through hormones and/or surgeries to treat gender dysphoria. Some transgender advocates believe the inclusion of Gender Dysphoria in the DSM is necessary in order to advocate for health insurance that covers the medically necessary treatment recommended for transgender people.



**Transgender women are not cross-dressers or drag queens. Drag queens are men, typically gay men, who dress like women for the purpose of entertainment. Be aware of the differences between transgender women, cross-dressers, and drag queens. Use the term preferred by the person. Do not use the word "transvestite" at all, unless someone specifically self-identifies that way.**

## Other terms you may hear

You may hear the following terms when doing research on transgender issues or speaking to an interview subject. As they are not commonly known outside the LGBTQ community, they will likely require context and definition if used in mainstream media.

### Cisgender

A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-." A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say *non-transgender people*.

### Gender Non-Conforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. **Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming.** Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional – that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for *transgender* or *transsexual* and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

### Non-binary and/or genderqueer

Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The term is not a synonym for *transgender* or *transsexual* and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

**Always use a transgender person's chosen name.**

Many transgender people are able to obtain a legal name change from a court. However, some transgender people cannot afford a legal name change or are not yet old enough to legally change their name. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who uses a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).

**Use the pronoun that matches the person's authentic gender.**

A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or undergone surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you are not certain which pronoun to use, ask the person, "What pronouns do you use?"

**If it is not possible to ask a transgender person which pronoun they use, use the pronoun that is consistent with the person's appearance and gender expression or use the singular *they*.**

For example, if a person wears a dress and uses the name Susan, feminine pronouns are usually appropriate. Or it is also acceptable to use the singular *they* to describe someone when you don't wish to assign a gender. For example: "Every individual should be able to express their gender in a way that is comfortable for them."

**Some people use the singular *they* to reflect their non-binary gender identity.**

In 2015, *The Washington Post* updated its style guide to include the singular *they* to describe people who "identify as neither male nor female." It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity to use *they*/*them* as their pronoun. For example: "Jacob writes eloquently about their non-binary identity. They have also appeared frequently in the media to talk about their family's reaction to their gender expression."

**It is never appropriate to put quotation marks around either a transgender person's name or the pronoun that reflects that person's gender identity.****The Associated Press Stylebook provides guidelines for journalists reporting on transgender people and issues.**

According to the AP Stylebook, reporters should "use the pronoun preferred by the individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex or present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth. If that preference is not expressed, use the pronoun consistent with the way the individuals live publicly." (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style)

**When describing transgender people, please use the correct term or terms to describe their gender identity.**

For example, a person who was assigned male at birth and transitions to live as a woman is a *transgender woman*, whereas a person who was assigned female at birth and transitions to live as a man is a *transgender man*. If someone prefers a different term, use it along with an explanation of what that term means to them.

**Avoid pronoun confusion when examining the stories and backgrounds of transgender people prior to their transition.**

Ideally, a story will not use pronouns associated with a person's birth sex when referring to the person's life prior to transition. Try to write transgender people's stories from the present day, instead of narrating them from some point in the past, thus avoiding confusion and potentially disrespectful use of incorrect pronouns. For example, "Prior to her transition, Caitlyn Jenner won the gold medal in the men's decathlon at the Summer Olympics held in Montreal in 1976."

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*In 2015, The Washington Post updated its style guide to include the singular they to describe people who "identify as neither male nor female." It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity to use they/them as their pronoun.*

PROBLEMATIC	PREFERRED
<p><b>"transgenders," "a transgender"</b></p> <p><i>Transgender</i> should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, "Tony is a transgender," or "The parade included many transgenders."</p>	<p><b>"transgender people," "a transgender person"</b></p> <p>For example, "Tony is a transgender man," or "The parade included many transgender people."</p>
<p><b>"transgendered"</b></p> <p>The adjective <i>transgender</i> should never have an extraneous "-ed" tacked onto the end. An "-ed" suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer. You would not say that Elton John is "gayed" or Ellen DeGeneres is "lesbianed," therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is "transgendered."</p>	<p><b>"transgender"</b></p>
<p><b>"transgenderism"</b></p> <p>This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to "a condition."</p>	<p><b>"being transgender"</b></p> <p>Refer to <i>being transgender</i> instead, or refer to <i>the transgender community</i>. You can also refer to <i>the movement for transgender equality and acceptance</i>.</p>
<p><b>"sex change," "pre-operative," "post-operative"</b></p> <p>Referring to a "sex-change operation," or using terms such as "pre-operative" or "post-operative," inaccurately suggests that a person must have surgery in order to transition. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.</p>	<p><b>"transition"</b></p>

<p><b>"biologically male," "biologically female," "genetically male," "genetically female," "born a man," "born a woman"</b></p> <p>Problematic phrases like those above are reductive and overly-simplify a very complex subject. As mentioned above, a person's sex is determined by a number of factors - not simply genetics - and a person's biology does not "trump" a person's gender identity. Finally, people are born babies: they are not "born a man" or "born a woman."</p>	<p><b>"assigned male at birth," "assigned female at birth" or "designated male at birth," "designated female at birth"</b></p>
<p><b>"passing" and "stealth"</b></p> <p>While some transgender people may use these terms among themselves, it is not appropriate to repeat them in mainstream media unless it's in a direct quote. The terms refer to a transgender person's ability to go through daily life without others making an assumption that they are transgender. However, the terms themselves are problematic because "passing" implies "passing as something you're not," while "stealth" connotes deceit. When transgender people are living as their authentic selves, and are not perceived as transgender by others, that does not make them deceptive or misleading.</p>	<p><b>"visibly transgender," "not visibly transgender"</b></p>

## Defamatory language

### **"deceptive," "fooling," "pretending," "posing," "trap," or "masquerading"**

Gender identity is an integral part of a person's identity. Do not characterize transgender people as "deceptive," as "fooling" or "trapping" others, or as "pretending" to be, "posing" or "masquerading" as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are inaccurate, defamatory and insulting. (See "passing" and "stealth" as problematic terms above.)

### **"tranny," "she-male," "he/she," "it," "shim"**

These words dehumanize transgender people and should not be used in mainstream media. The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted. So that such words are not given credibility in the media, it is preferred that reporters say, "The person used a derogatory word for a transgender person." Please note that while some transgender people may use "tranny" to describe themselves, others find it extremely offensive.

### **"bathroom bill"**

A term created and used by far-right extremists to oppose nondiscrimination laws that protect transgender people. The term is geared to incite fear and panic at the thought of encountering transgender people in public restrooms. Simply refer to the nondiscrimination law/ ordinance instead. For additional resources on how to fairly and accurately report on nondiscrimination laws and bathrooms, please see ["Debunking the 'Bathroom Bill' Myth – Accurate reporting on LGBT nondiscrimination: A guide for journalists."](#)

In recent years, the nation's leading media style books have published guidelines for language and terminology use when reporting on LGBTQ people and their lives, issues and stories. The Associated Press, Reuters, and *The New York Times* all restrict usage of the term "homosexual" – a word whose clinical history and pejorative connotations are routinely exploited by anti-LGBTQ extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically and emotionally disordered. Editors at the AP and *New York Times* also have instituted rules against the use of inaccurate terminology such as "sexual preference" and "gay lifestyle."

Following are the LGBTQ-related editorial guidelines from The Associated Press, Reuters, and *The New York Times* as they appear in their respective style guides.

### Associated Press (2013)

#### gay

Used to describe men and women attracted to the same sex, though *lesbian* is the more common term for women. Preferred over *homosexual* except in clinical contexts or references to sexual activity. Include sexual orientation only when it is pertinent to a story, and avoid references to "sexual preference" or to a gay or alternative "lifestyle."

#### lesbian

See *gay*.

#### husband, wife

Regardless of sexual orientation, *husband* or *wife* is acceptable in all references to individuals in any legally recognized marriage.

#### transgender

Use the pronoun preferred by the individuals who have acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex or present themselves in a way that does not correspond with their sex at birth. If that preference is not expressed, use the pronoun consistent with the way the individuals live publicly. See *transsexual*.

#### transsexual

A person who changes gender by undergoing surgical procedures. See *transgender*.

### Reuters (2015)

#### gay

Preferred over *homosexual* to refer to men and women attracted to people of the same sex. *Lesbian* commonly used when just referring to gay women. Use *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual* and *transgender* in place of the frequently used acronym LGBT that is used to describe groups and issues affecting those communities.

#### gender

People generally have a clear sense of their own gender, sometimes called gender identity, which may conflict with their sex at birth. When in doubt, ask people what gender pronouns they prefer. Respect their wishes if they ask not to be identified as either male or female. If it's not possible to ask their preference, use pronouns that are most consistent with the way they present themselves. Do not use quotation marks around names or pronouns used for transgender or gender-nonconforming people.

