

Gender & Sexuality Glossary of Common Terms:

Feeling confused about gender terms? Want to support, but cannot get the hang of it? Here is a quick guide you can refer to!

- **Aikāne:** (literally “sex with a man”): traditional Kanaka Maoli intimate same-gender relationship (either gender). Famous examples: Kauikeaouli & Kaomi, Hi’iaka & Hōpoe. Often a respected courtly position amongst ali’i (chiefs).
- **Asexual (“Ace”):** not interested in sex at all.
- **Aromantic (“Aro”):** not interested in romance.
- **Bisexual (“Bi”):** attracted to more than one gender.
- **Cis/Cisgender:** Someone who appears to be & identifies as the gender of one’s biological sex, regardless of attraction to any gender.
- **Drag Queen/King:** a performer who dresses up in gender-nonconforming clothing as part of performance, and possibly other parts of life.
- **Fa’afafine** (Samoa): a Samoan gender similar to feminine māhū, essential to Samoan culture.
- **Fakeleti /Leti /Fakafefine** (Tonga): a Tongan gender similar to feminine māhū/fa’afafine.
- **Gay:** a blanket term describing attraction that includes the same gender; not straight.
- **Hate crime:** crime, usually violent, motivated by prejudice based on ethnicity, religion, sexual/gender orientation, etc. Fed by normalized fear/prejudice in society. Common & hard to prove; often not reported as such. Terrorism. Harms LGBTQ+ mental health. Needs to STOP.
- **Heterosexual:** attraction to someone of the opposite gender. As a noun, it means someone who is *only* attracted to the opposite gender.
- **Homophobia/ Homophobic:** fear-rooted discrimination or unkindness because a person is LGBTQ+. This can be open (eg violence) or subtle (eg cold treatment, or calling lgbtq+ expression by children “inappropriate”).
- **Homosexual:** attraction to someone of the same gender (can be insulting if used improperly).
- **LGBTQ+, LGBTQIA+,** etc: acronyms used for anyone who is not both straight and cis.
- **Kāne:** Man, male (‘Ōlelo Hawai’i). May be cis or māhū (trans masc).
- **Lesbian** - A woman or nonbinary person (cis or transgender) who is attracted to women (cis or transgender).
- **Māhū:** traditional Kanaka Maoli term for a person with gender outside of biological sex. Māhū are often considered to possess both kāne & wahine mana (power), & are extra powerful / talented in many arts.
- **Misgender:** use wrong gender language with which the person does not identify.
- **Nonbinary:** gender that is not exclusively either male or female (binary).
- **(Gender) Nonconforming:** not conforming to standard societal gender norms.
- **Pansexual:** attracted to people across the entire gender spectrum.
- **Polyamorous, Polycule:** see punalua/lau.
- **Punalua, Punalau:** having multiple polyamorous relationship partners (lua = 2, lau = more than 2). Ongoing relationship, does not include casual relationships.
- **Queer:** Not straight &/or cis gender (originally a derogatory term claimed by LGBTQ+ folks for their own use).
- **Straight** - Someone who is *only* attracted to people of the opposite gender.
- **Transgender** - A person who doesn’t solely identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. May appear to be any gender.
- **Trans man/trans masc:** A person who was assigned female gender at birth and now identifies as a man/masculine.
- **Trans woman/trans femme:** A person who was assigned male gender at birth and now identifies as a woman/feminine.
- **Transphobia:** fear-based unkindness/discrimination against those with trans identity. Major cause of violence & suicide.
- **Two-Spirit:** A term used by some Indigenous cultures of Moku Honu (Turtle Island, aka “North America”) for people with non-cis gender identity (similar to māhū). Hundreds of cultural terms are also used.
- **Wahine:** Woman, female (‘Ōlelo Hawai’i). May be cis or māhū (trans femme).

This glossary is still being developed! If you have questions or would like to comment, please email us at nativepeace@gmail.com.

Mahalo!

Common Pronouns

She/her/hers “she and her wahine ran sound for the lū’au; that mic must be hers.”

He/him/his “He is wondering if that shirt still matches him, as his kāne identity develops.”

They/them “They have their ‘aikāne with them.”

‘Oia: ua hele mai ‘oia (Note: as Polynesian pronouns are not gendered in the first place, figuring out pronouns is easier - just saying!).

Neo pronouns: Xe/Xem, Ze/Zem....

It is VERY important to use the pronouns that a person identifies with. This shows respect & support, & encourages others to be respectful & supportive. Using wrong pronouns can hurt & cause feelings of rejection & dysphoria, which can lead to depression or suicidal thoughts, and could also expose the person to hate &/or violence. Sometimes, Indigenous People resist learning “new” terms, as many foreign ideas have been forced on us. Our mähū & LGBTQ+ ‘ōhana are helping to heal this historic abuse, & we need to stand up for their self-determination & identity as they puka through colonial prejudice & hate.

Main thing: If you do not know a person’s pronouns, just **ask them** what they are.

It is ok to make mistakes (correcting self & simple kine “sorry!” is best if you mess up), and it is normal to feel a little awkward, but it is not okay to keep using words that feel more familiar, but hurt the person they refer to. Nobody (including cis people) likes to be misgendered.

Maika’i (GOOD) questions:

“What kine pronouns you get?”
“How you identify?”
“How you like me refer to you?”
“You stay comfortable with _____?”

A’ole maika’i (WRONG) questions:

“Is you one man or one woman?”
“When you stay getting surgery?”
ANY questions about genitals.

They/Them/Their

Some folks get confused about how to use “they/them” in a sentence. *Because English is confusing!* But it is not hard, when you get used to it. Here are some examples:

“Lani came over and brought poi they pounded with their new board, and I gave them some pa’akai for their uncle.”

“Kalei picked guavas from their tree and brought them to their tūtū’s hale for make guava jam to give to their kaikamahine.”

“Kimo went to the crack seed store and bought themselves some li hing mui candy.”

Note: They/them is not a blanket term used by everyone who is not cis, and should not be used if a different gender pronoun has been made clear. This is especially important for people who want to be called by “she” or “he” pronouns specifically.

ASK AUNTIE MÄHÜLANI! Quick Kine Questions

Q: He aha transphobia?

A: When fakas is sked of mahu & other trans folks. Da fear often leads to hatred.

Q: Where transphobia come from?

A: We live in one society that no like trans people cuz colonization. Anti-mahu messages stay in sports, TV, movies, music & some religions foa decades. Dis not so subtly tells colonized fakaz dat being mahu or trans stay weird or wrong. Leads to dakine transphobia, discrimination, violence, murder. Dis no mean you no can enjoy your favorite movies, shows, an’ songs even if they do stay dakine transphobic - main ting is stay maka’ala. 👍

This is a preview of a kanaka gender guide being developed by ‘Ike ‘Ōpio, a youth program of Ho’opae Pono Peace Project. <https://www.eapono.org/opio>. Mahalo nui to Seventh Generation Fund & Sogorea Te LT.

The full guide is coming soon! Stay tuned!

