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explainity explains: LGBTIQ

Sex, gender and gender identity. Similar terms that mean very different things. And then there is this complicated acronym LGBTIQ. But let's have a closer look: Sex refers to the biological gender that we are born with. Gender in turn describes how people reflect on and express themselves and their perceived gender identity. This is also referred to as the "social gender". And to cover all those aspects we use the term LGBTIQ.

The first three letters say something about sexual orientation. "L" stands for lesbian; they are women who are attracted by other women. "G" stands for gay, they are men who like other men. And the "B" stands for bisexual. They are people who are attracted to both women and men.

The "T" stands for trans which revolves around gender identity. It's bases on the idea that gender and sex are different. People are born with a biological sex and are then assigned the attribute "girl" or "boy". However, for some people these binary attributes are not right. They know they have a different gender identity from their sex and want to have it accepted by society. So, if the biological sex is different from the gender of a person, we speak of a transwoman or transman respectively.

However, there are people for whom these two attributes are simply not sufficient, who feel neither as "male" nor "female" and find their own identity. The correct term here is "non-binary" — and the variety is as broad as there are people on earth.

The "I" stands for intersexual. Some people are born with no definitive biological sex. Sometimes intersexual kids have surgery to adapt their sex and are hence defined a specific sex. However, this is a very controversial intrusion into the personal physicality of intersexual people.

The umbrella term queer from which the letter "Q" derives covers people that fit anywhere on spectrum of sexual orientation, sex, gender and identity, and the LGBTI community in general. Because of the rights of intersexual people some governments recently, in addition to male and female, added a third gender: divers.

Society re-determines what is male, female or divers on a daily basis. Between these poles there is a plethora of ways to express and live one's own gender identity.