



The History of Pride Month

Originally celebrated on the last Sunday in June as “Gay Pride Day,” the celebration of Pride has now expanded to include a month-long series of events across the country. June was chosen to honor and remember the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. The Stonewall Uprising was a display of LGBTQ+ activism and a landmark moment for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States.¹

In June 1999, President Clinton issued a proclamation declaring the month as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month in recognition of the anniversary of Stonewall. In June 2009, President Obama issued a proclamation declaring June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month and formally recognized the many contributions made by LGBTQ+ Americans.² Overall, this month is a way to commemorate and recognize the impact LGBTQIA+ individuals have had and continue to have.

How is Pride Month Celebrated?

The first Pride march was held on June 28, 1970 in New York City on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising as a chance for the community to commemorate the uprising against discrimination. There was estimated to be three to five thousand people who marched in this inaugural Pride march.³

Today, Pride Month events draw in millions around the world and are held all month long. Celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts. Memorials are also held during this month for community members lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS.⁴

¹ Library of Congress, 'About Pride Month', <https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about/>

² Library of Congress, 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Pride Month: A Commemorative Observances Legal Research Guide' <https://guides.loc.gov/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer-pride/history-overview>

³ Library of Congress, 'About Pride Month', <https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about/>

⁴ United States Census Bureau, 'LGBTQIA+ Pride Month: June 2023', <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/lgbt-pride-month.html>

The Evolution of the Pride Flag

The original Pride flag was made up of six stripes carrying a different meaning for each color: red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, blue for harmony and serenity, and purple for spirit. Over the years, the Pride flag has evolved to encompass the full range of identities that celebrate Pride. The latest iteration of the Pride flag was designed by Valentino Vecchiotti in 2021 and encompasses the following elements:

- The **chevron shape** resembles an arrow pointing forward – a collective journey toward progress.
- The Progress flag is inclusive of transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals represented by **light blue, light pink, and white**.
- The **brown and black stripes** stand for communities of color.
- The **black stripe** remembers individuals impacted by AIDS, both those who have been lost and those who continue to live with the condition today.
- The **choice of yellow and purple** intentionally avoids colors that reference gender stereotypes
- The **unbroken circle** rejects symbols that represent gender and signifies wholeness and completeness.⁵



Traditional Pride Flag



Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag

To learn more about the individual pride flags, check out the [Human Rights Campaign website](#).

Some Common Definitions⁶

LGBTQIA+ - sometimes shortened to LGBT or LGBTQ+ - an ever-evolving acronym commonly used to identify all walks of people who identify under this umbrella term. The full acronym stands for the following:

- **Lesbian** - a female identifying person who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to other female identifying people.
- **Gay** - an individual who is emotionally, romantically, and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.
- **Bisexual** - an individual who is attracted to two or more genders.
- **Transgender** - a term describing a person's gender identity that does not necessarily match their assigned sex at birth.
- **Queer/Questioning** - Queer is an umbrella term used by some LGBTQ+ people to describe themselves and/or their community. Questioning describes those who are in a process of discovery about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof.
- **Intersex** - the current term used to refer to people who are biologically between the medically expected definitions of male and female.
- **Asexual** - a person who may not experience sexual attraction but may experience romantic attraction.
- **+** - represents those who are part of the community, but for whom the acronym does not accurately capture or reflect their identity.

Pronouns - The words used to refer to a person other than their name. Common pronouns are they/them, he/him, and she/her. Neopronouns are pronouns created to be specifically gender-neutral, including xe/xem, ze/zir and fae/faer.

[Additional Pronoun Resources](#)

Gender - A set of socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate.

Gender Identity - A person's deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex.

Cisgender - A term used to refer to an individual whose gender identity aligns with the one associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. This term is not a slur.

Sexual Orientation - Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people or no people. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one.

Ally - In the LGBTQ+ community, this term is used to describe someone who is supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate.

⁵ National Institutes of Health, 'About the Intersex-Inclusive Progress Pride Flag', <https://www.edi.nih.gov/people/sep/lgbt/pride-2023#02>

⁶ National Institutes of Health, 'Terms and Definitions', <https://www.edi.nih.gov/people/sep/lgbt/safezone/terminology>

