

## Glossary for Women in Astronomy IV

Sources for these definitions are listed under ‘**References**,’ below. Some of the text from these sources has been edited for grammar, clarity, conciseness, or grace of expression.

### General

**Accomplice:** a person whose actions are informed by, directed by, and often coordinated with leaders who are People of Color, LGBT+, and/or members of other oppressed groups. Accomplices actively listen with respect, and they understand that oppressed people are not monolithic in their tactics and beliefs. <sup>[1]</sup>, <sup>[2]</sup>

**Ally:** A person who is not (most) directly impacted by an issue but works in solidarity with those who are most directly impacted by the issue. Allies' primary role is to educate themselves, educate their community, and lend their support to the leadership of those most directly impacted by the issue. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Bias:** A positive or negative orientation relative to something or someone, often informed by previous experience. Biases can be rational. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Harassment:** unwelcome or offensive conduct in the workplace that: (a) is based on sex (including sexual orientation, pregnancy, and gender identity), race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, and/or genetic information; and (b) is detrimental to an employee’s work performance, professional advancement, and/or mental health. This includes, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, undue attention, physical assaults or threats, unwelcome touching or contact, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, constant or unwelcome questions about an individual’s identity, and offensive objects or pictures. <sup>[4]</sup>

**Intersectionality:** the study of: how race, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity and inequality affect social life and social structures in interaction with each other; and how various forms of oppression can be challenged. <sup>[5]</sup>

**Minoritized population:** A community of people whose access to institutional and structural power has been severely limited regardless of the size of the population. As a result, the community is disenfranchised and disempowered by the majoritized population. Also referred to as a subordinated population. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Microaggressions:** Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. <sup>[6]</sup>

**Oppression:** A system for gaining, abusing and maintaining structural and institutional power for the benefit of a dominant class. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Prejudice:** An assumption about something or someone not rooted in personal experience; prejudice is informed by stereotype rather than experience. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Privilege:** The unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Stereotype:** Trait and/or characteristic assumed to be true of all members of a social group. Stereotypes focus on one aspect of people's identity to the exclusion of their full humanity. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Workplace Bullying:** repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that: threatens, humiliates, or intimidates; Interferes with work; or Is verbally abusive. <sup>[7]</sup>

## Sex and Gender

**Bisexuality:** Sexual orientation characterized by romantic and sexual attraction to both men and women. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Cisgender or Cis:** Term referring to a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman is considered to be cisgender. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Gay:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender. "Gay" often refers to a male-identified person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to some other males. While the term can be and is often used by lesbians <sup>[8]</sup>, "gay" should not be used as an umbrella term to refer to all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; the term "LGBT" is more accurate and inclusive. <sup>[9]</sup>

**Gender:** Roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men and women. It is distinct from sex, which is defined at birth and based on physical characteristics. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Gender Binary:** A socially constructed view of gender as consisting solely of two categories, "male" and "female." <sup>[9]</sup>

**Gender Expression:** How people represent or express themselves in relation to gender — through the clothes they wear, their hairstyle, or their mannerisms. Gender expression may not always match sex or gender identity and can change from situation to situation or from day to day. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Gender Identity:** Individuals' private sense and personal experience of their gender. One's gender identity need not be in line with one's sex. Most people find that their gender identity lies

somewhere between the extremes of male and female; some individuals do not identify with either gender. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Gender Minority:** An individual in a situation in which their gender is not as widely represented as others. For example, a trans woman is a gender minority. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Genderqueer:** An umbrella term for gender identities outside the gender binary and/or not conforming to the gender assigned at birth. "Non-binary" and "gender nonconforming" are common synonyms. <sup>[8,9]</sup>

**Heterosexuality:** Sexual orientation characterized by romantic and sexual attraction to individuals of another gender. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Homosexuality:** Sexual orientation characterized by romantic and sexual attraction to individuals of the same gender. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Intersex:** A sex assigned at birth for persons exhibiting physical characteristics of both males and females, usually due to variations in prenatal development. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Lesbian:** A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women. <sup>[8]</sup>

**LGBT+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. The '+' recognizes that some people's personal identities do not fit neatly into the LGBT constructs. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Out (of the Closet):** Openly identifying as LGBT+. Someone may be out to some people but not to others (e.g., out at school but not to family members, or vice versa). The decision to come out is highly personal. No one should be outed without explicit prior agreement, as this can be harmful and even dangerous. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Gender Pronoun:** The pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about that individual. If you are unsure, simply ask, "What are your preferred gender pronouns?" <sup>[8]</sup>

**Queer:** A former term of abuse that has been reclaimed by some members of the LGBT+ community as an identity that may be used in place of or in conjunction with other identities from the LGBT+ spectrum. Like all reclaimed words, it should be used with caution by persons outside of the community. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Questioning:** An individual who is not yet certain of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Questioning is considered to be a legitimate identity in itself. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Sex:** A category, such as male, female, or intersex, assigned at birth based on physical characteristics. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. <sup>[7]</sup>

