

Safe Sex

Systemic Oppression

Sexism

Intersect
ionality

Absti
nence

Consent

Internalised
Misogyny

The Woke Vocab.

Gender
queer

Victim
Blaming

Gender Affirmation
Surgery

8888
88 the yp foundation

Pleasure

Pron
ouns

The Woke Vocab. is a pocket-sized dictionary that lists out and explains some basic but essential terms related to themes of gender, sexuality, sexual health, and feminism.

Along with a definition, each term also comes with data, case studies, or dialogical examples. We hope this helps our readers expand their understanding of these often complex and confusing words!

Gaslighting

feminist vocab

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation where a person slowly seeps in doubts in the mind of an individual which further makes them question their own mind, reason, perception, decision, judgement. Gaslighting shadows one's own cognitive abilities, capabilities, and oneself as a whole.

Some common phrases you might hear from your gaslighter are:

- You're imagining things.
- You are making that up.
- You are just paranoid.
- That never happened.
- There you go again, you are so ungrateful.
- Nobody believes you, why should I?
- You know that's just because you are so insecure.



Internalised Misogyny

feminist vocab

Internalised misogyny is the prejudiced behaviour women project upon themselves and other women.

Internalised misogyny could look like:

**"Did you look at what she was wearing?
What a s ***!"**

"I'm not like other girls."

"I get along better with guys, girls are too bitchy."



Intersectionality

feminist vocab

The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

What can you do to acknowledge intersectionality?



**Recognise
difference**

**Seek
other
points of
view**

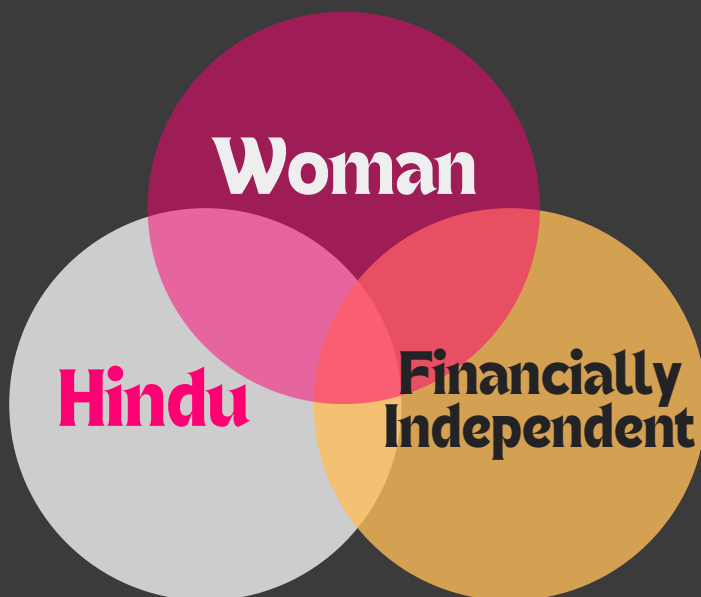
**Analyse
the space
you
occupy**

**Avoid over-
simplified language**

Intersectional Feminism

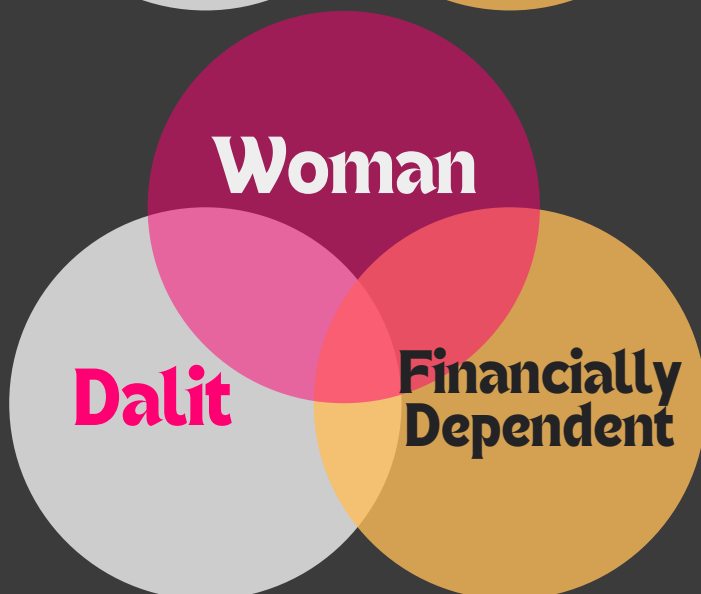
feminist vocab

Intersectional feminism is the understanding of how women and marginalised people's overlapping identities – including race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and others – impact the way they experience oppression and discrimination.



A woman who belongs to social groups/backgrounds of power or majority, and is economically stable, would be worried about facing sexism.