#### transgender

An umbrella adjective to describe people whose gender identity or expression differs from the sex assigned at birth. A transgender man is somebody who was assigned female at birth and lives as a male. A transgender woman was assigned male at birth and lives as a female. Do not use *transgender* as a noun; no one should be referred to as "a transgender." Always use a transgender person's chosen name. We typically only mention that a person is transgender if it is relevant to the story. For example, no need to describe one of three victims of a random car crash as a transgender person. If you are not sure which gender pronoun to use, ask. If you can't ask, then use the one that is consistent with the way a person presents himself or herself. In some situations confusion may be avoided by not using pronouns. Do not use *transgendered*.

## Reuters (2015) con't

### **trans**

Trans is sometime used as an abbreviation for transgender, transsexual or other terms (as in "trans man.") It's best to avoid unless used in a direct quote since the meaning may not be clear.

### **sex change**

Avoid. Use "transition" to describe the process of transitioning from male to female or female to male. Use the terms "gender confirmation surgery" or "sex reassignment surgery" to describe medical procedures that are part of the transition process. Avoid using the terms "post-op" and "pre-op." One can transition from one sex to the other without having such surgery.

## New York Times (2013)

**bisexual.** Do not use the slang shorthand *bi*.

**homosexuality.** See *bisexual; gay; lesbian; sexual orientation*.

**gay** (adj.) is preferred to *homosexual* in most references. Generally confine *homosexual* in specific references to sexual activity or clinical orientation. *Gay* may refer to homosexual men or more generally to homosexual men and women. In specific references to women, *lesbian* is preferred. When the distinction is useful, write *gay men and lesbians*. Do not use *gay* as a singular noun. As a noun, the plural *gays* is acceptable, but avoid the singular *gay*. Also see *sexual orientation*.

**gay rights.** Advocates for gay issues are concerned that the term may invite resentment by implying "special rights" that are denied other citizens; the advocates prefer phrases like *equal rights* or *civil rights for gay people*. But the shorter phrase is in wide use and often indispensable for confined headlines. When it occurs, define the issues precisely.

**homosexuality.** See *bisexual; gay; lesbian; sexual orientation*.

**lesbian** (adj. and n.). Lowercase except in the names of organizations. Lesbian women is redundant. See *sexual orientation*.

**L.G.B.T.** Except in quotations and organization names, seek alternatives to this cumbersome abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. (Take care, however, not to inadvertently exclude relevant information; for example, if antidiscrimination legislation specifically applies to bisexual and transgender people, avoid suggesting that it only affects gay people.) If the abbreviation is necessary as a first reference, deftly explain it at some point. Note that some groups use G.L.B.T. instead. Do not use other, less familiar variations that include additional categories.

**same-sex marriage, gay marriage.** Both terms are acceptable, though the former is sometimes preferred to make clear that the expression covers both gay men and lesbians. Normally use *wife* or *husband* for people who are legally married. (*Spouse* is also accurate for either partner in any legal marriage, but do not use it simply to avoid *husband* and *wife* for same-sex couples.)

**sex changes.** See *transgender*.

**sexual orientation.** Never *sexual preference*, which carries the disputed implication that sexuality is a matter of choice. Cite a person's sexual orientation only when it is pertinent and its pertinence is clear to the reader. Also see *bisexual; gay; lesbian; straight*.

**sexual preference.** Use *sexual orientation* instead.

**straight**, meaning heterosexual, is classed as slang by some dictionaries and standard by others. Avoid any use that conveys an in-group flavor. But use the term freely (adj. only) in phrases drawing a contrast with gay: *The film attracted gay and straight audiences alike*.

**transgender** (adj.) is an overall term for people whose current identity differs from their sex at birth, whether or not they have changed their biological characteristics. Cite a person's transgender status only when it is pertinent and its pertinence is clear to the reader. Unless a former name is newsworthy or pertinent, use the name and pronouns (*he, his, she, her, hers*) preferred by the transgender person. If no preference is known, use the pronouns consistent with the way the subject lives publicly. *Transgender* is generally preferable to the older *transsexual*. Do not use the offensive slang *tranny*.

**transvestite** is outdated and often viewed as offensive. Use *cross-dresser* instead to describe someone of either sex who sometimes dresses in clothing associated with the opposite sex. Note that cross-dressing does not necessarily indicate that someone is gay or transgender.

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UCLA's Williams Institute estimates there are 1.4 million transgender people in the United States. But according to a GLAAD/Harris Interactive poll, only 16% of Americans say they personally know someone who is transgender. A 2013 Pew poll shows that 87% of Americans say they personally know someone who is gay or lesbian. If a stereotypical or defamatory image of a gay or lesbian person appears in the media, viewers can compare it to real people they know. But when a stereotypical or defamatory image of a transgender person appears in the media, the viewer may assume that all transgender people are actually like that; they have no real-life experience with which to compare it.

Transgender issues can be complicated, but GLAAD staff are always available to answer questions, provide resources, and identify spokespeople. Below are some basic tips for writing fair and accurate stories about transgender people.

## Basics of writing a transgender story

**Language is important.** Using accurate terminology is the first step toward creating a respectful story about transgender people. The Transgender Terminology section of this guide (pg 10) offers definitions of basic terms, along with guidelines on name and pronoun usage and a list of defamatory and offensive terms to avoid. More resources for journalists may be found at [glaad.org/transgender](http://glaad.org/transgender).

**Moving beyond the coming out narrative.** People who have just come out publicly as transgender are considered newsworthy, but they are often not ready for media attention, nor are they ready to speak about larger issues facing a diverse transgender community. Consider interviewing people who have chosen to take leadership roles in the community. Furthermore, the "coming out" or "transition narrative" has been covered thoroughly since Christine Jorgensen came back from Europe in 1952. Just as coverage of the LGB community now focuses on many different aspects of being gay, lesbian, or bisexual, the media is encouraged to look for stories about transgender people that go beyond "when did you know" and "what surgeries have you had."

**Avoid focusing on medical issues.** It is inappropriate to ask a transgender person questions about their genitals or other surgeries they may or may not have had. Typically, those questions are only asked out of prurient curiosity. They also distract the journalist and the viewer from seeing the whole person, and from focusing on larger

issues that affect transgender people like discrimination, poverty, and violence. Do not characterize being transgender as a mental disorder. Neither the American Psychiatric Association nor the American Psychological Association consider being transgender a "mental disorder."

**Describing the fact that someone is transgender.** Transgender should always be used as an adjective. For example, "Susan is a transgender woman." If your audience needs clarification about what that phrase means, you can explain that "Susan was designated male at birth, and began her transition 15 years ago." Avoid "Susan was born a man." People are born babies and a doctor decides the sex based on a quick look at the baby's external anatomy. A transgender person's gender is much more complicated than a simple glance at external anatomy can capture. A person's biology does not "trump" their gender identity, and oversimplifications like "born a man" can invalidate the current, authentic gender of the person you're speaking about.

**Disclosing birth names.** When a transgender person's birth name is used in a story, the implication is almost always that this is the person's "real name." But in fact, a transgender person's chosen name is their real name, whether or not they are able to obtain a court-ordered name change. Many people use names they have chosen for themselves, and the media does not mention their birth name when writing about them, (e.g., Lady Gaga, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg). Transgender people should be accorded the same respect. When writing about a

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*It is inappropriate to ask a transgender person questions about their genitals or other surgeries they may or may not have had. Typically, those questions are only asked out of prurient curiosity. They also distract the journalist and the viewer from seeing the whole person, and from focusing on larger issues that affect transgender people like discrimination, poverty, and violence.*

transgender person's chosen name, do not say "she wants to be called," "she calls herself," "she goes by Susan," or other phrases that cast doubt on a transgender person's identity. Do not reveal a transgender person's birth name without explicit permission from them. If the person is not able to answer questions about their birth name, err on the side of caution and do not reveal it.

### **Illustrating your story and headlines.**

In almost every instance it is unnecessary to show before and after pictures of the person being profiled. Often these images are simply included to satisfy the invasive curiosity of readers or viewers, and in most cases, they add nothing substantive to the story. Similarly, avoid clichéd images of transgender women putting on make-up, wigs, or panty hose, and shots of transgender men shaving. These type of photos connote that being transgender is simply a superficial, external matter. Being transgender is not about or limited to physical appearance. With headlines, it is often necessary to save space and simplify; however not at the expense of resorting to clichés and offensive language. It is easy to ruin a well-written, nuanced story with a sensationalistic headline. Avoid phrases like "sex change" or "born a man" in headlines.

**Bringing in expert opinion.** Be cautious of inviting non-transgender guests to talk about transgender people – instead of talking *to* transgender people. Transgender people are the experts to talk about transgender people. You don't always need a medical or psychological "expert" to speak about transgender people, but if you'd like a medical or psychological perspective, there are many transgender doctors and psychologists who can speak with experience and authority.

**Integrating transgender people into non-trans stories.** While it is true that there are many social issues that must be addressed before transgender people are treated equally, it is also true that transgender people live day-to-day lives just like everyone else. When being transgender is just one of the many traits that make someone unique, we will move closer to full acceptance. If you are doing a story about women in tech or Mother's Day, consider including a transgender woman in those stories. Transgender people can also be booked to talk about issues that are not trans-specific.