**Sexism:** A system of oppression that benefits male-identified people at the expense of female-identified people. <sup>[9]</sup>

**Sexual Minority:** A person in a situation where their sexual orientation is not as widely represented as others. For example, a gay man in physics is a sexual minority. <sup>[8]</sup>

**Transgender (sometimes Trans or Trans\*):** Term referring to a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a trans woman is someone who was assigned the male sex at birth but whose gender identity is female. <sup>[8]</sup>

## Race

**Ethnicity:** Membership in a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. Ethnic groups are self-formed and identified while racial groupings are externally imposed. <sup>[3,10]</sup>

**Eurocentrism:** The utilization of European cultural standards as universals that all should be judged by or as as the benchmark of humanity, culture, truth, virtue, style, beauty, civility, knowledge, and ethics. The process and product of the cultural default of Whiteness. <sup>[3]</sup>

**People of Color:** People belonging to to non-White racial or ethnic groups. <sup>[11]</sup> Also: women of color, men of color.

**Race:** A group of people of common ancestry, distinguished from others by physical characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture or facial features. (This definition refers to the common usage of the term when dealing with human rights matters. It is irrelevant to any debate about the relationship of phenotypic characteristics of individuals and groups of individuals to other characteristics.) The term is also used to designate social categories into which societies divide people according to such characteristics. <sup>[11]</sup>

**Racialization:** The process by which we all are shaped by racial grouping or by racially oriented structural policies/practices, institutional/organizational cultures, and interpersonal interactions. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Racial Profiling:** The systematic targeting, surveillance, policing, and harassment of people of color based on the assumption that people of color are more likely to be criminals than White people. <sup>[3]</sup>

**Racism:** Any individual action or institutional practice which treats people differently because of their color or ethnicity. This distinction is often used to justify discrimination. <sup>[11]</sup>

**White Supremacy:** A racist ideology centered upon the belief, and promotion of the belief, that white people are superior in certain characteristics, traits, and attributes to people of other racial backgrounds and that therefore white people should politically, economically and socially rule non-white people. The term is also typically used to describe a political ideology that perpetuates and maintains the social, political, historical and/or industrial domination by white people. In academic usage, a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy a structural advantage (privilege) over other ethnic groups, both at a collective and an individual level. <sup>[12]</sup>

**Whiteness:** A position of structural advantage, of race privilege, from which white people look at themselves, at others, and at society; also, a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed by them. <sup>[13]</sup> See: Eurocentrism, above

## Disability

**Ableism:** A system of oppression that includes discrimination and social prejudice against people with intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities, their exclusion, and the valuing of people and groups that do not have disabilities. <sup>[6]</sup>

**Accessibility:** extent to which a facility or a resource is readily entered and used by individuals with or without disabilities. <sup>[14]</sup>

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## References

<sup>[1]</sup> <http://www.whiteaccomplices.org/>

<sup>[2]</sup> Sommer Foster, "I stopped calling myself an LGBT ally. I became an accomplice," <http://www.electablog.com/2015/12/guest-post-i-stopped-calling-myself-an-lgbt-ally-i-became-an-accomplice.html>

<sup>[3]</sup> [http://www.ywboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MISS\\_VIT\\_BLD-SUPP-FOR-MISS\\_TRN-AND-DEVEL\\_SJ-GLOSSARY\\_MARCH\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ywboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MISS_VIT_BLD-SUPP-FOR-MISS_TRN-AND-DEVEL_SJ-GLOSSARY_MARCH_2016.pdf)

<sup>[4]</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace: Report of Co-Chairs Chai R. Feldblum and Victoria A. Lipnic, [https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task\\_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf](https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf), p. 3

<sup>[5]</sup> P. R. Grzanka ed. 2014, *Intersectionality: A Foundations and Frontiers Reader* (Boulder: Westview Press), pp. xiii, xv

<sup>[6]</sup> *Astronomy in Color*, <http://astronomyincolor.blogspot.com/2015/09/ground-rules-some-vocabulary-words.html>

[7] *AGU: Harassment in the Sciences*, <https://harassment.agu.org/homepage/types-of-harassment/>

[8] <https://sgma.aas.org/sites/sgma.aas.org/files/BestPracticesGuide.pdf>

[9] GLSEN's Safe Space Kit

[https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit%202016\\_0.pdf](https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit%202016_0.pdf)

[10] *New Oxford American Dictionary* (Apple, Inc. 2014; also

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195392883.001.0001/acref-9780195392883>)

[11] The Canadian Race Relations Foundation, <http://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1>

[12] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White\\_supremacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_supremacy)

[13] DiAngelo, R. 2012, "Nothing to add: A Challenge to White Silence in Racial Discussions," *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege*, 2, 1, <http://www.wpcjournal.com/article/view/10100>

[14] <http://sja.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/social-justice-terminology.pdf>