However,



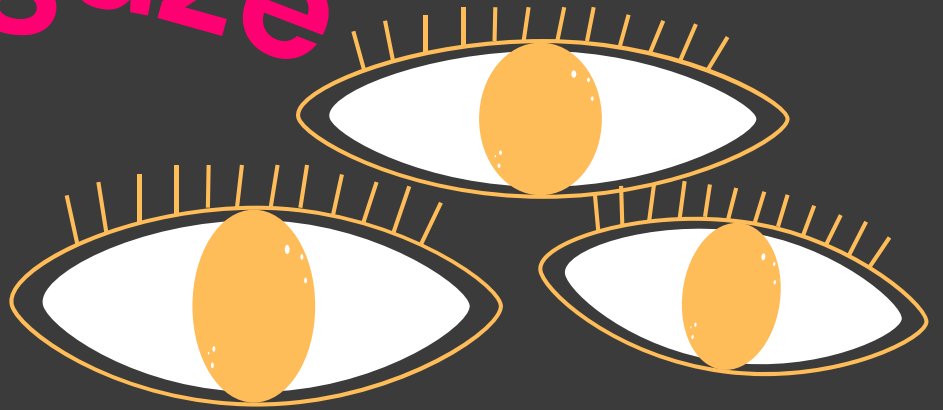
A woman who belongs to social groups/backgrounds that have a history of oppression or are in minority, and is economically unstable, would be worried about facing sexism, casteism, and also financial debt.

Male Gaze

feminist vocab

A way of looking at the world through a (toxic) masculine lens that views women primarily as sexual objects.

Examples of male gaze



- Extraneous nudity by female characters
- Slow camera pans of women's bodies
- Women wearing tight or occasion-inappropriate clothing when male characters are appropriately dressed
- Using the female body as a prop
- A male protagonist, with women characters only as sexual objects

Mansplaining

feminist vocab

Mansplaining is when a man talks condescendingly to someone (especially a woman) about something he has incomplete knowledge of, with the mistaken assumption that he knows more about it than the person he's talking to does.

"Women, what's the most infuriating thing you've had mansplained to you?"

"I once had a friend mansplain to my roommate how to correctly pronounce her own name because he thought she was doing it wrong."

"At the racetrack—where I've worked for 14 years—men regularly try to explain to me how gambling works as I take their bets."

"How to correctly insert a tampon. No, this person was not a doctor."

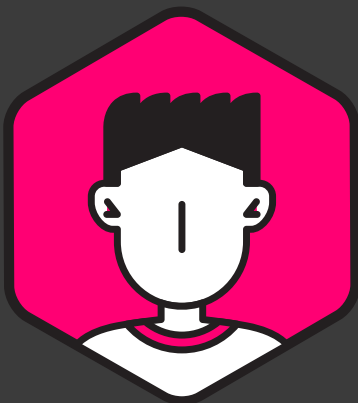


Misogyny

feminist vocab

Misogyny is an extreme form of sexism that is often defined as the hatred of women and feminine presenting people. A person with misogynistic beliefs may not be aware that they are demonstrating a hatred towards women — or even believe that they hate women — but their behaviour and words expose prejudice, disdain of, or hostility to, women.

How are Sexism and Misogyny different?



Hi! I am
Sexism

I make you 'believe' that women are fragile and inferior.

Hi! I am
Misogyny

I am the method through which you implement sexism!



To say 'boys will be boys' and therefore, a woman should not wear certain clothes at night — is sexism. But, to make 'she had it coming' rape jokes — that's misogyny.

Objectification

feminist vocab

Objectification is when women are reduced to just their physicality, i.e., body parts for the purpose of catering to the “male gaze”. Objectification further paints the way we treat, interact, portray women in families, public spaces, culture, media, and all other realms of life. This dehumanises women and often perpetuates violence.

Objectification

**Rigid Gender-
Stereotypes**

**Harassment
and Threats**

**Assault, Physical
or Verbal Abuse**

Murder

reinforces

lead to

results in

leads to

Patriarchy

femnist vocab

Patriarchy literally translates to “rule of the father” and historically refers to the systemic and institutionalised male domination which has been embedded in and perpetuated by cultural, political, economic, and social structures and ideologies.



I can wear any clothes that I feel comfortable in without any comments being made about my morality.

I don't have to worry about continuing my education or work should I get married.

If I can't do a physically demanding task, my failure will not be ascribed to my gender.

I have never received any threats of sexual assault online.

I can wander without the threat or fear of being sexually assaulted and without having to take any precautions for it.

Sexism

feminist vocab

Sexism is any expression (act, word, image, gesture) based on the idea that some persons, most often women, are inferior because of their sex.

47.2 per cent of the respondents in a study had been asked to 'dress appropriately' by someone from their educational institutes.

35 percent from students within the campus.

Among them, **66.2** percent have faced such comments from female faculty members.

38.3 percent from male faculty members.

35.3 percent from non-teaching staff.

Systemic Oppression

feminist vocab

This kind of oppression is systematic and has historical antecedents; it is the intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity while advantaging members of the dominant group (in terms of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, language, etc.).

Systemic Oppression is when people of certain groups are being discriminated against not just by an individual, but by a whole system or institution. Examples of systemic sexism in schools:

An excerpt from a Class 9 Hindi textbook in Rajasthan, India, not only demeans and devalues the unpaid labour that housewives perform, but also claims that women are worse than donkeys on the basis that they exercise their rights and leave possibly abusive relationships, which makes them disloyal because they disobey their “master” (read: husband).

An Indian textbook printed this excerpt about homosexuality - 'The condition is one of arrested development or a natural deviation, and beyond that, homosexuality is a disease. It exists among all callings and at all levels of society.'

Victim Blaming

feminist vocab

When a victim of a crime is held partly or wholly responsible for the act, it's known as victim blaming.

Asking such questions is an example of victim-blaming:

what were you wearing?

was there alcohol involved?

but nobody asked you to stay there, right?

why didn't you come forward sooner?

are you sure your door was locked?