## **Social issues facing transgender people**

**Transgender people, particularly transgender women of color, are disproportionately affected by hate violence.** In 2015, 67% of LGBTQ homicide victims were transgender women, according to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. The majority were transgender women of color. For information on covering stories where a transgender person has been the victim of hate violence, please see the In Focus section on Hate Crimes and GLAAD's report "[Doubly Victimized: Reporting on Transgender Victims of Crime.](#)"

**Transgender people face high levels of discrimination and poverty.** According to the largest national survey of transgender people, the community experiences unemployment at twice the rate of the general population, with rates for people of color up to four times the national unemployment rate. Transgender people are also four times more likely to live in poverty. Ninety percent of trans people report experiencing harassment, mistreatment, or discrimination on the job. Forty-one percent of transgender respondents reported attempting suicide, compared to 1.6% of the general population. More statistics from this survey may be found [here](#).

**Access to healthcare is extremely limited for transgender people.** The American Medical Association has stated that treatment for gender dysphoria is medically necessary and involves changing the body to align with a person's gender identity (their internal sense of being a man or a woman.) Trying to change a person's gender identity is no more successful than trying to change a person's sexual orientation - it just does not work. However until very recently, private insurance companies have treated transition-related medical care as if it is cosmetic - regularly inserting "transgender exclusion clauses" into health insurance plans making access to care difficult, if not impossible, for most transgender people. In 2016, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a rule stating that under the Affordable Care Act of 2010, individuals are protected from discrimination based on gender identity and sex stereotyping in health care settings that have a connection to federal funds, which includes the vast majority of health insurance companies. This is a huge step forward in improving access to healthcare for the transgender community. However, not all procedures associated with medical transition are covered by this ruling and any policy which does not receive federal funds may still discriminate. Furthermore, even if a transgender person has a health insurance policy which will cover medical transition, it can still be quite difficult to find any health care providers who are knowledgeable about transgender healthcare.

**Covering nondiscrimination bills.** When covering the Equality Act or other nondiscrimination bills that include gender identity, do not accept at face value misperceptions promulgated by anti-LGBTQ activists that nondiscrimination can be reduced to arguments about transgender people using the bathroom consistent with their gender identity. Nondiscrimination bills that are inclusive of gender identity and expression provide important protections for transgender people in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Transgender women are often the targets of violence and harassment when they try to use a public restroom consistent with the gender they live every day.

Issues pertaining to the bisexual community are often under-reported or poorly reported by mainstream and LGBTQ media, leading many people who are bisexual to feel misunderstood, isolated, and depressed. Multiple research studies have shown that people who identify as bisexual are more likely to binge drink, engage in self-harm, and have suicidal thoughts than gay, lesbian, or heterosexual people.

The Williams Institute [found that more than half of all non-heterosexual people in the United States identify as bisexual](#). Despite making up the majority of people who aren't straight, a 2013 Pew Research Center report showed only 28% of bisexuals said most or all of the important people in their lives knew about their sexual orientation, compared to 71% of lesbians and 77% of gay men. Among bisexual men, only 12% said they were out to that degree. At work, only 11% of bisexual people polled by Pew said most of their closest coworkers knew about their sexual orientation, compared to 48% of gay men and 50% of lesbians.

According to the Los Angeles Times, bisexual people reported they "avoided coming out because they didn't want to deal with misconceptions that bisexuals were indecisive or incapable of monogamy — stereotypes that exist among straights, gays and lesbians alike."

By being more cognizant of the realities facing bisexual people and the community's many diversities, and by fairly and accurately reporting on someone who identifies as bisexual, the media can help eliminate some of the misconceptions and damaging stereotypes bisexual people face on a daily basis.

**Identify individuals accurately.** If someone clearly states that they identify as bisexual, do not identify them as gay, lesbian, or straight instead. Simply because a person is currently in a relationship with someone of the same sex, that does not negate the person's bisexual orientation. Similarly, if a person is in what appears to be a heterosexual relationship, that also does not negate the person's bisexual orientation.

**Identify couples accurately.** If someone clearly states that they identify as bisexual, do not identify them as gay, lesbian, or straight instead. Simply because a person is currently in a relationship with someone of the same sex, that does not negate the person's bisexual orientation. Similarly, if a person is in what appears to be a heterosexual relationship, that also does not negate the person's bisexual orientation.

**It's not a phase or a deception.** Do not imply that being bisexual is a phase and that bisexuals are "on their way" to being gay or lesbian. People who self-identify as bisexual are not confused, indecisive, or lying. Studies consistently show that bisexuality and the numerous identities under the bisexual umbrella are distinct sexual orientations and not experimental or transitional stages.

**Bisexual does not mean promiscuous.** A common stereotype is that bisexual people do not want to be, or cannot be, monogamous. This is simply not true. Bisexual people are just as capable of forming monogamous relationships as heterosexual, gay, and lesbian people. It is inaccurate and harmful to imply that bisexual people are more "promiscuous" than others. Since the 1990s, there has been a tendency to blame "promiscuous" bisexual people for spreading HIV and other diseases to the "general population." This is a blatantly false and harmful stereotype. One's type of relationship or sexual activity do not relate to sexual orientation.

**Other terms you might hear:** Some people who have the capacity to be attracted to people of any gender may consider themselves part of the bi+ community and/or choose other words to describe their sexual orientation, such as: pansexual, polysexual, omnisexual, fluid, queer, and more. Some people prefer to avoid any label at all. Given the lack of understanding of even the word bisexual, it's best to only use alternate words if someone specifically self-identifies that way and asks for their preferred term to be used.

For additional resources on how to fairly and accurately report on bisexual people, please see "[Reporting on the bisexual community: A guide for journalists.](#)"



Nondiscrimination laws and LGBTQ ordinances may exist at the federal, state, city, and county levels. They simply ensure that a person may not be discriminated against based on any number of characteristics, such as race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and more.

However, not all state and local nondiscrimination laws include protections based on gender identity (which protect transgender people) or sexual orientation (which protect lesbian, gay, and bisexual people) - and there is no federal law that explicitly protects LGBTQ people from discrimination.

Only 18 states have passed laws that protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Two additional states (New Hampshire and Wisconsin) protect citizens based on sexual orientation, but not gender identity. Utah protects transgender people in employment and housing, but does not include public accommodations.

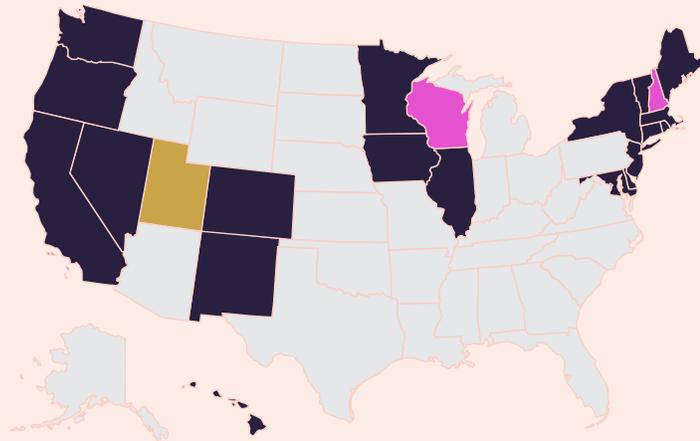
However, these laws only cover approximately 48% of the American LGBTQ population, leaving an unacceptable majority of LGBTQ people vulnerable to lawful discrimination. According to a 2015 poll, 63% of LGBT people reported experiencing discrimination in their personal lives. 47% of these reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace, 19% reported experiencing discrimination while trying to access public spaces, 14% reported discrimination in housing and 8% reported discrimination while in the education system.

## The importance of nondiscrimination protections for transgender people

A startling percentage of the transgender population has encountered some form of discrimination. According to the 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 63% of those surveyed reported facing serious discrimination, while 23% of respondents reported experiencing "catastrophic discrimination," which was defined as being affected by 3 or more life-disrupting events or types of harassment (for example, denial of medical service due to bias, sexual assault due to bias, eviction due to bias, teacher bullying, etc.). Furthermore, since transgender people are represented across every race, religion, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, and nationality, the type of discrimination

**SPOTLIGHT**

## Nondiscrimination laws and ordinances in the United States



**Statewide laws protecting from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity**  
California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington



**Statewide laws protecting from discrimination in employment and housing on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, but not public accommodations**  
Utah



**Statewide laws protecting from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation, but not gender identity**  
New Hampshire, Wisconsin



**No statewide laws protecting from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity**  
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming

*Data via the Movement Advancement Project as of October 2016*

they experience may differ depending on the intersections of a transgender person's identities. For example, transgender people of color suffer from poverty, violence, and incarceration at rates much higher than others within the transgender community.

