

## Safe Zone 201: Race, Gender, and Sexuality Vocabulary

*The following list of terms and definition are meant to shape our understanding of the intersections of race and gender and sexual diversity. There are also colloquial terms here that are used in queer and transgender of color communities and culture. Colloquialisms or “gay slang” terms like “throwing shade” or “werk” are often appropriated in mainstream media without attribution to the queer and trans people of color and communities that created them. It’s important to respect the groups who use these terms and their histories as we learn these terms.*

1. **Being shady or throwing shade:** Underhanded or indirect actions or someone’s attempt to undermine a person without being overt; to call judges shady is to accuse them of judging unfairly or in a biased manner. I can also be an indirect critique of someone (*from Marlon M. Bailey’s Butch Queens up in Pumps: Gender Performance and Ballroom Culture in Detroit*).
2. **Tees:** Gossip (Bailey).
3. **Slay:** To beat your competitors (Bailey).
4. **Trade:** A masculine, male-bodied [sic] man (cisgender male) who identifies as straight; in the Ballroom gender system, *trade* is another term for the “men who do not identify as gay” category (Bailey).
5. **Houses:** family-like structures that are configured social rather than biologically. Most houses are named after *haute couture* designers, but some are named after mottos and symbols that express qualities and aims with which the leaders want a house to be associated (Bailey).
6. **Ball events:** Also known as balls. House parents recruit, socialize, and prepare their protégés to compete successfully in categories based on the deployment of performative gender and sexual identities, vogue, and theatrical performances, and the effective presentation of fashion and physical attributes (Bailey).
7. **Colorblindness:** the process by which a person attempts to ignore the existence of race or skin color in service of seeing past race and just seeing the person. This deemphasizing of race, however, ignores the real, lived experience of people of color in the US and ignores their experience (Avarna Group).
8. **Ethnicity:** a group of people that identify with one another based on shared culture (Avarna Group).
9. **People of Color:** include U.S. citizens who do not identify as only white or Caucasian under the current U.S. Census ethnicity categories. This is the preferred and most inclusive term, currently (Avarna Group) .
10. **QPOC / QTPOC – abbr.:** initialisms that stand for queer people of color and queer and/or trans people of color (Safe Zone Project, SZP).

11. **same gender loving (SGL)** – *adj.*: sometimes used by some members of the African-American or Black community to express an non-straight sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent (SZP).
12. **transition / transitioning** – *noun, verb*: referring to the process of a transgender person changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning) (SZP).
13. **coming out** – **1** *noun*: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). **2** *verb* : the process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others (SZP).
14. **down low** – *adj.*: typically referring to men who identify as straight but who secretly have sex with men. Down low (or DL) originated in, and is most commonly used by, communities of color (SZP).
15. **biphobia** – *noun*: a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express toward bisexual individuals (SZP).
16. **homophobia** – *noun*: an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQ people (SZP).
17. **transphobia** – *noun*: the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans\* people, the trans\* community, or gender ambiguity (SZP).
18. **stud** – *noun*: most commonly used to indicate a Black/African-American and/or Latina masculine lesbian/queer woman. Also known as ‘butch’ or ‘aggressive’ (SZP).
19. **Respectability politics** or **politics of respectability**: is a form of moralistic discourse used by some prominent figures, leaders or academics who are members of various marginalized groups. Proponents of this moralistic discourse may be attempting to portray their personal social values as being continuous and compatible with dominant values (Wikipedia).
20. **White supremacy**: The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions (Racial Equity Tools).
21. **Misogynoir**: is misogyny directed towards black women where race and gender both play roles in bias (Wikipedia).
22. **Indigenous**: Also known as first peoples, aboriginal peoples, native peoples, or autochthonous peoples, indigenous people are ethnic groups who are descended from and

identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently (Avarna Group).

23. **Intersectionality:** A term coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality originally was created to account for the ways in which black women experience both racism and sexism. The term has now expanded to account for the ways that an individual can experience multiple forms of oppression based on multiple marginalized identities. A salient quote on intersectionality is Audre Lorde's quote "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."(Avarna Group)
24. **Anti-blackness:** a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues (Racial Equity Tools).
25. **Anti-racism:** the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts (Racial Equity Tools).