

What is gay identity?

Gay identity might mean something different for each person who identifies that way. The easiest way to understand the word "gay" is as a term that generally refers to a man who experiences only romantic or physical attraction to men.

REMEMBER:

Everybody has the right to self-identify! No matter what definition you've learned, each person may define themselves differently.

The term "gay" tends to be used to describe any man who is solely attracted to other men, and is often used instead of saying "homosexual men". Gay has become a word that a lot of people use to describe the entire LGBTQ+ community.

If you want to learn about gay identity, here are some words to understand. Keep in mind that these are just the way we understand these words; each person who identifies this way might understand a term differently:

STRAIGHT MAN

a cisgender or transgender man who is sexually or romantically attracted to women.

GAY MAN

a cisgender or transgender man who is sexually, or romantically attracted to men.

QUEER MAN

a cisgender or transgender man who is not straight and who identifies with this term





BEAR

a queer man who expresses himself in a way that is representative of a traditional, rugged masculinity

TWINK *(some people consider this word a slur)*

a queer man who expresses himself in a way that is representative of a traditional, young femininity

Check us out online!

-  @rainbowcoalitionyk
-  @rainbowcoalitionyk
-  Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife
-  www.rainbowcoalitionyk.org

Talk to us!

Rainbow Coalition of YK
867-444-RCYK (7295)
5112 52nd Street
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 1T6

Send us mail!

Rainbow Coalition of YK
P.O. Box 1751 Stn. Main
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2P3



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Things to Know:

- Not all men who are attracted to other men are “gay”. Men who are attracted to other men can be bisexual, pansexual or other forms of polysexual.
- Not all gay men are the same; there are stereotypes that gay men act really feminine, or that gay men dress a certain way. Gay men are really diverse, and it’s important to consider that!
- Some gay men have had meaningful relationships with women that could have included sex, love or romance. Sexuality is fluid, and it’s important to remember that some gay men might not have always identified as gay.
- Both transgender men and cisgender men can be gay. Being gay isn’t related to the body you have, but rather the gender that you identify with.
- Unfortunately, a lot of the spaces that exist for gay and queer men to meet each other are really focused on drinking, drugs, and partying. This is especially important to keep in mind when we consider that queer people experience higher rates of addictions and substance abuse.

Am I gay?

The important thing to remember is that you don’t have to use certain words to describe yourself, just because that’s the “box” you fit into, but here are just some of the things that might apply to you if you’re a part of the gay community:

- first off, you identify as a man and
 - you find yourself wanting to kiss, hug, touch or have sex with other men but never with women; or
 - you think about dating, marrying or spending your life with another man, but never with a woman.

Discrimination & Oppression:

Gay men tend to experience both homophobia and heterosexism.

Homophobia is the fear, hatred, or intolerance of gay or lesbian people.

Heterosexism is the systemic oppression of people who are not straight or heterosexual.

Homophobia is...

Homophobia is ways that individual people might act that imply that being lesbian or gay is a bad thing.

An example of homophobia is when a guy is called a “fag” as an insult.

Another example of homophobia is when a person beats up a man because he’s gay.

Heterosexism is...

Heterosexism is ways that society has made being straight or heterosexual seem “normal”, and everything else seem “bad” or “weird”.

An example of heterosexism is when gay men aren’t allowed to donate blood because of the assumption that they might have HIV or AIDS.

Another example is the lack of diversity or representation of gay men in television, in movies or in books.

RCYK 201:

“201” sections are meant to provide you with a bit extra. It’s helpful if you have a little background on queer and trans issues.

Homophobia 201:

It’s important to think about the way in which people experience homophobia differently depending on other aspects of their identity. For example, an Indigenous gay man is going to experience homophobia that is twisted up with racism and colonialism too. This experience is going to look different.

It’s also worth discussing how gay men experience homophobia differently than lesbian women. This is because our patriarchal society values masculinity over femininity, and gay men are considered “feminine” by our society’s standards, whereas lesbian women are considered “masculine” by our society’s standards. Because of this, gay men and lesbian women experience homophobia really differently.

Support & Help

If you’re a gay man, and you need some support, don’t hesitate to give us a shout.

We support all gay men, no matter the age, gender assigned at birth, race, or where they live in the NWT.

You can reach us by:

- calling us at 867-444-RCYK (7295)
- emailing us at info@rainbowcoalitionyk.org
- finding us online by searching “Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife”
- visiting us in person at 5112 52nd Street in Yellowknife.