## The myth of "bathroom bills"

Public discussions about protecting LGBTQ people under federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws are often sensationalized. While LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections usually cover employment, housing, and public accommodations, opponents of these protections typically focus on generating fears about bathrooms, falsely claiming that such laws will make it legal for sexual predators to enter women's restrooms. Sometimes, they also imply or overtly claim that transgender women are not women, and therefore they should not be allowed to use the women's restroom. (It is also often implied that transgender women are in some way deviant and predatory.) This is despite a lack of evidence to support their claims that transgender people put anyone in danger while in the restroom that aligns with the gender they live every day.

Indeed, such claims are simply untrue. It is important to note that nondiscrimination protections for transgender people do not change longstanding laws that make it illegal for anyone to enter a public restroom for the purpose of harassing or harming another person or invading their privacy. Some statewide nondiscrimination laws even expressly state that gender identity may not be asserted for an improper purpose. Police use current public safety laws to keep people safe, make arrests, and hold perpetrators accountable. The oft-repeated claim by opponents of nondiscrimination laws that public safety will be compromised if these laws include and protect transgender people is simply false.

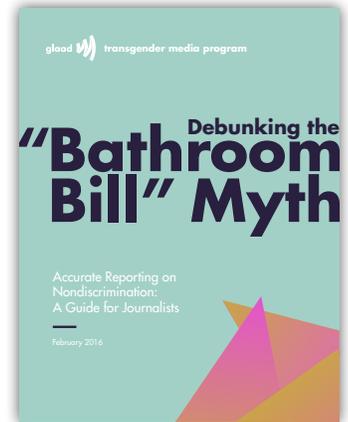
If journalists repeat the characterization of LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination laws as "bathroom bills," or overly focus on the application of these far-reaching policies to the narrow issue of bathrooms, they impair the public's understanding of how these laws protect people from discrimination, harassment, unfair treatment, and more. While these laws often allow transgender people to use the restroom which matches

the gender they live every day, the benefits of nondiscrimination laws are much more extensive, typically covering employment, housing, education, jury service, credit, and more.

Additionally, any effort to defame or malign transgender women must be vigorously challenged. Just as many old, ugly stereotypes about gay men (e.g., claims that gay men are pedophiles) have been thoroughly debunked, similar claims about transgender women must be pointed out as false. These gross stereotypes have been refuted by the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and other medical authorities. Journalists can hold anti-transgender activists accountable by asking them to verify their statements and by including the voices of transgender people whose lived experiences differ greatly from the defamatory stereotypes used to dehumanize them.

In reality, all people, including people who are transgender, are concerned about privacy and safety in public restrooms. Unfortunately, multiple studies show that transgender people often report experiencing denial of access to facilities, verbal harassment, and physical assault when attempting to use public restrooms. Moreover, focusing on opponents' false claims about bathrooms distracts from other injustices that transgender people face, such as the fact that in a majority of states, transgender people can be fired from their jobs or denied a place to live simply because of who they are - a fact that is often overlooked or unreported when coverage becomes fixated on opponents' false claims about bathrooms. The discrimination that transgender people face in all aspects of their lives has been documented in multiple studies.

For additional resources on how to fairly and accurately report on nondiscrimination protections and so-called "Bathroom Bills," please see ["Debunking the Bathroom Bill Myth: Accurate reporting on nondiscrimination."](#)



In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that every American has the constitutional right to marry the person they love. When reporting on marriage for same-sex couples, preferred terminology includes marriage equality and marriage for same-sex couples. Note, the terms "gay marriage" and "same-sex marriage" should be avoided, as they can suggest marriage for same-sex couples is somehow different than other marriages.

### **According to a November 2015 report by the Williams Institute,**

there are approximately 486,000 married same-sex couples in the United States. Using data from the 2013 American Community Survey, the Williams Institute also estimates that an estimated 122,000 same-sex couples are raising children under age 18, and same-sex couples are much more likely to have adopted or foster children.

### **According to a 2013 report by the Williams Institute,**

"LGBT Parenting in the United States," there are an estimated six million Americans (children and adults) with a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender parent. Same-sex parents and their children are more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities. An estimated 39% of individuals in same-sex couples with children under age 18 at home are non-white, as are half of their children. States with the highest proportions of same-sex couples raising biological, adopted, or step-children include Mississippi (26%), Wyoming (25%), Alaska (23%), Idaho (22%), and Montana (22%).

### **With the 2015 Obergefell decision, married same-sex couples now have greater access to adoption.**

Joint and second-parent adoption are now legal in all 50 states for married same-sex couples. However, some state legislatures have begun introduction bills that would allow adoption agencies to refuse to work with same-sex couples due to moral or religious objection.

### **Adoption by unmarried same-sex couples, single-parent adoption by an LGBTQ parent, and foster parenting laws vary.**

For more information, please contact the Family Equality Council, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the ACLU or Lambda Legal (see *Directory of Community Resources*).

## **Research on parenting & adoption**

Discussions about research on children raised by same-sex parents often become mired in divisive political rhetoric by those opposed to same-sex parents and legal protections for their families.

Those who oppose parenting by same-sex couples often make two claims: first, that "all" social science research shows that children do best when raised by married opposite-sex parents, and, second, that any study that shows otherwise is flawed.

In fact, there is a large and growing body of literature that focuses on family structure and outcomes for children raised by same-sex parents. These studies have consistently shown that parenting by same-sex parents has no adverse effects on children.

Additionally, **nearly every credible authority on child welfare** (including the Child Welfare League of America, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, and the American Academy of Pediatrics) **has determined that a person's sexual orientation has nothing to do with the ability to be a good, loving, effective parent.**

**Most of the studies cited by those opposed to same-sex parented families have a significant flaw: they do not study same-sex parented families.** Instead, they generally compare children with single parents to those living with their married parents. As such, it is inappropriate to use this research to argue that the sexual orientation or the gender-composition of parents affects the wellbeing of their children.

In 2012, a study by Mark Regnerus and the conservative Witherspoon Institute claimed to prove that people raised by same-sex parents

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*Nearly every credible authority on child welfare has determined that a person's sexual orientation has nothing to do with the ability to be a good, loving, effective parent.*

reported more negative experiences than those who were raised by opposite-sex parents. It quickly became clear that the Regnerus study was technically flawed and biased. The study compared people raised by opposite-sex parents in committed relationships to people raised by (often single) parents who had at one time or another experienced same-sex attraction. Only two of the respondents had been raised by same-sex parents from birth. After reviewing the study, the American Sociological Association (of which Regnerus is a member) declared that the study "provides no support for the conclusions that same-sex parents are inferior parents or that the children of same-sex parents experience worse outcomes." The Regnerus study is still being used by anti-LGBTQ activists. Fortunately, most media outlets were vigilant in uncovering the bias behind this study. It is crucial that media position biased studies like this in the context of the dozens of legitimate studies which show that same-sex parenting has no negative influence.

**By the same token, it is important to note that research does not show that children with same-sex parents are "exactly the same" as kids with straight parents.** There may indeed be differences (for example, one study found that female children of lesbian parents are more willing to consider career paths that could be thought of as atypical for women). The relevant question is whether such differences are harmful; and again, the considerable body of research demonstrates that they are not.

**Media sometimes unintentionally but inaccurately frame discussions about same-sex parenting as a false dichotomy, pitting parenting by opposite-sex couples against parenting by same-sex couples.**

Research shows that men and women with good parenting skills come in all types – gay, straight, bisexual, and transgender. Academics and practitioners agree that sexual orientation and gender identity are not a relevant factor when it comes to good parenting.

**Transgender parents face unique challenges.** Parents who are married and transition face the risk of losing their children if their spouse chooses to make the transition an issue in a custody case. According to Lambda Legal, "Courts are generally allowed to base custody or visitation rulings only on

factors that directly affect the 'best interests of the child.' If a transgender parent's gender identity can't be shown to hurt the child in some way, contact should not be limited, and other custody and visitation orders should not be changed for this reason." However, some courts have unfairly ruled that simply because a parent is transgender, there is a risk of "social harm" to the child.

**GLAAD encourages media to share the stories of LGBTQ families as they are, on their own terms, without requiring them to defend themselves against the attacks of those who believe they shouldn't be allowed to exist.** For additional information on research related to parenting by LGBTQ people, please contact the Child Welfare League of America, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, or the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law (see Directory of Community Resources).

## Language & terminology

When reporting on LGBTQ families, it is important to treat those families, parents, and children with dignity and respect – both during the newsgathering process and in the language used to tell their stories.

Never put quotation marks around descriptions such as family, parents, mothers, or fathers when describing families with LGBTQ parents. Such tactics are often used by anti-LGBTQ groups to denigrate, delegitimize, and dehumanize loving families.

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*Research does not show that children with same-sex parents are "exactly the same" as kids with straight parents. The relevant question is whether such differences are harmful; the considerable body of research demonstrates that they are not.*

A common myth is that people of faith universally oppose LGBTQ people and equality. This myth, combined with vitriolic opposition to LGBTQ people and families by anti-LGBTQ activists who claim the mantle of Christianity, frequently leads to media coverage that falsely positions LGBTQ equality as a matter of "God vs. gay." Despite increasing religious acceptance of LGBTQ people, three out of four religious leaders interviewed by the media on LGBTQ issues come from traditions that have policies or traditions that oppose LGBTQ equality.

