



REPORTING ON THE
JAMAICAN
LGBT
COMMUNITY

A Guide for Jamaican and
International Journalists





J-FLAG is a human rights and social justice organisation which advocates for the rights, livelihood and well-being of LGBT people in Jamaica.

Our work seeks to build a Jamaican society that respects and protects the rights of everyone. Our board and staff are committed to promoting social change, empowering the LGBT community, and building tolerance for and acceptance of LGBT people.

Written by:

Elton Johnson

Edited by:

Glenroy Murray

Jaevion Nelson

Design:

Dandre Foster

Rainbow House, PO Box 1152,
Kingston 8, Jamaica W.I.

876-667-6202 | 876-875-2328

 www.equalityjamaica.org

 [equalityja](https://www.facebook.com/equalityja)

  [@equalityja](https://www.instagram.com/equalityja)

 [youtube.com/equalityJA](https://www.youtube.com/equalityJA)

Contents

Introduction by Jodi-Ann Quarrie	3
Glossary of Terms	4-7
LGBT Visibility and the Media	8
Beyond the Buggery Law	9-10
Language and Covering the LGBT Community	11-13
Defamatory Language and Covering the LGBT Community	14
Names, Pronoun Usage and Descriptions	15
LGBT Representation in Caricatures and Illustrations	16
Moving Beyond Superlatives and Exaggerations	17
Additional Contacts	18
References	19
Notes	20

Introduction

Fair, Accurate and Inclusive



Jodi-Ann Quarrie
Human Rights Lawyer and
Radio Host

The media has an awesome and incredible power. The power to change minds, change hearts, and change narratives. The power to inform, educate, and inspire. This media guide, *Reporting on the Jamaican LGBT Community: A Guide for Jamaican and International Journalists* from J-FLAG seeks to ensure that the media get it right when they discuss the stories of LGBT Jamaicans and the issues that affect them.

It would have been enough if J-FLAG asked for the media to improve their coverage of stories affecting the LGBT community in Jamaica, highlighting areas where they thought there were deficiencies. They have, however, gone further. J-FLAG, an advocacy and support group for LGBT people in the country has created a guide to help the media both locally and internationally. Sometimes the reporting deficiencies are not intended to harm but they do. This *Guide* seeks to address those deficiencies.

If a television host, radio presenter, or a newspaper reporter does not know how to approach the coverage of LGBT Jamaicans in a holistic and non-discriminatory manner, this *Guide* will not only serve to inform them of how to tackle issues but also have them challenge assumptions within their worldview. When stories use derogatory words for LGBT people that are meant to shame and humiliate them, it is sometimes a reflection of the cultural acceptance or skewed viewpoint that is merely adopted into the news story.



Media coverage, however, can transform the perceptions of the public and the world concerning LGBT Jamaicans. This *Guide* asks journalists and media practitioners to reject the “single story” of the lived realities of LGBT Jamaicans and gives them tools to do so. From explaining the distinction between gender identity and gender expression, to helping those who speak to the public to use language that is thoughtful and appropriate as opposed to hurtful and damaging, this *Guide* allows the LGBT community to influence the way issues are discussed and presented.

The *Guide* is also careful to be informative, not condescending. Sometimes media practitioners just are not aware of the distinctions that exist within the LGBT community, or are not sensitive to the fact that the use of particular words play into harmful stereotypes. This is also true for the selection of stories as well. The *Guide* challenges the stories that are chosen for publication, challenging media houses to widen the scope of the visibility of LGBT Jamaicans.

At the end of reading this document, narratives of Jamaica’s LGBT community will be richer and more inclusive because of the work of J-FLAG and their belief that you, a media practitioner, are willing to be fair in your coverage and careful in your portrayal of Jamaica’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, and transgender community.

This is the awesome and incredible power of the media, the power to change how Jamaican LGBT people are seen in the country and across the world. Through this *Guide*, you can inform, educate, and inspire shifts in both the language and perception of LGBT Jamaicans and change minds, change hearts, and change narratives about what it means to be LGBT in Jamaica, Land We Love.

Glossary of Terms



Sexual Orientation

The accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman.