Cisgender

gender vocab

Cisgender refers to an identity that a person has when the sex assigned to them at birth matches their self determined gender identity.

There are certain privileges that come with being cisgender, but go unnoticed. Some of these are:

Using public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation, or arrest.

Walking through the world and blending in, not being constantly pointed at or whispered about.

Having their gender as an option on the forms they fill.

Easily finding role models and mentors to emulate who share their identity.



Crossdressing

gender vocab

A cross-dresser is a person who partially or fully dresses as a member of a particular gender which isn't aligned to their assigned sex. It is an act of gender expression and not an individual's gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Myth → Crossdressing is a mental illness.

Reality → There is nothing wrong about crossdressing. Crossdressing is a way of expressing a part of that person's being, and how they feel inside.

Myth → Crossdressers are homosexual.

Reality → One's sexual orientation or gender identity cannot be judged on the basis of how they dress.

Myth → Crossdressing is a a choice they make, for fun.

Reality → It is not as much a choice as it is a part of that person's being. They feel it inside and know that is who they truly are.

Deadname

gender vocab

Deadnaming refers to calling a person by their birth or given name after they have changed it.

When you deadname someone, it's always the best to acknowledge, quickly apologise, and correct yourself! If the person you're talking to does the same, you could correct them politely.

When I met Isha the last time, she was...

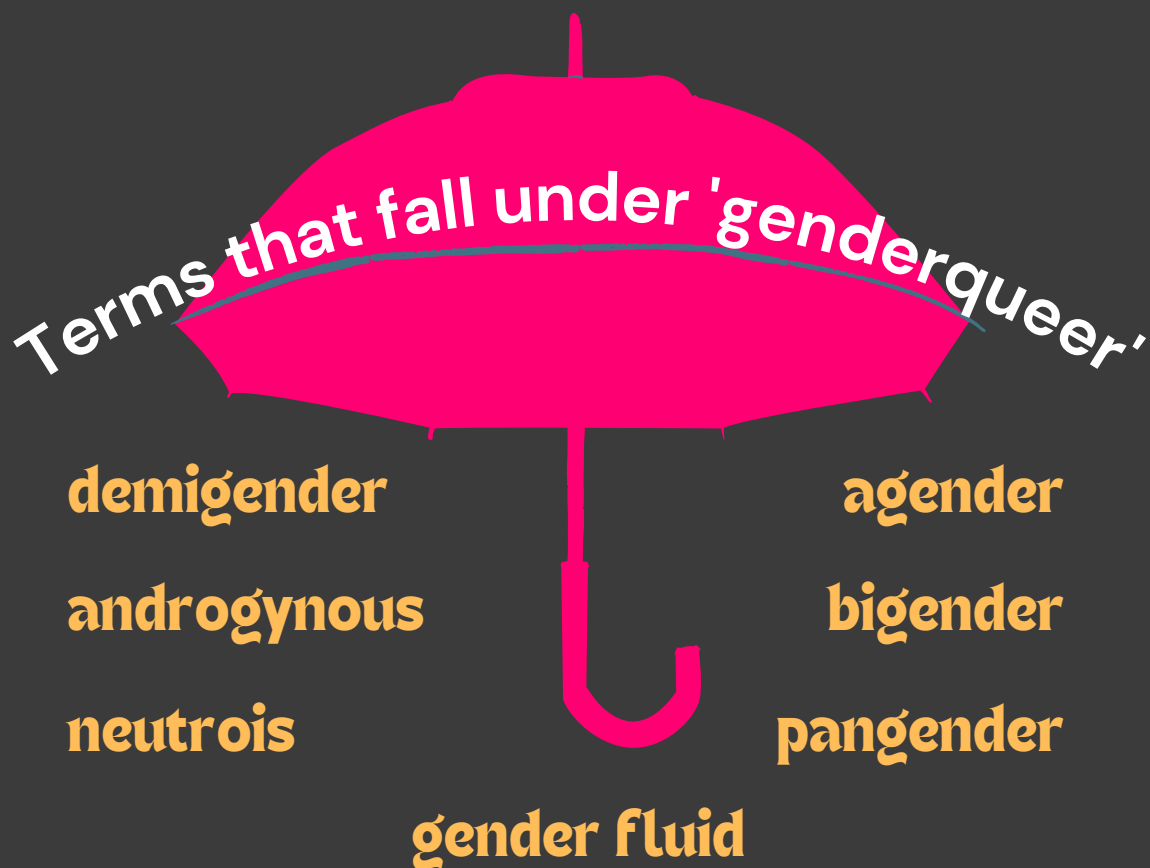
Yes, sorry! So when I met Ishaan the last time, he took me to a great coffee shop

You mean Ishaan?
And he..?

Genderqueer

gender vocab

This term describes a gender identity that is embraced by people whose genders are unconventional or non-normative.



"I prefer the term genderqueer because it feels like it leaves it open to interpretation daily, which is how I feel about my gender. I feel differently day to day, so sometimes certain terms fit and sometimes they don't, but genderqueer kind of always fits."

Gender Dysphoria

gender vocab

Gender dysphoria is a term that describes a sense of unease that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

How can gender dysphoria impact a person?