**Mainstream religious denominations support LGBTQ equality.** For decades, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the United Church of Christ, and the Metropolitan Community Church have had policies of LGBTQ inclusion, including ordaining LGBTQ people, performing weddings for same-sex couples, and advocating for LGBTQ equality under the law. Within the last 20 years, The Episcopal Church, Conservative Judaism, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) have all adopted policies of LGBTQ inclusion. Their leaders are often vocal supporters of marriage equality, employment non-discrimination, transgender inclusion, and other LGBTQ issues.

**Other denominations are home to robust debate about LGBTQ issues and equality.** Other denominations continue to debate issues of LGBTQ inclusion, the blessing of same-sex couples' unions, and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy, with growing support for full inclusion. For example, the United Methodist Church has not changed its policies to be more LGBTQ inclusive, but several United Methodist leaders have challenged those policies, as well as advocated publically for LGBTQ equality. LGBTQ affinity groups can be found within any religion, even those that might be considered anti-LGBTQ. One can find LGBT Muslims, Orthodox Jews, and Evangelicals. The Mormon Church has shifted its tone about LGBTQ people, no longer advocating for family alienation and so-called "ex-gay" programs.

**Anti-LGBTQ activists are often identified by the media as representing the only "religious" or "Christian" view, while excluding religious voices that are in favor of LGBTQ inclusion.** Anti-LGBTQ activists like Pat Robertson and Harry Jackson, as well as groups like Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, Traditional Values Coalition, and the Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Institute on Religion & Democracy often claim to represent the views of religious Americans. Yet these groups' policy views are not shared by the majority of those they claim to represent. This is especially true for Roman Catholics, nearly three-quarters of whom support LGBTQ equality, despite anti-LGBTQ language and actions from many in the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Large majorities of all Americans, including people of faith, favor inclusive protections for LGBTQ people.

**Please consider whether anti-LGBTQ activists' attacks on the dignity and equality of LGBTQ people warrant a media spotlight.** When such prejudice is newsworthy or must be quoted, please seek out religious voices who support LGBTQ people and equality and can effectively address those attacks in the language of inclusive faith.

**When reporting on religion and LGBTQ people, please include the voices of LGBT faith leaders.** In addition to the groups mentioned above, GLAAD, the Institute for Welcoming Resources, the National Black Justice Coalition, the Human Rights Campaign, the World Congress of GLBT Jews, and others can help direct reporters to qualified spokespeople.

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*When prejudice is newsworthy or must be quoted, please seek out religious voices who support LGBTQ people and equality and can effectively address those attacks in the language of inclusive faith.*

## Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRA)

Although the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion, in 1993 Congress passed a federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) to protect the free practice of religion for the purpose of protecting minority religions. Under the 1993 federal RFRA, the government can only restrict religious practices if it furthers a *compelling government interest*. Additionally, the government must act so in the *least restrictive means* of furthering that government interest.

However, following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v Hodges*, which legalized marriage equality across the U.S., many states have enacted or attempted to enact state versions of RFRA that have expanded both what actions are protected under a RFRA (including denial of goods and services) and who can claim protection under a RFRA (including for-profit companies). These proposed and newly expanded RFRA run against other state and local laws, including nondiscrimination laws, essentially allowing people to pick and choose which laws they will follow. The intended result is for businesses and professionals to refuse goods or services to a population they oppose on the basis of a "sincerely held religious belief."

While proposed RFRA often do not explicitly mention the LGBTQ or any other specific community, the timing of the laws, paired with anti-LGBTQ rhetoric from those who are proposing them often make RFRA a weapon to legalize discrimination against LGBTQ people.

Reporters would do well to examine the impact RFRA would have on minority communities, including the LGBTQ community. Legal experts can speak directly about the vague wording of such laws and the potential for licensing discrimination. Additionally, reporters should question what "sincerely held religious belief" is being compromised in the process of doing business with LGBTQ people.

In its 2014 report, the FBI recognized 1,248 victims of hate crimes targeted due to their sexual orientation (18.6 percent of all hate crimes reported) and 109 victims of hate crimes targeted due to their gender identity (1.8 percent of all hate crimes reported). The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported that 2015 saw a 20% increase in the number of hate violence-related homicides of LGBTQ and HIV-affected people - noting that people of color and transgender people are disproportionately targeted. NCAVP reported that 62% of all LGBTQ homicide victims were people of color, and 54% of homicide victims were transgender women of color.

### **Avoid re-victimizing transgender people who have suffered violence.**

Transgender people, particularly transgender women of color, are disproportionately affected by hate violence. Sadly, the tragedy of these incidents is often compounded by reporting that does not respect (or sometimes even exploits) the victim's transgender identity. Often, reporters writing about transgender victims of violent crimes will be given incorrect or incomplete information from police, from witnesses, or even from family and friends of the victim. GLAAD has a special report entitled "Doubly Victimized: Reporting on Transgender Victims of Crime" which details how to fairly and accurately report on crimes with transgender victims.

**Provide context.** The transgender community is one of the most marginalized and discriminated against communities in the United States. If a transgender victim was in a difficult or unfortunate situation at the time of a violent crime, try to provide your audience with some context. Please visit [glaad.org/transgender](http://glaad.org/transgender) for statistics that will help you provide context about the disproportionate rates of unemployment, poverty, and discrimination that transgender people face. For additional information about anti-transgender discrimination, please see "[Injustice at Every Turn.](#)" a report issued by the National LGBTQ Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

**Media can play a vital role in determining community and law enforcement response to hate crimes.** In some cases, local law enforcement still places a low priority on anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. As a result, police may not investigate the case properly or at all, may re-victimize survivors, and may be unresponsive to families and/or community members seeking information. In cases like these, fair, accurate,

and inclusive media coverage of the case can motivate law enforcement to better and more transparently investigate and communicate around a hate crime.

Many on the far right downplay or trivialize hate crimes. Some people, particularly many on the far right, generalize that "all crimes are hate crimes." We ask that you offer your readers, viewers, or listeners the facts so they may decide for themselves whether a crime victim was targeted because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Assaults and criminal acts may involve only a single victim, but perpetrators often intend to send a message that LGBTQ people are legitimate targets for abuse and violence. (In fact, the victims of some anti-LGBTQ hate crimes are heterosexuals who are perceived to be LGBTQ). Please report the specifics of a crime and its social implications based on the facts of the case.

**Inaccurate hate/bias crime reporting can unintentionally support a "gay panic" (i.e., "blame the victim") strategy.** Implying that an LGBTQ victim shares responsibility for being attacked, or that an attack was justified because of an unwanted romantic or sexual advance (the so-called "gay panic" or "transgender panic" strategy) is never acceptable.

In August 2013, the American Bar Association issued the following statement "...the American Bar Association urges federal, state, local and territorial governments to take legislative action to curtail the availability and effectiveness of the 'gay panic' and 'trans panic' defenses, which seek to partially or completely excuse crimes such as murder and assault on the grounds that the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity is to blame for the defendant's violent reaction."

## SPOTLIGHT

## Orlando

In June 2016, a shooter opened fire at an LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people – most of whom were LGBTQ Latinx people – and wounding 53 others. The attack marked the largest mass shooting in U.S. history and was described by President Barack Obama as both "an act of terror and an act of hate." The attack also marked the country's largest mass casualty event specifically targeting LGBTQ people.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Hate crime laws

**The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 added sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability to the categories covered under federal hate crimes law.** As a result, federal hate crimes law now addresses violent crimes based on a victim's race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

**State laws on hate crimes vary considerably.** Of the states with some kind of hate crimes law that expands law enforcement resources and/or sentencing in cases involving hate-motivated crimes, some explicitly include sexual orientation among the law's protected classes, and some include both sexual orientation and gender identity.

**HIV transmission is tied to specific high-risk behaviors that are not exclusive to any one sexual orientation.** Avoid suggesting that simply being LGBTQ makes one part of a "high-risk group," or that risk of HIV infection increases simply by having sex with someone of the same sex.

**"MSM" is acronym created by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention for "men who have sex with men." It should not be used to describe gay or bisexual men who self-identify as gay or bisexual, individually or collectively, except in specific clinical or statistical contexts.** For men do not self-identify as gay or bisexual, and yet engage in sexual activity with other men, the term may be a useful as a description of that discrete category of people.

**Avoid terms that directly or indirectly pit LGBTQ people against others at risk for HIV.** For example, references to "the general population" typically are used to suggest that gay, bisexual, and queer men, and/or MSM should be considered separate and apart from broader prevention and treatment strategies.