Gay

The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., gay man, gay people). Sometimes lesbian is the preferred term when speaking about gay women exclusively.

Lesbian

A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women.

Bisexual (or Bi)

A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual.

Queer

An adjective used to describe sexual orientation that is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g. queer person, queer woman). Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting. Some people may use queer, or more commonly gender-queer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression.

LGBT

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. In Jamaica, we use this form most popularly. However, LGBT is a condensation of a longer acronym, LGBTQQIAAP, which means Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and/or Aromantic, Ally, and Pansexual. This form is not popularly used but using LGBT is taken to mean all.

Intersex

A term that describes people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female. Avoid the outdated and derogatory term "hermaphrodite." While some people can be intersex and also identify as transgender, the two are separate and should not be conflated.

Asexual

An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction. A person can also be aromantic, meaning they do not experience romantic attraction.

Heterosexual

An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. The word straight is popularly used.

Homosexual

Clinical term for persons with same-sex attraction that is not popularly used. Popular international media entities such as the Associated Press, New York Times and Washington Post restrict their usage of the term.

Homophobia

Fear of people attracted to the same sex. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBT people.

Biphobia

Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

Coming Out

A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a LGBT identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. People may come out privately, choosing not to share with the media and thus the wider public, but choose to do so with the persons in their lives such as family, friends and work colleagues.



Out

A person who self-identifies as LGBT in their personal, public, and/or professional lives.

Openly Gay

Describes people who self-identify as gay in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. Also openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender, openly queer.

Closeted

Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one's job, or other concerns. Closeted is often associated with sensationalism. It is best not used when referring to a specific person, especially in the media, as this would be equivalent to making suggestions about someone's sexuality.

Outing

The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent.

HFLE

An acronym for Health and Family Life Education, which is a comprehensive, life skills-based programme, implemented in select high schools across Jamaica and focuses on the development of the whole person.

The content of the curriculum is organized around four thematic areas:

- 1. Sexuality and Sexual Health
- 2. Self and Interpersonal Relationships

3. Eating and Fitness

4. Managing the Environment

The most sensitive theme of the HFLE program is undoubtedly the "Sexuality and Sexual Health" which include HIV & AIDS education. This is the aspect of the curriculum that comes under most scrutiny in the media. It is important to understand that this thematic area of HFLE It is designed to help students to acquire knowledge about sexuality but more so to develop positive attitudes and helpful skills that enable healthy sexual growth and development.

Sex

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy (this is what is written on the birth certificate). A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

Gender

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, attributes and opportunities that any society considers appropriate for girls and boys, and women and men. Gender interacts with, but is different from, the various categories of biological sex.

Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two. Unlike gender expression (see next) gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behaviour, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, a transgender person seeks to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender.

Transsexual

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have undergone gender affirming surgery or on hormones. Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender.

Trans

Used as shorthand to mean transgender or transsexual.

Transgender man

People who were assigned female at birth but identify and live as a man may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans man. (Note: trans man, not "transman.") Some may also use FTM, an abbreviation for



female-to-male. Some may prefer to simply be called male, without any modifier.

Transgender woman

People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans woman. (Note: trans woman, not "transwoman.") Some may also use MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called female, without any modifier.

Drag Queen

Drag queens are men who dress like women for the purpose of providing entertainment, including professionally. Be aware of the differences between transgender women, cross-dressers, and drag queens.

Cross-dresser

While anyone may wear clothes associated with a different sex, the term cross-dresser is typically used to refer to men who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with women. Those men typically identify as heterosexual. This activity is a form of gender expression and not done for entertainment purposes. Cross-dressers do not wish to permanently change their sex or live full-time as women.

Transition

The process of transition for a trans person can include some or all of the following:

- a. personal, medical, and legal steps;
- b. telling one's family, friends, and co-workers;
- c. using a different name and new pronouns;

d. dressing differently;

e. changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents;

f. hormone therapy;

g. and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery.

The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person.

Cisgender

A term used to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-." Because cisgender people form the majority, there is a proclivity towards using the terms "normal" or "regular" when referring to people who are cis in comparative contexts with people who are trans. However, cis or cisgender is preferred because both "normal" and "regular" create stigma against trans people who, by their use, are seen as the opposite of "normal" or "regular."

