**CORE TERMS**

The following terms are available to help you as a Safe Pledge member. These terms can be of use if you would like to educate yourself, if you need to help someone through crisis or to assist in others understanding feelings. This glossary is also available to assist in ensuring we provide a Safe environment for our students, staff and faculty.

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**Sexuality and Gender**

* **Agender**: a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.
* **Androgyny**: a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; occasionally used in place of “intersex” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy, generally in the form “androgyne."
* **Androsexual / Androphilic:** being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men, males, and/or masculinity.
* **Aromantic**: experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic). Sometimes abbreviated to “aro” (pronounced like “arrow”).
* **Asexual**: experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions. Many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual). Sometimes abbreviated to “ace.”
* **Bicurious**: a curiosity toward experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).
* **Bigender**: a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with both genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender).
* **Biological sex:** a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.”

* **Bisexual**: a person who experiences attraction to some men and women / a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender. Bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to. Often used interchangeably with “pansexual”.
* **Cisgender**: a gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.”
* **Demiromantic**: little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual connection is formed with someone, often within a sexual relationship.
* **Demisexual:** little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.
* **Feminine-of-center; masculine-of-center:** a phrase that indicates a range in terms of gender identity and expression for people who present, understand themselves, and/or relate to others in a generally more feminine/masculine way, but don’t necessarily identify as women or men.  Feminine-of-center individuals may also identify as “femme,” “submissive,” “transfeminine,” etc.; masculine-of-center individuals may also often identify as “butch,” “stud,” “aggressive,” “boi,” “transmasculine,” etc.
* **Feminine-presenting; masculine-presenting:** a way to describe someone who expresses gender in a more feminine/masculine way. Often confused with

feminine-of-center/masculine-of-center, which generally include a focus on identity as well as expression.

* **Femme**: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally. Often used to refer to a feminine-presenting queer woman or people.
* **Gay**: experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women / an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight.
* **Gender binary**: the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.
* **Gender expression**: the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”
* **Gender fluid**: a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.
* **Gender identity:** the internal perception of an one’s gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don’t align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Often conflated with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.
* **Gender non-conforming**: a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man) / a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as “GNC.”
* **Gender normative / gender straight:** someone whose gender presentation, whether by nature or by choice, aligns with society’s gender-based expectations.
* **Gender variant:** someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to

gender-based expectations of society (e.g., transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.).

* **Genderqueer**: a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman / an umbrella term for many genders non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).
* **Gynesexual / Gynephilic**: being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to woman, females, and/or femininity.
* **Heterosexual/straight:** experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender.
* **Homosexual**: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. This [medical] term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).
* **Intersex**: term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.
* **Lesbian**: women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.
* **Metrosexual**: a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.
* **Pansexual**: a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”
* **Polyamory (polyamorous):** refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to “poly.”
* **Queer**: an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight and/or cisgender. / a slur used to refer to someone who isn’t straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term “queer” can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer people” instead of “LGBTQ people”).
* **Same gender loving (SGL):** sometimes used by some members of the African American or Black community to express an non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent.
* **Sex assigned at birth (SAAB):** a phrase used to intentionally recognize a person’s assigned sex (not gender identity). Sometimes called “designated sex at birth” (DSAB) or “sex coercively assigned at birth” (SCAB), or specifically used as “assigned male at birth” (AMAB) or “assigned female at birth” (AFAB): Jenny was assigned male at birth but identifies as a woman.
* **Skoliosexual**: being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or non-binary people.
* **Straight**: a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.
* **Two-spirit:** is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both genders.
* **Transgender**: a gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another / an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).
* **Transsexual**: a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

**Frequently Used Terms**

* **Ally**: a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who act with support and respect.
* **Advocate**: a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group / to actively support or plea in favor of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance or educate others.
* **Coming out:** the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself) / the process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others.
* **Cisnormativity**: the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender, and that cisgender identities are superior to trans\* identities and people. Leads to invisibility of non-cisgender identities.
* **Closeted**: an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.”  When someone chooses to break this silence, they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)
* **Constellation**: a way to describe the arrangement or structure of a polyamorous relationship.
* **Cross-dresser:** someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.
* **Drag king:** someone who performs (hyper-) masculinity theatrically.
* **Drag queen**: someone who performs (hyper-) femininity theatrically.
* **Fluid(ity):** generally, with another term attached, like gender-fluid or fluid-sexuality, fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available (e.g., man and woman, bi and straight).
* **Outing**: involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.
* **Passing**: trans\* people being accepted as, or able to “pass for,” a member of their self-identified gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans\* / an LGB/queer individual who is believed to be or perceived as straight.
* **Questioning**: an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.
* **Romantic attraction:** a capacity that evokes the want to engage in romantically intimate behavior (e.g., dating, relationships, marriage), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.
* **Sexual preference:** the types of sexual intercourse, stimulation, and gratification one likes to receive and participate in. Generally, when this term is used, it is being mistakenly interchanged with “sexual orientation,” creating an illusion that one has a choice (or “preference”) in who they are attracted to.
* **Sex reassignment surgery (SRS):** used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s biological sex. “Gender confirmation surgery” is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as “top” surgery and “bottom” surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.