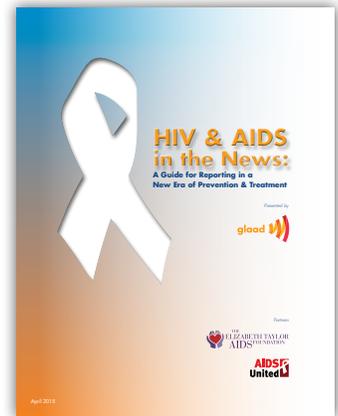
**PrEP and PEP should be presented alongside other methods to present a complete picture of HIV prevention tools.** PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a drug treatment for HIV-negative people that protects against exposure to HIV and the federal government recommends that PrEP be prescribed for people who are at substantial risk of contracting HIV. PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is an emergency medication for HIV-negative people that can help prevent infection after exposure to HIV. PEP should be started within 36, and ideally no later than, 72 hours after exposure to HIV. With expanded knowledge and use of PrEP and PEP, alongside regular testing, condom use, access to clean needles, and mutual monogamy, HIV transmission can be severely curtailed.

**Despite rigorous blood testing and risk factors that cross lines of sexual orientation, self-identified gay and bisexual men are still prohibited by federal law from donating blood unless they have been celibate for at least one year.**

In December 2015, the FDA amended its policy that previously banned all gay and bisexual men from donating blood. However, the FDA's updated policy still prohibits sexually active gay and bisexual men from donating blood. Some public health officials have condemned this policy, noting that it can jeopardize the blood supply by senselessly preventing millions of men of all blood types from donating. Gay and bisexual men also face different restrictions when donating tissue and organs.

**Use the term "Down Low" only to describe men who self-identify that way.** A controversial term describing the phenomenon of MSM (men who have sex with men) who publicly identify as heterosexual and maintain sexual relationships with women, the "Down Low" has become synonymous with sensationalized claims that MSM are spreading HIV into "the general population." Avoid inaccurate claims that the "Down Low" is a phenomenon exclusive to communities of color. If you report on HIV and AIDS, please seek information from diverse resources, including talking to people who are living with HIV and AIDS, public health agencies, service organizations, advocacy organizations, and groups that focus on health education LGBTQ communities of color (see *Directory of Community Resources*).

For additional resources on how to fairly and accurately report on transgender people, please see "[HIV & AIDS in the News: A guide for reporting in a new era of prevention and treatment](#)" and visit [glaad.org/hiv](http://glaad.org/hiv).



## SPOTLIGHT

### PrEP & PEP

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a drug treatment for HIV-negative people that protects against exposure to HIV. The federal government recommends that PrEP be prescribed for people who are at substantial risk of contracting HIV. PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is an emergency medication for HIV-negative people that can help prevent infection after exposure to HIV. PEP should be started within 36, and ideally no later than, 72 hours after exposure to HIV.

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## SPOTLIGHT

### HIV criminalization

The term "HIV criminalization" refers to the inappropriate use of a person's HIV-positive status in a criminal prosecution, typically under an HIV-specific criminal statute, or as heightened charges or punishments under general assault, prostitution, or other statutes. HIV criminalization is based on outdated and erroneous beliefs about the routes, risks, and consequences of HIV transmission.

As of 2014, 34 states have laws that specifically criminalize HIV exposure (not transmission) through consensual sex, needle-sharing, spitting, and biting. Public health professionals oppose HIV-specific criminal statutes because they may discourage persons at risk from getting tested for HIV, and make those who do test positive less trustful of public health officials and less willing to cooperate with public health measures. HIV criminalization perpetuates unwarranted stigma and treats HIV differently from other sexually-transmitted infections, which if left untreated, can inflict serious harm or even be fatal.

In July 2014, the [Department of Justice called upon states to eliminate or reform antiquated laws](#) which criminalize conduct by HIV-positive individuals that would be legal if they were not HIV-positive or did not know their status. For detailed information about states with HIV criminalization laws, please contact the [Sero Project](#).

Anti-LGBTQ activists have argued for years that sexual orientation is a choice and changeable – but only for people attracted to the same sex, not heterosexuals. They often claim "homosexuality" is not real, but rather a form of mental illness or an emotional disorder that can be "cured" through psychological or religious intervention. Anti-LGBTQ activists claim that being attracted to the same sex is a curable condition, and therefore people attracted to the same sex do not need or deserve equal treatment under the law or protection from discrimination.

Such programs have come under increased scrutiny recently. The largest program, Exodus, closed in 2013, apologizing for the harm that was caused by those who participated in its programs. Additionally, lawsuits have been filed against other "ex-gay" programs, noting that they did not produce the orientation change promised, but instead brought great harm to those who participated.

### **American Psychiatric Association**

The American Psychiatric Association has condemned the "treatment" of "homosexuality," saying, "The potential risks of 'reparative therapy' are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient."

### **American Psychological Association Report (2009)**

In 2009, a task force of the American Psychological Association drafted a landmark report on *Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation*. Following a comprehensive analysis of peer-reviewed research on what the APA labeled "sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE)" the APA "concluded that efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful and involve some risk of harm, contrary to the claims of SOCE practitioners and advocates." The APA's governing body adopted the report's recommendations by an overwhelming 125-4 vote. In addition, the American Medical Association, the National Mental Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have also spoken out against these attempts to "cure" lesbian, gay men and bisexual people.

### **States banning "conversion therapy" for minors**

Many anti-LGBTQ activists claim that they only help people who want to live their lives in accordance with their religious beliefs, and that they only offer their programs for people who want to change. However, many participants in "conversion therapy" programs are youth who do not enroll in the programs of their own will, but

who are forced into such programs by parents who have been told by religious leaders that they must change their child. A handful of states have begun examining the harm done by "conversion therapy" programs that seek to change the sexual orientation or the gender identity of a minor. At the time of this writing, six states (California, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Vermont) and the District of Columbia have now taken steps to ban the harmful practice on anyone under 18 years of age.

### **Terminology**

In reporting, the terms "conversion therapy" or "reparative therapy" should be placed in quotation marks or avoided altogether, as the terms are most often used to insinuate that people attracted to the same sex, or who are transgender, are "disordered" or "broken" and need to be "repaired." It is usually best simply to describe the actions and motivations of those who seek to change the orientation of people attracted to the same sex and/or someone's gender identity.

### **Conversion Therapy Survivors**

Any story about "conversion therapy" programs should include the perspective of those who survived it. For each "success story" featured by "conversion therapy" activists, there are hundreds who have gone through the programs with no change in orientation or gender identity, but who have suffered trauma, depression, even suicidal thoughts or actions. Networks like Beyond Ex-Gay have been created to provide support and healing for those who have been harmed by ex-gay programs. Beyond Ex-Gay has surveyed survivors of "ex-gay" programs, and the results may be found [on the organization's website](#).

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*The American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, the National Mental Health Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have all spoken out against attempts to "cure" lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people.*

In recent years, the complex intersection of sports culture, homophobia, transphobia, and LGBTQ athletes has become a hot topic among sports fans and in sports media. Anti-LGBTQ comments by athletes and coaches, speculation about athletes' sexual orientations, and the coming out stories of Olympic medalists Tom Daley and Caitlyn Jenner, former NFL player Michael Sam, former NBA player Jason Collins, Puerto Rican boxer Orlando Cruz, soccer player Robbie Rogers, Welsh rugby player Gareth Thomas, U.S. Olympic soccer player Megan Rapinoe, and others have sparked national dialogue on these issues. Competitors in sports like tennis, diving, and skating, such as Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King, Greg Louganis, and Johnny Weir, have led the way as LGBTQ athletes have become spokespeople on issues the community faces.

### **Professional sports are more accepting than ever.**

Many coaches, managers, and players are becoming aware that they probably have people who identify as LGBTQ on their teams, and many are taking steps to educate themselves and create a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ athletes. Outspoken allies in the athletic community like Ben Cohen, Brian Burke, and Hudson Taylor have formed non-profit groups like the StandUp Foundation, the You Can Play Project, and Athlete Ally respectively to show their support for LGBTQ athletes and inclusive professional sports teams. Hundreds of professional athletes have appeared in "You Can Play" or "It Gets Better" PSAs to express public support for LGBTQ teammates and fans.

The corporate owners of many teams are following the lead of their business counterparts and showing official support for the LGBTQ community. The professional leagues are actively working to educate and inform their employees and players about LGBTQ issues, including at the rookie symposia for the NHL, NFL, and NBA. In July 2014, MLB appointed Billy Bean, a former player who is now openly gay, as a consultant in guiding the sports community toward full LGBTQ inclusion.

However, some sports professionals still publicly say there are no LGBTQ people on their team, and enforce a negative work environment through locker room jokes and innuendoes, usually directed toward gay men. In women's collegiate sports, negative recruiting – where coaches use anti-LGBTQ messages to deter potential recruits from attending a rival school – is a common problem. As a result, the majority of LGBTQ athletes remain closeted due to a system of institutionalized intimidation and discrimination.

**Allow players to play.** While LGBTQ athletes playing at the professional level is still relatively new and an important step forward in dismantling stereotypes about LGBTQ people – it is also important to acknowledge that any athlete's first and most important role is simply to play and excel at their sport. In an ideal world, an LGBTQ NFL or NBA player will be allowed to play without constantly being asked to comment on LGBTQ issues.