Gender Non-Conforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming. Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional – that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be

used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

Non-binary and/or Genderqueer

Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

Gender Pronouns

Gender pronouns refer to the set of third-person pronouns that an individual requires that others use in order to identify that person's gender (or gender neutrality). These include:

- 1. He/Him/His
- 1. She/Her/Hers
- 1. They/Them/Their

Asking and correctly using someone's pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity. When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above). Outside of They/Them/Their, there are many other gender-neutral pronouns in use, however, in Jamaica, They/Them/Their is most popularly used. Note also, that some persons will be fine with more than one group of pronouns being used to describe them. The best way to navigate gender pronouns is to throw out all assumptions and simply ask.



Deadname

A deadname is the birth name of someone who has changed it. The term is especially used in the LGBT community by people who are transgender and elect to go by their chosen name instead of their given name.

Deadnaming

Deadnaming is the use of the birth or other former name (i.e. a name that is "dead") of a transgender or non-binary person without their consent. Deadnaming is not always intentional. Intentional deadnaming, however, is sometimes used to "aggressively dismiss and reject" a gender identity and the name that accompanies it, and is considered by some as deeply disrespectful.



LGBT Visibility and the Media



The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Stereotypes, especially those regarding the LGBT community, do more harm than good, even positive stereotypes. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie notes “[T]he problem with stereotypes is... that they are incomplete.” The story of one becomes the story of all. Even more damaging is when these stereotypes are magnified using media platforms accessible to large audiences. LGBT Jamaicans become reduced to the actions of the visible few. For example, a group of LGBT Jamaicans experiencing homelessness who are widely known as the “gully queens” become the international face of what it means to be an LGBT Jamaican—dejected, mistreated and abandoned. Locally, it positions LGBT Jamaicans as the scourge of society. In both instances, this potentially reinforces negative assumptions about Jamaica, its treatment of LGBT citizens and also the status of LGBT Jamaicans.

It is important that accurate and broadened representation of LGBT Jamaicans becomes a priority of the media. An important part of this is language. The main goal of this media guide is to provide journalists, bloggers, vloggers, broadcasters, reporters, and other media practitioners with a useful tool that can guide the process of representing LGBT Jamaicans and issues in the media in a more holistic way.

It is always important to understand as well that not all members of the LGBT community share the same level of comfort with visibility. It is important that the media practice responsible journalism and work from place of consent when it comes to working with LGBT individuals outside of news reporting purposes. Even within news reporting, a person’s sexual or gender identity is not always relevant and need not be reported on if its relevance is low or questionable. Responsible journalism involves recognizing that and acting upon it.

Important rules of thumb when it comes to reporting on LGBT Jamaicans include:

Diversify representation.

Get a wide range of voices that can effectively represent the LGBT community. It is also important to showcase LGBT Jamaicans discussing topics not specific to LGBT issues.

Ensure minority voices are heard.

The LGBT community includes many identities. It’s important that gay men or lesbians don’t dominate discourse on the whole community. It’s important to seek out and to represent transgender, intersex, and asexual voices.

Do research. Research is always important.

Reading this guide is a great first step on the research front. Feel free to read additional LGBT resources as you develop your stories and features or reach out to individuals or organizations (including those on our Additional Contacts

page) that might be able to help. Review resource materials produced by local LGBT organizations. Visit our website to view our published resources: <http://www.equalityjamaica.org/resources.html>

Resist the temptation to uncritically repeat dominant narratives.

Narratives such as LGBT issues are about the imposition of foreign culture, LGBT couples are inherently violent and human rights are a hurdle to development are very common and very harmful stereotypical narratives that permeate Jamaica. In media reporting, it is important to question whether a report uncritically reproduces those narratives or whether there is actual evidence to support the presentation of these narratives within an article. If it is the former then the reporting could be considered baseless and repetitive at best, but also a contributor to harmful stereotypes that exist about the community.

Create safe space for LGBT Journalists in the media.

Focus on creating safe spaces so that LGBT writers, editors and journalists can start to feel empowered to challenge the existing modes of reporting.

