

# LGBTQ Umbrella

If you could all turn to the page with the umbrella image on it, we want to explain what the LGBTQ letters represent, how they refer to different identities, and why we often use the phrase “umbrella term.” When we discuss “LGBTQ” people, one thing we generally forget to make clear what, exactly, those letters mean. For example, there is no such thing as an “LGBTQ” person. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer are all different labels, representing different identities. Importantly, they are words that relate to folks’ experiences of gender and sexual identities -- two things we often confuse for being one and the same.

LGB all represent sexual identities. And the T represents a gender identity. And the Q — sometimes referring to “Questioning,” but generally meaning “Queer” — is often used as an umbrella term, in an affirming and positive way, to lump all marginalized sexualities and genders together.

We’d like to draw your attention to the umbrella handle itself, because while these identities are all often grouped together, we’re talking about distinctly different aspects of our humanity and experience: sexuality and gender.

When we say sexual identities, sexualities, or sexual orientations, we are talking about are the ways we categorize and define who we are attracted to. When we “gender identities” we are talking about the ways we categorize and define our genders.

So, to recap: on one side we have queer sexualities (Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual, to name a few), and on the other we have queer genders (Transgender, to name one), and we often group all of these under the umbrella term of “queer.”

# LGBTQ Umbrella Handout

## LGBTQ is an acronym

meant to encompass a whole bunch of diverse **sexualities** and **genders**. Folks often refer to the Q (standing for “queer”\*) as an **umbrella term**, under which live a whole bunch of identities. This is helpful because **lesbian, gay,** and **bisexual** aren’t the only marginalized sexualities, and **transgender\*** isn’t the only gender identity. In fact, there are many more of both!



\* The “Q” sometimes stands for “questioning” and “transgender” is often thought of as an umbrella term itself (sometimes abbreviated “trans”; or “trans\*” in writing). Lots of asterisks, lots of exceptions, because hey – we’re talking about **lots** of different folks with different lived experiences to be inclusive of.