### **Highlight players from every level of sport.**

Typically, there is a strong focus on professional and Olympic athletes, but players at every level of performance are coming out in large numbers. Please consider looking for stories of athletes at the high school and college level who want to share

their experiences as LGBTQ people. Stories like bisexual college football kicker Conner Mertens and transgender high school coach Stephen Alexander have the potential to illustrate people in local communities are also accepting LGBTQ players and coaches.

### **When covering the issue of LGBTQ athletes in sports, expand your focus beyond those who claim that team sports are not able to deal with LGBTQ athletes.**

Sports journalists, coaches, managers, and athletes sometimes claim it would be impossible for an LGBTQ athlete to play openly in team sports. Journalists sometimes contribute to this fallacy by constantly framing their questions around the negative, difficult consequences of a player choosing to come out. When reporting on the topic, consider seeking out other voices in the sports world who would challenge the merits of this opinion. As more players come out, they will be able to speak about the positive responses they've received, and the benefits of being able to play without the fear of losing their job or feeling ashamed because they are LGBTQ.

### **Treat anti-LGBTQ comments from professional athletes, managers, and coaches as you would similar remarks by other public figures.**

Just as anti-LGBTQ epithets would receive extensive negative coverage if uttered by an elected official or a Hollywood celebrity, antipathy toward LGBTQ people by sports figures should also be examined and discussed in its larger context of fueling a climate of hate and discrimination.

### **Transgender athletes face uninformed opposition.**

Public and media reaction to a transgender person – particularly a transgender woman – competing in a sport is often extremely negative and uninformed by scientific fact. Commentators often espouse their "gut feelings" about whether or not a transgender person has an "unfair advantage." Gut feelings are not science. Sport governing organizations like the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the National College Athletics Association (NCAA), as well as the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), have looked at the actual science associated with medical transition and made clear statements in support of the right of transgender athletes to participate in a way that is fair, equitable, and respectful to all. **When writing about transgender athletes, please use up-to-date expert legal and medical knowledge about the effects of medical transition on athletic performance.**

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While the LGBTQ community encompasses the full spectrum of our society's diversity, that diversity is often not reflected in media coverage. The LGBTQ community crosses lines of gender, race, age, income, class, family structure, education, geography, religion, and political affiliation. More often than not, however, media representations of the LGBTQ community focus largely on those who are white, male, and affluent.

With this in mind, GLAAD makes it a priority to provide media professionals with resources so they may seek out to more accurately reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ community across all issues affecting their lives. We encourage you to contact us for additional resources and/or with any other questions you may have.

## African American communities

National Black Justice Coalition  
[www.nbjc.org](http://www.nbjc.org)

Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD)  
[www.gmad.org](http://www.gmad.org)

Affinity Community Services (Chicago)  
[www.affinity95.org](http://www.affinity95.org)

Audre Lorde Project (multi-cultural)  
[www.alp.org](http://www.alp.org)

Zuna Institute  
[www.zunainstitute.org](http://www.zunainstitute.org)

## Anti-violence & hate crimes

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)  
[www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org)

Matthew Shepard Foundation  
[www.matthewshepard.org](http://www.matthewshepard.org)

Community United Against Violence  
[www.cuav.org](http://www.cuav.org)

Transgender Day of Remembrance  
[www.transgenderdor.org](http://www.transgenderdor.org)

## Asian Pacific Islander (API) communities

API Equality (Northern California)  
[www.apiequalitync.org](http://www.apiequalitync.org)

API Equality (Southern California)  
[apiequalityla.org](http://apiequalityla.org)

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)  
[www.nqapia.org](http://www.nqapia.org)

Trikone (South Asian communities)  
[www.trikone.org](http://www.trikone.org)

## Bisexuality

American Institute of Bisexuality  
[www.bisexual.org](http://www.bisexual.org)

BiNet USA  
[www.binetusa.org](http://www.binetusa.org)

Bisexual Resource Center (Boston)  
[www.biresource.net](http://www.biresource.net)

Boston Bisexual Women's Network  
[www.biwomenboston.org](http://www.biwomenboston.org)

## Community centers

CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
[www.lgbtcenters.org](http://www.lgbtcenters.org)

## "Conversion therapy"

Beyond Ex-Gay (support for those who survived "ex-gay" programs)  
[www.beyondexgay.com/](http://www.beyondexgay.com/)

American Psychological Association  
[www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/](http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/)

National Association of Social Workers  
[www.naswdc.org/diversity/lgb/reparative.asp](http://www.naswdc.org/diversity/lgb/reparative.asp)

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
[www.aamft.org/imis15/content/about\\_aamft/position\\_on\\_couples.aspx](http://www.aamft.org/imis15/content/about_aamft/position_on_couples.aspx)

## Family, parenting & adoption

Family Equality Council  
[www.familyequality.org](http://www.familyequality.org)

PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

COLAGE (Children, youth and adults with an LGBT parent)  
[www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)

Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute (Adoption laws, policy, practices)  
[www.adoptioninstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org)

National Center for Lesbian Rights' Family Protection Project  
[www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/family-relationships/](http://www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/family-relationships/)

Child Welfare League of America  
[www.cwla.org/our-work/advocacy/race-culture-identity/lgbtq-issues-in-child-welfare/](http://www.cwla.org/our-work/advocacy/race-culture-identity/lgbtq-issues-in-child-welfare/)

Asian & Pacific Islander Family Pride  
[www.apifamilypride.org](http://www.apifamilypride.org)

Straight Spouse Network  
[www.straightspouse.org](http://www.straightspouse.org)

Lambda Legal Transgender Parents Program  
[www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/trans-parents/transgender/transgenderaud1](http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/trans-parents/transgender/transgenderaud1)

COLAGE: Kids of Trans Community  
[www.colage.org/resources/kids-of-trans-resource-guide/](http://www.colage.org/resources/kids-of-trans-resource-guide/)

## Health

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)  
[www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)

Whitman-Walker Health  
[www.whitman-walker.org](http://www.whitman-walker.org)

The National LGBT Health Education Center  
[www.lgbthealtheducation.org/about-us/lgbt-health-education/](http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/about-us/lgbt-health-education/)

Fenway Health  
[www.fenwayhealth.org/](http://www.fenwayhealth.org/)

World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)  
[www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org)

## HIV & AIDS

AIDS United  
[www.aidsunited.org/](http://www.aidsunited.org/)

The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation  
[www.elizabethtayloraidsfoundation.org/](http://www.elizabethtayloraidsfoundation.org/)

Global Forum on MSM & HIV  
[www.msmsgf.org](http://www.msmsgf.org)

Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS  
[www.gnpplus.net](http://www.gnpplus.net)

National Minority AIDS Council  
[www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org)

American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)  
[www.amfar.org](http://www.amfar.org)

Black AIDS Institute  
[www.blackaids.org](http://www.blackaids.org)

Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center (San Francisco)  
[www.apowellness.org](http://www.apowellness.org)

GMHC (founded as Gay Men's Health Crisis)  
[www.gmhc.org](http://www.gmhc.org)

The Sero Project  
[www.seroproject.com](http://www.seroproject.com)

Global Network of People Living with HIV in North America (GNP+ NA)  
[www.gnpna.org](http://www.gnpna.org)

United States People Living with HIV Caucus  
[www.hivcaucus.org](http://www.hivcaucus.org)

Positive Women's Network  
[pwnusa.wordpress.com](http://pwnusa.wordpress.com)

## Immigration

Immigration Equality  
[www.immigrationequality.org](http://www.immigrationequality.org)

National Center for Lesbian Rights' Immigration Project  
[www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/asylum-immigration/](http://www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/asylum-immigration/)

Out4Immigration  
[www.out4immigration.org](http://www.out4immigration.org)

## International

OutRight Action (formerly the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission)  
[www.outrightinternational.org](http://www.outrightinternational.org)

GLAAD Global Voices Program  
[www.glaad.org/globalvoices](http://www.glaad.org/globalvoices)

Human Rights Watch Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Program  
[www.hrw.org/lgbt](http://www.hrw.org/lgbt)

Council for Global Equality  
[www.globalequality.org](http://www.globalequality.org)

Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM)  
[www.oraminternational.org](http://www.oraminternational.org)

## Latinx/Hispanic communities

Unid@s  
[www.unidoslgbt.org/](http://www.unidoslgbt.org/)

GLAAD Spanish-Language Media Program  
[www.glaad.org/latino](http://www.glaad.org/latino)

Association of Latino Men for Action (ALMA) (Chicago)  
[www.almachicago.org](http://www.almachicago.org)

Unity Coalition | Coalicion Unida (Florida)  
[www.unitycoalition.org](http://www.unitycoalition.org)

Bienestar (Los Angeles)  
[www.bienestar.org](http://www.bienestar.org)

ALLGO (Texas)  
[www.allgo.org](http://www.allgo.org)

ACLU of Florida en Español  
[espanol.aclufl.org/](http://espanol.aclufl.org/)

Casa Ruby (Washington, DC)  
[uslea.org/](http://uslea.org/)

Entre Hermanos (Seattle)  
[www.entrehermanos.org/](http://www.entrehermanos.org/)