**low self-
esteem**

**depression
or anxiety**

**becoming withdrawn or
socially isolated**

neglecting themselves

taking unnecessary risks

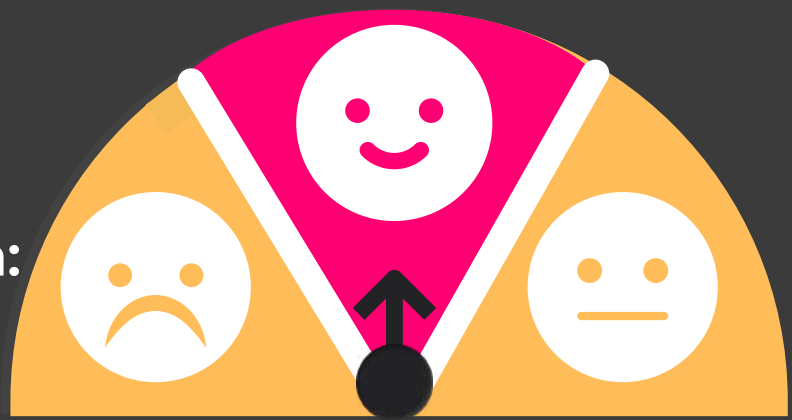


Gender Euphoria

gender vocab

Gender euphoria is the psychological state of bliss and comfort that happens when our gender expression is aligned with our identity.

Moments of Gender Euphoria:



"Someone in public called me 'sir' rather than 'ma'am' or 'miss.' It's usually someone older, but goddamn it's the best feeling in the world. I feel somewhat of a sense of relief/momentary spring in my step. It's honestly so fulfilling and amazing."

Charlie (he/him) — Trans man

"I got called 'mommy' by a character in a video game. I was overcome with an intense feeling like I'd been hooked up to a car battery of pure happiness."

- Ferrodoy (she/her) — Trans woman

"A recent moment of gender euphoria was just yesterday. I had forgotten my phone in my bedroom and had to walk back to get it, and I said to myself out loud, 'Good job Toby.' There was no hesitation, it felt so natural coming out of my mouth like the name truly belonged to me."

- Toby (they/them) — Nonbinary

Gender Expression

gender vocab

The external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behaviour, clothing, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviours and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

How is Gender Expression different from Gender Identity?



Gender Identity

Gender Identity is how you perceive yourself. It means identifying as woman, man, both, none.

Gender Expression

While Gender Identity is a covert concept, Gender Expression is more overtly significant. It means how you express your gender through the way you act, behave, dress, or interact.

Gender Identity

gender vocab

One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

What are some gender identities?



Agender is defined as not having a gender.



Bigender people experience exactly two gender identities, either simultaneously or varying between the two. These two gender identities could be male and female, but could also include non-binary identities.



Non Binary is used to describe someone whose gender identity can't be described as exclusively woman or man; Non binary could also be used as an umbrella term, encompassing many gender identities that don't fit into the man-woman binary.

Heteronormativity

gender vocab

This concept describes actions, institutions, ideologies, and systems that assume heterosexuality is the standard sexual orientation.

Examples of heteronormativity:

Treating other sexualities as “a phase”.

Media’s misrepresentation of homosexual couples.

Preference for biological pronouns.

Parental disapproval of LGBTQ+ children.

Health care discrimination.

Assigning gender to intersex people.

Misgendering

gender vocab

Misgendering is to address someone (especially a transgender person) by using a word or pronoun that doesn't reflect the gender with which they identify themselves. It's always better to ask a person what pronoun(s) they use to address themselves.

Here's what you can do if you accidentally misgender someone:

1

Acknowledge the mistake, give a quick apology, and correct yourself.

2

Centre the needs and feelings of the person who has been misgendered, not your own.