Beyond the Buggery Law



“It is rather unfortunate that when there is discourse about LGBT rights in our country, it almost exclusively focuses on the need to repeal or amend the buggery law found in Sections 76-79 of the archaic Offences Against the Person Act. Consequently, political will to address the myriad challenges, such as homophobic bullying, inability to secure justice when their rights have been infringed, and employment and housing discrimination, among others faced by the LGBT community, is assessed on this basis. Regrettably, without realising, many gay-rights activists create the impression that this is the panacea for improving the rights of LGBT people. One of my lesbian friends says “buggery needs to be buggeded.”

Jaevion Nelson, Executive Director, JFLAG

Locally and internationally there has been great emphasis placed on the presence of the Buggery Law which criminalizes the sexual expression of males within the LGBT community. Internationally, there is also some focus placed on Jamaica as a jurisdiction that neither allows or recognizes same-sex marriages. This focus detracts heavily from other areas of legislation that greatly impact the ability of LGBT Jamaicans to navigate daily life and enjoy the same rights as other citizens.

Below are a list of legislative areas, not limited to the Buggery Law, where emphasis can be placed by the media in discussions of the rights of LGBT Jamaicans and the law:

Charter of Rights

There are 19 rights enumerated in the Charter for Jamaican citizens. S.13(12) saves certain laws, including the Buggery Law, from challenge and section 18 recognises only heterosexual relationships.

Trans Recognition

Trans persons are not recognised in law by virtue of the rulings in *Corbett v Corbett* and *R v Tan*. Trans recognition legislation is needed.

Citizenship

Citizenship cannot be passed to the same-sex partners of Jamaicans married abroad.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

The Equality clauses in ss. 13(3)(g) & (h) may give some protection to LGBT persons but the non-discrimination clause excludes them.

Sexual Offences

The offences of buggery, rape and previous sexual assault give less protection to sexual assault in same sex instances.

Justifiable Homicide & Provocation

These laws justify homophobic and transphobic violence and should be challenged constitutionally because of the rights they breach.

Family Law

Same-sex couples are excluded from the benefits these laws guarantee, which are protected by section 18 of the Charter.

Succession

Same-sex couples are excluded from laws dealing with inheritance, which are protected by section 18 of the charter.

Trust Law

Same-sex couples can have property shared between them dealt with under trust law, however, in limited circumstances.

Law Consequent on Marriage

Same sex couples are excluded from laws related to evidence and defamation which privilege married couples. The law related to undue influence recognise these couples, nonetheless.



LGBT Minors

Issues that particularly affect LGBT Minors are not addressed in law/policy. HFLE is not evenly implemented and “uncontrollable child” cases may put LGBT Minors at risk.

Education

Discriminatory rules are adopted by some schools and there is an absence of or failure to implement anti-bullying policies which acknowledge and treat with homophobic attitudes.

Employment

There are no broad anti-discrimination provisions in employment laws, and workman’s legislation excludes same-sex couples. Anti-discrimination legislation is needed.

Housing

The vagueness in the Rent Restriction Act creates a space in which discrimination can occur.

Incidental Areas

Pension Schemes, the Insurance Act and the Fatal Accidents Act exclude persons in same-sex unions. Section 76-79 of the Offences Against the Person Act create legal grounds for disqualification in several professions.

Some key areas of focus for JFLAG in terms of legislative advocacy include:

1. Advocacy for the removal of sections 13(12) and 18 of Jamaica’s Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms.
2. Advocacy for amendments to the buggery law and the Sexual Offences Act.
3. Advocacy for amendments to family law statutes to include same-sex couples.
4. Advocacy for challenges to the law on Provocation and Justifiable Homicide.
5. Advocacy for Trans recognition legislation.
6. Advocacy for Anti-Discrimination legislation to prohibit discrimination in various sectors.
7. Advocacy for anti-discrimination policies related to education, childcare and health.



Language and Covering the LGBT Community



Using accurate and respectful language is the cornerstone of effective representation of the LGBT community.

Here's a table which simplifies through categorization various terms used to describe the LGBT community. The offensive column may describe pejorative terms as well as terms that have become negative because of their popular use. While preferred provides easy alternatives to these offensive words.