Familia es Familia  
[familiaesfamilia.org/](http://familiaesfamilia.org/)

Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC) Boston  
[www.hbgc-boston.org/](http://www.hbgc-boston.org/)

Lambda Legal Proyecto Igualdad  
[www.lambdalegal.org/issues/proyecto-igualdad](http://www.lambdalegal.org/issues/proyecto-igualdad)

Latino AIDS Commission (New York)  
[www.latinoaids.org/](http://www.latinoaids.org/)

Latino Equality Alliance (Los Angeles)  
[www.latinoequalityalliance.com/](http://www.latinoequalityalliance.com/)

Latino GLBT History Project (Washington, DC)  
[www.latinoglbthistory.org](http://www.latinoglbthistory.org)

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) LGBT Program  
[lulac.org/programs/lgbt](http://lulac.org/programs/lgbt)

Make the Road New York  
[www.maketheroad.org](http://www.maketheroad.org)

Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP)  
[unitedwedream.org/](http://unitedwedream.org/)

Somos Familia (San Francisco)  
[somsfamiabay.org/](http://somsfamiabay.org/)

Southerners On New Ground (SONG) (Atlanta)  
[www.southernersonnewground.org](http://www.southernersonnewground.org)

TransLatina Coalition  
[translatinacoalition.org/](http://translatinacoalition.org/)

Unión=Fuerza Latino Institute  
[sites.google.com/site/creatingchangelatino/](http://sites.google.com/site/creatingchangelatino/)

## Legal

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Project  
[www.aclu.org/lgbt](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)  
[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

Williams Institute UCLA School of Law  
[williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/)

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)  
[www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)

## Marriage

Freedom to Marry (closed)  
[www.freedomtomarry.org](http://www.freedomtomarry.org)

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

GLTBQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)  
[www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)  
[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Lesbian Gay  
Bisexual Transgender Project  
[www.aclu.org/lgbt](http://www.aclu.org/lgbt)

Human Rights Campaign  
[www.hrc.org/campaigns/marriage-center](http://www.hrc.org/campaigns/marriage-center)

Williams Institute UCLA School of Law (demographics,  
economic research)  
[williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/)

## Media

GLAAD  
[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA)  
[www.nlgja.org](http://www.nlgja.org)

## Military

OutServe-SLDN (Servicemembers Legal Defense Network)  
[www.sldn.org](http://www.sldn.org)

SPART\*A (Service members, Partners, and Allies for  
Respect and Tolerance for All )  
[www.facebook.com/SPARTAArmedForces/info](http://www.facebook.com/SPARTAArmedForces/info)

Palm Center  
[www.palmcenter.org](http://www.palmcenter.org)

Transgender American Veterans Association  
[www.tavausa.org](http://www.tavausa.org)

## Nondiscrimination

Freedom for All Americans  
[www.freedomforallamericans.org](http://www.freedomforallamericans.org)

## Political organizations

Human Rights Campaign  
[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
[www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org)

Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Leadership Institute  
(LGBT candidates)  
[www.victoryfund.org](http://www.victoryfund.org)

Log Cabin Republicans  
[www.logcabin.org](http://www.logcabin.org)

Stonewall Democrats  
[www.stonewalldemocrats.org](http://www.stonewalldemocrats.org)

## Religion & faith communities

### General

Institute for Welcoming Resources (program of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force)  
[www.thetaskforce.org](http://www.thetaskforce.org)

Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Religion & Faith Program  
[www.hrc.org/explore/topic/religion-faith](http://www.hrc.org/explore/topic/religion-faith)

Gay Christian Network  
[www.gaychristian.net](http://www.gaychristian.net)

GLAAD Religion, Faith & Values Program  
[www.glaad.org/faith](http://www.glaad.org/faith)

Interfaith Alliance  
[www.interfaithalliance.org](http://www.interfaithalliance.org)

National Black Justice Coalition  
[www.nbjc.org](http://www.nbjc.org)

Network on Religion & Justice for Asian and Pacific Islander LGBT People  
[www.netrj.org](http://www.netrj.org)

Soulforce  
[www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org)

The Naming Project  
[www.thenamingproject.org](http://www.thenamingproject.org)

Muslims for Progressive Values  
[mpvusa.org/portfolio/lgbt/](http://mpvusa.org/portfolio/lgbt/)

### Denominational affinity groups

Integrity (Episcopal)  
[www.integrityusa.org](http://www.integrityusa.org)

Dignity/USA (Catholic)  
[www.dignityusa.org](http://www.dignityusa.org)

New Ways Ministry (Catholic)  
[www.newwaysministry.org](http://www.newwaysministry.org)

Reconciling Ministries Network (United Methodist)  
[www.rmnetwork.org](http://www.rmnetwork.org)

ReconcilingWorks (Lutheran)  
[www.reconcilingworks.org](http://www.reconcilingworks.org)

More Light Presbyterians  
[www.mlp.org](http://www.mlp.org)

Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons  
[www.affirmation.org](http://www.affirmation.org)

Keshet (Jewish)  
[www.keshetonline.org/](http://www.keshetonline.org/)

### LGBTQ/allied denominations & congregations

Metropolitan Community Churches (LGBT-affirming Christian denomination)  
[www.mccchurch.org](http://www.mccchurch.org)

Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (New York City LGBT synagogue)  
[www.cbst.org](http://www.cbst.org)

Congregation Kol Ami (Los Angeles LGBT synagogue)  
[www.kol-ami.org](http://www.kol-ami.org)

United Church of Christ  
[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

City of Refuge United Church of Christ / Refuge Ministries (San Francisco)  
[www.srefuge.org](http://www.srefuge.org)

Unitarian Universalist Association  
[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

Unity Fellowship of Christ Church  
[www.unityfellowshipchurch.org](http://www.unityfellowshipchurch.org)

## Research

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP)  
[www.lgbtmap.org/](http://www.lgbtmap.org/)

Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law  
[williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/)

## Seniors & elders

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)  
[www.sageusa.org](http://www.sageusa.org)

American Society on Aging's Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network  
[www.asaging.org/lain](http://www.asaging.org/lain)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Elder Law Project  
[www.nclrights.org/our-work/elders/](http://www.nclrights.org/our-work/elders/)

## Sports

LGBT Sports Foundation  
<https://www.facebook.com/lgbtsportsfoundation/>

You Can Play Project  
[www.youcanplayproject.org](http://www.youcanplayproject.org)

Athlete Ally  
[www.athleteally.org](http://www.athleteally.org)

The Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation  
[www.standupfoundation.com](http://www.standupfoundation.com)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Sports Project  
[www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/sports/](http://www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/sports/)

Lambda Legal Transgender Parents Program  
[www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/trans-parents/transgender/transgenderaid1](http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/trans-parents/transgender/transgenderaid1)

COLAGE: Kids of Trans Parents Resources  
[www.colage.org/resources/kids-of-trans-resource-guide/](http://www.colage.org/resources/kids-of-trans-resource-guide/)

SPART\*A (Service members, Partners, and Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All )  
[www.facebook.com/SPARTAArmedForces/info](http://www.facebook.com/SPARTAArmedForces/info)

Transgender American Veterans Association  
[www.tavausa.org](http://www.tavausa.org)

Transgender Day of Remembrance  
[www.transgenderdor.org](http://www.transgenderdor.org)

## Statewide organizations

Equality Federation  
[www.equalityfederation.org](http://www.equalityfederation.org)  
(includes complete directory of LGBT statewide organizations)

## Transgender

National Center for Transgender Equality  
[www.transequality.org](http://www.transequality.org)

Transgender Law Center  
[www.transgenderlawcenter.org](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Transgender Law Project  
[www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/transgender-law/](http://www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/transgender-law/)

Transgender Law & Policy Institute  
[www.transgenderlaw.org](http://www.transgenderlaw.org)

Sylvia Rivera Law Project  
[www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)

TransLatina Coalition  
[translatinacoalition.org/](http://translatinacoalition.org/)

World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)  
[www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org)

Trans Youth Family Allies (TYFA)  
[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

Gender Spectrum  
[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

PFLAG Transgender Network  
[community.pflag.org/transgender](http://community.pflag.org/transgender)

## Youth & education

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)  
[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

Point Foundation  
[www.pointfoundation.org](http://www.pointfoundation.org)

Gay-Straight Alliance Network  
[www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)

The Trevor Project  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Youth Project  
[www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/youth/](http://www.nclrights.org/explore-the-issues/youth/)

Campus Pride  
[www.campuspride.org](http://www.campuspride.org)

Gender Spectrum  
[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

Trans Youth Family Allies (TYFA)  
[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

## **NEW YORK**

104 West 29th Street, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
phone 212.629.3322  
info@glaad.org

## **CALIFORNIA**

5455 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1500  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
phone 323.933.2240  
info@glaad.org

**For the latest updates, visit GLAAD's Media Reference Guide at [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org).**



GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

**[glaad.org](http://glaad.org)**  
**[facebook.com/glaad](https://www.facebook.com/glaad)**  
**[@glaad](https://twitter.com/glaad)**