3

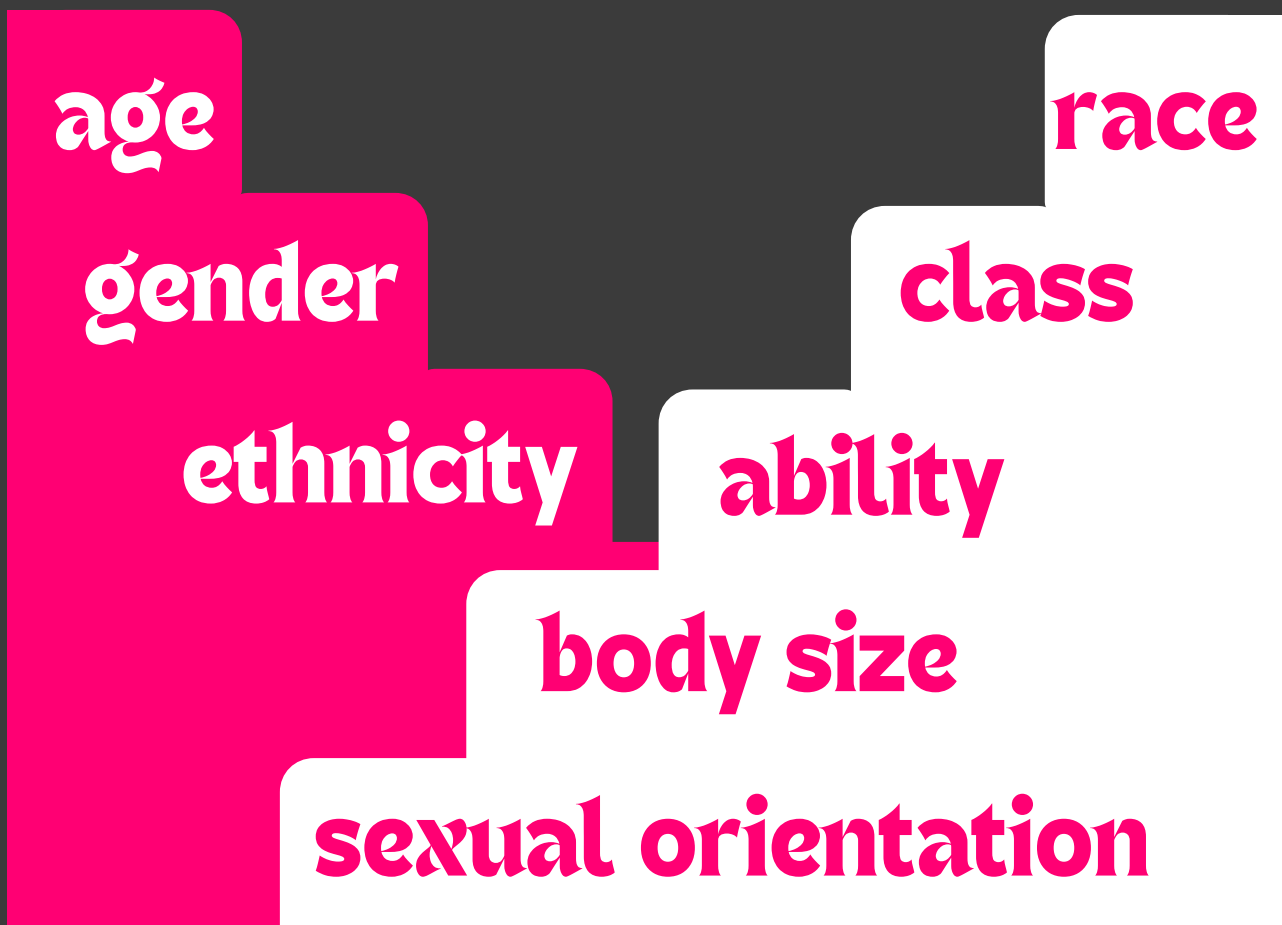
Don't make excuses for yourself, get defensive, or ask to be cut some slack. Begin work immediately to regain their trust by misstepping with as much grace as possible (more on this later) and then working on not making this a habit.

Privilege

gender vocab

Privilege is an advantage to a special right, position, place, or immunity given to a particular individual and/or group. Privilege is interlinked with power where privileged ones wield the power of decision making.

Axes of Privilege in society:



Pronouns

gender vocab

Pronouns are words that people use to refer to others without using their names. Using a person's correct pronouns fosters an inclusive environment and affirms a person's gender identity.

They/Them

are considered gender-neutral pronouns!

Using these ensures we're being inclusive, here's how:

Who is in charge for collecting the homework today? I'll email him.



Who is in charge for collecting the homework today? I'll email them.

Did you know Riya is having a baby? I'm sure she's going to be just as cute.



Did you know Riya is having a baby? I'm sure they are going to be just as cute.

I don't know who sent me that text but he seems to be interested in the job!



I don't know who sent me that text but they seem to be interested in the job!

Transgender

gender vocab

The term transgender is used to describe people whose gender identity doesn't match the biological sex that they were assigned at birth.

"Everyone made fun of me, they didn't sit with me, as if I had some disease. The teachers also sometimes made me sit separately. I felt troubled both at home and in school, so I decided to stop school."

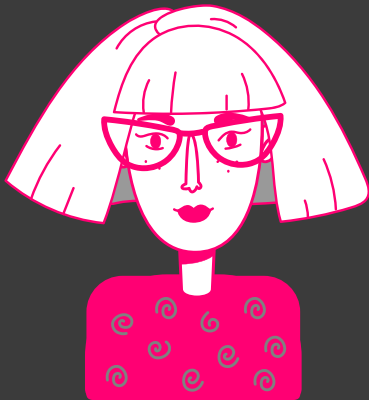
Nearly **Six in Ten** transgender persons surveyed in Kerala in 2015 had dropped out of school due to "severe harassment" and gender-related negative experiences.

A report prepared by Sangama, which interviewed 3,619 transgender persons, highlighted that **52%** of the respondents said they had been harassed by the police and nearly all (96%) said they had not raised a complaint because of their gender identity.

Ally

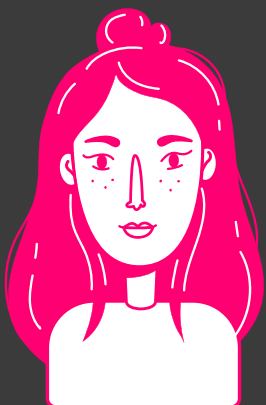
queer vocab

This term describes an individual, with social or economic privileges, who engages in practices that challenge and transform ideas, values, and behaviours, in order to help the less privileged. To be a good LGBTQIA+ ally means that a person is engaged in an ongoing process to (1) understand their own privilege and its effects (2) listen to and learn from those who are most effected by homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, homonormativity, and heterosexism (3) work in solidarity with those most affected by injustice (4) and, foster climates of respect, appreciation, and equity for diverse genders, sexualities, communities, cultures, and histories.



This is Vee.