Offensive	Alternatives
<p>Homosexual</p> <p>While this word isn't innately offensive, it's popular use by anti-LGBT extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered makes it culturally unsuitable.</p>	<p>Gay, Gay man, Lesbian, Gay person/people</p>
<p>Homosexual relations/relationship, Homosexual couple, Homosexual sex, etc.</p> <p>Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-LGBT extremists to denigrate LGBT people, couples, and relationships.</p>	<p>Relationship, Couple (or, if necessary, Gay / Lesbian / Same-sex couple), Sex, etc.</p> <p>As a rule, try to avoid labelling an activity, emotion, or relationship gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship "straight" if engaged in by someone of another orientation.</p>
<p>Sexual preference</p> <p>The term "sexual preference" is typically used to suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be "cured" or changed.</p>	<p>Sexual orientation or Orientation</p> <p>Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/ or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer people, as well as straight men and women.</p>
<p>Gay lifestyle, Homosexual lifestyle, or Transgender lifestyle</p> <p>There is no single LGBT lifestyle. LGBT people are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrases "gay lifestyle," "homosexual lifestyle," and "transgender lifestyle" are used to denigrate LGBT people. There are no appropriate ways to refer to a "gay lifestyle." If you mean to refer to the "experiences of the LGBT community" then explicitly state that.</p>	



Offensive	Alternatives
<p>Admitted homosexual or Avowed homosexual</p> <p>Dated terms used to describe those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.</p>	<p>Out gay man, Out lesbian, Out queer person</p> <p>You may also simply describe the person as being out, for example: "Diana King is an out Reggae artiste from Jamaica."</p>
<p>Gay agenda or Homosexual agenda</p> <p>Notions of a so-called "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBT extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal rights and opportunity for LGBT people as sinister.</p>	<p>Challenge with accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., "inclusion in existing non-discrimination laws," "securing equal employment protections")</p> <p>LGBT people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as other everyday Jamaicans. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, serve their country, and take care of the ones they love. Their commitment to equality and acceptance is one they share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBT.</p> <p>Importantly, JFLAG published a document called The Gay Agenda in 2018. The publication presented, boldly and unapologetically, our vision of an LGBT-inclusive Jamaica and directly countered to the popular use of "gay agenda" as a slur agent the LGBT community. Only references to this document as "The Gay Agenda" would be appropriate.</p>
<p>Special rights</p> <p>Anti-LGBT extremists frequently characterize equal protection of the law for LGBT people as "special rights" to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive non-discrimination laws.</p>	<p>Equal rights or Equal protection</p>
<p>Transgenders or a transgender</p> <p>Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, "Tony is a transgender," or "The event included many transgenders."</p>	<p>Transgender people, or a transgender person</p> <p>For example, "Tony is a transgender man," or "The event included many transgender people."</p>
<p>Transgendered</p> <p>The adjective transgender should never have an extraneous "-ed" tacked onto the end. This brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer. You would not say that Elton John is "gayed" or Ellen DeGeneres is "lesbianed," therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is "transgendered."</p>	<p>Transgender</p>



Offensive	Alternatives
<p>Transgenderism</p> <p>This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to "a condition."</p>	<p>Being transgender</p> <p>Refer to being transgender instead, or refer to the transgender community. You can also refer to the movement for transgender equality and acceptance.</p>
<p>Sex change, pre-operative, Post-operative</p> <p>Referring to a "sex-change operation," or using terms such as "pre-operative" or "post-operative," inaccurately suggests that a person must have surgery in order to transition. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.</p>	<p>Transition</p>
<p>Biologically male</p>	<p>Assigned male at birth or Designated male at birth</p>
<p>Biologically female</p>	<p>Assigned female at birth or Designated female at birth</p>
<p>Genetically male</p>	<p>Assigned male at birth or Designated male at birth</p>
<p>Genetically female</p>	<p>Assigned female at birth or Designated female at birth</p>
<p>Born a man</p>	<p>Assigned male at birth or Designated male at birth</p>
<p>Born a woman</p>	<p>Assigned female at birth or Designated female at birth</p>