She's passionate about advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights and is very well read on the topic. She's read more about the topic than any of her friends, and thus ends up invalidating her queer friends' experiences sometimes. Vee is not an effective ally.



This is Zee.

She understands that as an ally, it is her responsibility to not take up her queer friends' space, so she makes use of her privilege by passing the mic whenever needed. Zee is a good ally.

Closeted

queer vocab

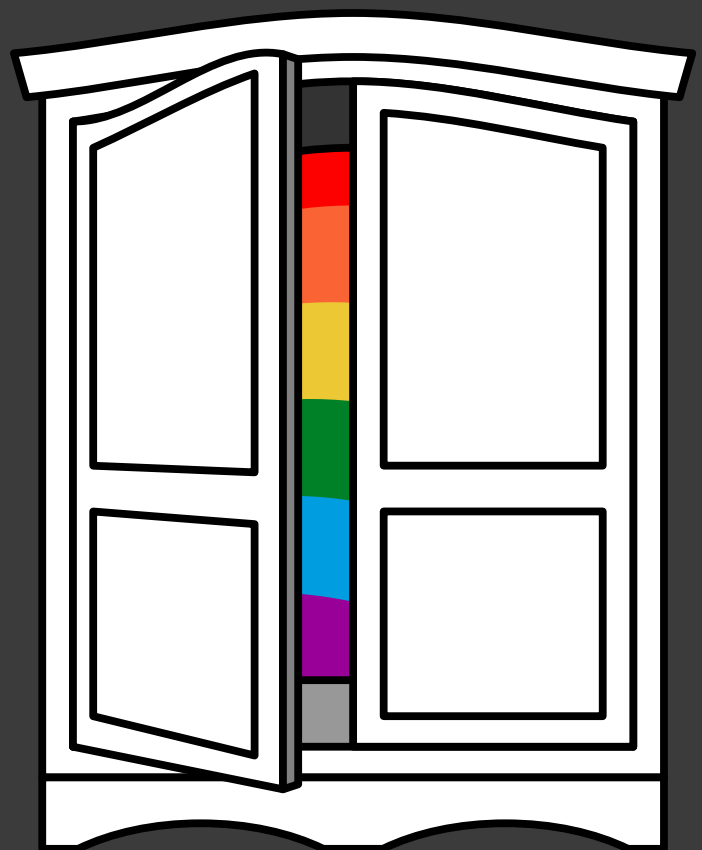
A person who is not open about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

"What is keeping you from coming out?"

"Parents, society, and career. Mostly parents."

"The fear of being judged and hated by my family, and their unawareness and naivety on the issue."

"Fear of being treated special (not normal), left alone, and abused. Homophobia is a greater problem than it seems."



"Fear of rejection and being looked at differently."

Coming Out

queer vocab

Coming out refers to the process that a person goes through as they work to accept their sexual orientation or gender identity and share that identity openly with other people.

How to respond when someone comes out to you:

Say "I think this is really great!" or something affirming that communicates that what they are telling you is fundamentally good.

Say affirming sentences like "Thank you so much for trusting me with this".

If you're not sure what to do next, go with "How can I best support you right now?"



Homophobia

queer vocab

Homophobia, also referred to as – Hetrosexism, is the idea that romantic and/or sexual feelings and relationships can only be between a man and a woman (heterosexuals). All other feelings and relationships that are outside the aforementioned dichotomy are outside the norm and thereby is unnatural and unacceptable.

EXPERIENCES

“I was very close to one of my old teachers, so I texted her about it. She told me that she used to think I was a good girl, but after reading my work, she was shocked to see me writing about such ‘rubbish’.”

“[Teachers] would constantly nag me about my hairstyle, how it made me look very feminine, and that it almost made them wonder if I were ‘the unspeakable’.”

“They think all short haired people are lesbians. My principal acts against every tomboy who has got a short haircut.”

Internalised Homophobia

queer vocab

Internalised homophobia is an aversion towards one's own sexuality, by people who have learned and been taught that heterosexuality is the norm and "correct way to be".

What Internalised Homophobia could look like:

Denying one's own sexual orientation and sexual identity

Anger and resentment toward other LGBTQIA+ people for being out or proud of their identity

Feeling anxious when expressing oneself in an environment of heterosexual norms

Disassociating oneself from the LGBTQIA+ community

Conforming to dominant heterosexual culture



Non-binary

queer vocab

Non-binary refers to the gender identities that are not exclusively straightjacketed in the categories of masculine and feminine.

- Non-binary identity is not just a quirk or trend.
- Not all non-binary people go by they/them pronouns.
- Not all non-binary people identify as intersex or transgender.
- There's no such thing as looking non-binary.
- You don't have to be equally "masculine" and "feminine" to be non-binary.



Abortion

sexual health vocab

Abortion is the removal of pregnancy tissue, products of conception, or the fetus and placenta from the uterus. Other terms for an abortion include elective abortion, induced abortion, termination of pregnancy, and therapeutic abortion.

Abortions are extremely stigmatised, but there are multiple reasons why someone might seek an abortion!

**Financial
Unpreparedness**

**Unwanted
Pregnancy**

**Abusive
Partner/s**

**Mental/Physical
Unpreparedness**

and a thousand other reasons, which are all completely and equally valid, and don't have to be explained by the person making the choice!

Abstinence

sexual health vocab

Choosing to refrain from a behaviour. Sexual abstinence refers to refraining from certain sexual behaviours for a period of time. Some people define sexual abstinence as not having penile–vaginal intercourse, while others define it as not engaging in any sexual behaviours at all.



Hey Riya, what would you infer if your partner tells you they're taking to sexual abstinence?

There isn't really a standard answer to that question, you know?



What do you mean?

I mean, abstinence is very subjective – people can have their own definitions for abstinence. So, before I infer anything, I'd like to know how my partner defines abstinence.

While for some people sexual abstinence might mean just not indulging in penile–vaginal intercourse, for others it could even include kissing or masturbating! You decide what you wish to abstain from!

Agency

sexual health vocab

Agency is defined as the capacity to take action and the manifestation of the capacity by wielding the power associated with it. There are some factors which cumulatively influence the structure of agency – class, caste, society, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, customs, ability, merit, and more.

When discussing sexual agency, you have the ability to

**define
yourself
sexually**

**choose
whether or not
you want to
experience
sexual activity**

**choose how
you want to
engage in
sexual activity**

**stop or refuse
any sexual
activity**

In other words, you know what you want sexually and what you don't want. You are capable of making and enforcing decisions about your sex life.

Consent

sexual health vocab

Sexual consent is an agreement to participate in a sexual activity. Before being sexual with someone, you need to know if, and how, they want to be sexual with you.

● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ●

consent ●

"Tinder has launched a brand film to highlight how disbanding consent in relationships can cause long-lasting damage to a couple's mental health.

Conceptualised by Jugaad Motion Pictures, the film features several stories of couples to help people understand the concept of consent, which goes way beyond just physical intimacy.

consent ●

consent ●

The film features the many barriers that couples face with regard to consent. It showcases how partners – in most cases women, refrain from denying their partners sexual pleasures for fear of disappointing them, even when they might not feel interested in sex at the time.

consent ●

It sheds light on gauging the importance of the subtle cues that a partner gives the other, even without explicitly saying the word "no".

consent ●

Check it out [here](#).

● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ● consent ●

consent ●

consent ●

consent ●

consent ●

consent ●

Gender Affirmation Surgery (GAS)

sexual health vocab

Gender affirmation surgery refers to procedures that help people transition to their self-identified gender. Gender-affirming options may include facial surgery, top surgery, or bottom surgery.

What was GAS formerly known as?

GAS was formerly known as Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS), which is a more exclusionary term, as it refers to transition in a binary sense (male-to-female) and is often perceived as a 'corrective' surgery.

Does GAS help with mental health?

In a study, GAS was associated with a 42% reduction in psychological distress and a 44% reduction in suicidal ideation in gender-diverse people who had the surgery, compared to people who had not had the surgery but wanted it.

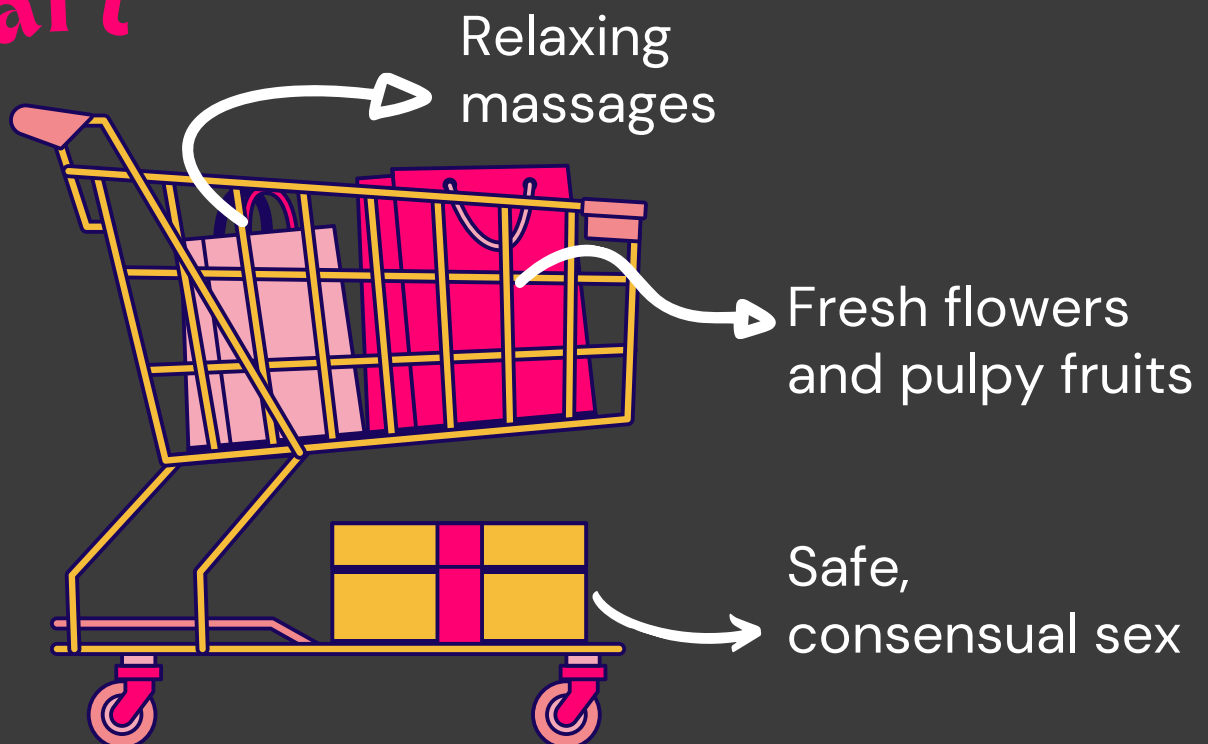
Pleasure

sexual health vocab

Pleasure can be defined as a state of gratification or a source of joy.