Defamatory Language when Covering the LGBT Community



"battyman" "fag," "fish" "faggot," "dyke," "homo," "sodomite," and similar epithets

The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted or where a person from the community chooses to use these words

"deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," "diseased," "perverted," "destructive" and similar descriptions

Today, words such as "deviant," "diseased" and "disordered" often are used to portray LGBT people as less than human, mentally ill, or as a danger to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about the LGBT community. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that clearly reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

Associating LGBT people with paedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest

Being LGBT is neither synonymous with, nor indicative of, any tendency toward paedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery and/or incest. Such claims, innuendoes and associations often are used to insinuate that LGBT people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such assertions and insinuations are defamatory and should be avoided, except in direct quotes that clearly reveal the bias of the person quoted.

"deceptive," "fooling," "pretending," "posing," "trap," or "masquerading"

Gender identity is an integral part of a person's identity. Do not characterize transgender people as "deceptive," as "fooling" or "trapping" others, or as "pretending" to be, "posing" or "masquerading" as a man or a woman.

"tranny," "she-male," "he/she," "it," "shim"

These words dehumanize transgender people and should not be used in mainstream media. The criteria for using these derogatory terms should be the same as those applied to vulgar epithets used to target other groups: they should not be used except in a direct quote that reveals the bias of the person quoted.

Names, Pronoun Usage and Descriptions



Always use a transgender person's chosen name.

In the media, trans people should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who uses a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities). Regardless of whether trans people go through the process of changing their names legally the media should respect their chosen name, unless directly quoting a legal document with their name on it and instances where references to a government name are absolutely necessary.

Use the pronoun that matches the person's authentic gender.

A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or undergone surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you are not certain which pronouns to use confirm with the person their pronouns, consult with someone familiar with the person or use resource material that may help to indicate. If it is not possible to find out a transgender person's pronouns, use the gender-neutral pronouns they/them/their.

Use the singular "they" to reflect their non-binary gender identity.

The singular they to describe people who "identify as neither male nor female." It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity to use they/them/their as their pronoun.

No quotation marks and no aka.

It is never appropriate to put quotation marks around either a transgender person's name or the pronoun that reflects that person's gender identity. It is also not okay to refer to their chosen name as an aka (also known as).

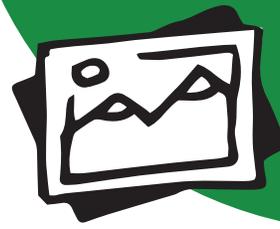
Avoid pronoun confusion when examining the stories and backgrounds of transgender people prior to their transition.

Ideally, a story will not use pronouns associated with a person's birth sex when referring to the person's life prior to coming out as transgender. Try to write transgender people's stories from the present day, instead of narrating them from some point in the past, thus avoiding confusion and potentially disrespectful use of incorrect pronouns. Example: "Prior to coming out as transgender, Renee Gibson often competed in the men's 100m sprint event in athletics. Her performances in the sprint event is universally praised by sporting critics."

There are a few tips that can help with navigating pronouns during an interview with a trans person.

- a.** Acquire the interviewees pronouns beforehand and stick to them throughout the interview.
- b.** Mistakes happen. If you misgender your interviewee, apologise and use the correct pronouns thereafter.
- c.** Avoid before and after narratives related to your interviewees transition. In other words, don't say anything to the effect of "You were a boy but now you're a woman..." It is more appropriate to refer to "gender assigned at birth" or "pre-transition" if reference needs to be made to the past.

LGBT Representation in Caricatures and Illustrations



It is important to practice responsible journalism with the publishing of caricatures and other illustrative works in media to represent LGBT people. Caricatures and illustrations have the potential to impact the LGBT community in the following ways:

To enforce stereotypes of LGBT Jamaicans

The purpose of caricatures should never be to enforce existing stereotypes of LGBT Jamaicans. Constant portrayal of stereotypes in the media give them credence in the eyes of the public and make them doubly hard to undo.

To detract from issues and mock LGBT Jamaicans

Caricatures can potentially detract from the serious issues that LGBT Jamaicans face and make mockery of their realities. This lessens the seriousness with which many of the issues that LGBT Jamaicans experience are perceived by the public to include persons in positions of power with the ability to make meaningful change.