Sexual pleasure is the physical and/or psychological satisfaction and enjoyment derived from solitary or shared erotic experiences, including thoughts, dreams, and autoeroticism.

The Pleasure Cart



All experiences of pleasure, be it sexual or not, are equally valid!

Polyamory

sexual health vocab

Polyamory is a way to practice consensual and ethical non-monogamy, which means having multiple intimate relationships with more than one person at a time.

Myth

A polyamorous relationship is for people who don't want to commit.

Polyamory can never work longterm because humans are jealous by nature.

Polyamory practitioners never get attached to anyone.

Poly people are more at risk for STIs.

Reality

Poly people are open about their experiences and feelings, unlike people with commitment issues.

Poly people learn to respond to feelings of envy with openness and curiosity, rather than shame.

People who practice polyamory tend to use the word abundance to describe the wealth of love that having multiple partners tends to bring to their life.

Not all polyamory is sexual in nature, and it does not increase the chances of contracting STIs if partners practice safe sex .

Safe Sex

sexual health vocab

'Safe sex' is sexual contact that doesn't involve the exchange of semen, vaginal fluids, or blood between partners. If used correctly, barrier contraceptives like condoms and dental dams can dramatically reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and most sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

Remembering things like these can help have safer sex!

You don't have to have sex with someone just because you love them or because they've asked you to. **You can say 'NO'** if you're not ready. It's your decision and your choice is completely valid.

Make sure you know what kind of **contraception** you and your partner(s) would be most comfortable with.

Try to get **sexual health check-ups** regularly, so that you know your body and what suits you the best!

It might get a little awkward, but **communicating openly** before having sex helps with making sex more safe and respectful. Discussing boundaries and sexual health check-ins are important!

Sexual Orientation

sexual health vocab

Sexual orientation or sexuality is an aspect of self that involves how you identify, the way you experience sexual or romantic desire (if you do), the gender(s) or sex(es) of the people who someone engages in sexual or romantic activity with (if any), and the gender(s) or sex(es) of the people someone is attracted to (if any).

In a survey:

- **68.5 percent of people reported that discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation negatively affected their psychological well-being.**
- **43.7 percent reported that discrimination negatively impacted their physical well-being.**
- **47.7 percent reported that discrimination negatively impacted their spiritual well-being.**
- **52.8 percent reported that discrimination negatively impacted their work environment.**
- **56.6 report it negatively impacted their neighbourhood and community environment.**
- **38.5 percent reported discrimination negatively impacted their school environment.**

STDs/STIs

sexual health vocab

Common infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that are transmitted from one person who has the infection to another during sexual contact that involves exchange of fluids or skin-to-skin contact. STD stands for sexually transmitted disease, while STI refers to sexually transmitted infection in an effort to clarify that not all sexually transmitted infections turn into a disease.

Myth

When someone is taking 'the pill', they cannot contract an STI.

Once you've had an STD, there's no chance of getting it again.

Only promiscuous people get STDs.

You can only transmit an STI if you have symptoms.

Fact

Oral contraception cannot protect against contracting an STI.

You can get some STDs more than just once.

STDs don't discriminate.

A lot of people pass on STIs to others without even knowing.

Glossary

Feminist Vocab

pages 1-12

Gaslighting
Internalised Misogyny
Intersectionality
Intersectional Feminism
Male Gaze
Mansplaining
Misogyny
Objectification
Patriarchy
Sexism
Systemic Oppression
Victim

Queer Vocab

pages 26-31

Ally
Closeted
Coming Out
Homophobia
Internalised Homophobia
Non-Binary

Gender Vocab

pages 13-25

Cisgender
Crossdressing
Deadname
Genderqueer
Gender Dysphoria
Gender Euphoria
Gender Expression
Gender Identity
Heteronormativity
Misgendering
Privilege
Pronouns
Transgender

Sexual Health Vocab

pages 32-41

Abortion
Abstinence
Agency
Consent
Gender Affirmation Surgery (GAS)
Pleasure
Polyamory
Safe Sex
Sexual Orientation
STDs/STIs

Credits

About TYPF

The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a youth development organisation that facilitates young people's feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights, and social justice. TYPF ensures that young people have the information, capacity, and opportunities to inform and lead the development and implementation of programmes and policies that impact their lives and are recognised as skilled and aware leaders of social change.

***The Woke Vocab** has been curated by Aakarsha Jagga during her communications internship with The YP Foundation (September 2021–March 2022).*

Aakarsha is a Political Science student at the University of Delhi, and is really passionate about the intersections of gender and society. She conceptualised The Woke Vocab with an aim to make young people understand the key terms relating to the four themes, in order to get over the stigma, and initiate a conversation around the same!

Acknowledgements

The YP Foundation acknowledges the contribution of all the young advocates who have been associated with us over the years for their invaluable perspective and insights.

Special thanks to the TYPF Communications Team – Rithvik Upadhyaya, Shannon Mathew, and Vineeta Rana.

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