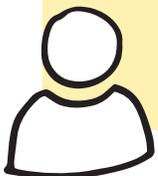
To create spectacles of LGBT Jamaicans

Creating spectacles of LGBT Jamaicans and the ways they present in society slows the process of acceptance that the wider public will experience, especially towards LGBT Jamaicans who are visibly queer. Reconsider making the ways in which LGBT Jamaicans present as jokes because overtime that reduces the LGBT Jamaicans to jokes in the eyes of the media consuming public.

To position LGBT Jamaicans as opposites or enemies

Extremely dangerous are the instances in which LGBT Jamaicans are portrayed as opposites or enemies of their wider Jamaican counterparts. This should be avoided entirely. It creates the impression that LGBT Jamaicans are not real Jamaicans, that their concerns are oppositional to the advancement of Jamaica, and that their existence is a threat to Jamaica and Jamaicanness.

Responsible caricaturing and illustrative works in media should make social commentary on contemporary issues holistically rather than consistently positioning specific groups, like LGBT Jamaicans, in limited ways in the eyes of the public that would seemingly confirm stereotypes and problematic narratives that are held to be true by the public.



Moving Beyond Superlatives and Exaggerations



Anti-gay lyrics as part of Jamaica's Dancehall and Reggae music have always been topics of discussion for the media, especially the international media. In 2006, a Time Magazine article described Jamaica as "The most homophobic place on earth." The article went on to quote someone as saying "Jamaica is the worst any of us has ever seen...". More recently, in 2019, in a Bloomberg Opinion podcast interview, the guest made the baseless comment that trans people are killed weekly in Jamaica. These exaggerations, that have become characteristic of international media—particularly global north—representations of the situation in Jamaica. These sort of representations that depend on exaggerations and heavy use of superlatives are largely unhelpful. It undermines Jamaica's LGBT advocacy efforts and is actually more damaging to the LGBT community.

There is a need to introduce nuance into the discourse around homophobia in Jamaica, where we acknowledge the difficult lived realities of many vulnerable LGBT Jamaicans while we honestly talk about stories of resistance, resilience and hope. It is important that the media play a central role in this shift.

Here are a few pointers that may help:

- Be more precise with the language surrounding the realities of LGBT Jamaicans. Less dependence on superlatives and other adjectives and more emphasis on highlighting facts and figures.
- Use anecdotal material to support facts and figures rather than using a single story as the state of affairs for all LGBT Jamaicans.
- It's important to understand the social context of Jamaica before writing about the realities of LGBT Jamaicans. For international media, writing from the cultural context of your home country may prove problematic.
- Consult local actors such as advocacy organizations, individual activists and community members to ground the nuance.

Additional Contacts



If you need information on Jamaica's LGBT community outside of what JFLAG can provide, here are some additional organizations who focus on the various local subgroups of the LGBT community.



TransWave

-  www.transwaveja.org
-  facebook.com/transwaveja
-   [@transwaveja](https://twitter.com/transwaveja)
-  hello@transwaveja.org
-  876-667-4671



WE-Change

-  www.wechangeja.org
-  facebook.com/wechangeja
-   [@wechangeja](https://twitter.com/wechangeja)
-  wechangeja@gmail.com
-  876-772-6937



Equality Youth Jamaica

-  facebook.com/equalityyouthja
-   [@equalityyouthja](https://twitter.com/equalityyouthja)
-  equalityyouthja@gmail.com
-  876-856-3624

References



- GLAAD's *Media Reference Guide* (10th Edition, October 2016).
- JFLAG's *The Gay Agenda* (2018)
- JFLAG's *Diversifying LGBT Rights Advocacy: A Legal Review* (2017)
- Julua Sinclair-Palm's *"It's Non-Existent": Haunting in Trans Youth Narratives about Naming* (2017)
- Ministry of Education, Jamaica and the United Nations Children's Fund, (UNICEF)'s *Health and Family Life Education Resource Handbook* (2009)
- Rebecca Stanborough's *She/He/They/Them: Understanding Gender Identity* (2020)



www.equalityjamaica.org