LGBTQQA 101
A Guide for New Students

What does LGBTQQA Stand for?

LGBTQA is an acronym to designate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Ally community. It may also be written as LGBTQQAA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Ally), LGBTQ, or in other variations. At times, the word “queer” is also used as an umbrella term referring to all these groups. The term an individual chooses depends on their preference.

What LGBTQQA Resources Does Midd Have?

There are a number of organizations and groups at Middlebury here to serve the LGBTQQA community. Middlebury Open Queer Alliance (MOQA) is a student organization devoted to increasing awareness and support for LGBTQQA students. The club likes to stress the “O” for “Open,” since it welcomes people regardless of their gender, sexuality, or point of view. The Queer Studies House (QSH) is an academic interest house whose mission is to further the academic pursuit of sexuality and gender studies. It holds regular academic and social events, and welcomes people from all perspectives. For students who desire mental health services around issues of sexuality or gender identity, the Center for Counseling and Human Relations is free to students and confidential. Finally, students interested in studying sexuality and gender from an academic perspective can take advantage of the Program in Women’s and Gender Studies (go/wags), which offers both a major and minor.
LGBTQIA Community?

As members of different cultures, religions, and backgrounds, the concept of a LGBTQIA community might be a foreign concept, inexistent in our own cultures, or even taboo. Middlebury College has an active community of LGBTQIA students, faculty, and staff, and we understand that facing such a community for the first time might be intimidating, or might even make us anxious. MOQA, QSH, and the other campus organizations devoted to LGBTQIA issues serve as a resource for students who would like to learn more or simply understand what it means to be a member of the LGBTQIA community. We are open to hear different world perspectives on LGBTQIA issues and answer all questions you might have. We want Middlebury to feel like a safe and welcoming environment for you, which is exactly why we want to encourage dialogue around these issues.

I Identify as an LGBTQIA Student, Now What?

It is important for us in MOQA, QSH, and in the LGBTQIA community in general that you know that Middlebury is a safe, welcoming environment. Students can live freely, and openly be and express themselves. This freedom includes being able to express their gender and sexual orientation without fear.

Middlebury, for some of our students, also serves as a safe environment where they can start exploring or expressing their genders and sexualities for the first time. MOQA, QSH, and the Counseling Center have resources for questioning students and students who are going through the process of coming out. We would like to stress that no organization or Middlebury community member would contact a person’s family if they were to decide to come out. Our goal is to provide a safe space for those who might not be ready or who do not think they can come out at home.

It is also important to know that all programs (academic and extracurricular) at Middlebury are bound by the college’s nondiscrimination statement, which prohibits discrimination on
the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, along with many other things (see go/nondiscrimination for the full statement).

**Where Do I Go for More Info?**

MOQA has many resources available. The group holds meetings every Sunday at 8pm in the Chellis House, where we discuss different LGBTQA-related issues. We also hold different awareness events during the Fall and Spring semesters, such as Coming Out Week, Gaypril, and various academic lectures. Interested students can contact confidentially the MOQA co-chairs at moqa@middlebury.edu or individually at the addresses below for further information:

Emma Ashby: eashby@middlebury.edu  
Petr Knor: pknor@middlebury.edu  
Steven Dunmire: sdunmire@middlebury.edu

The Queer Studies House also has many resources for interested students. The house holds frequent academic and social events, including teas, workshops, film screenings, and parties. The house also has a library of queer-themed books, zines, and other publications. Finally, there are safer sex supplies (condoms, dental dams, latex gloves, etc) available in the house's front room at all times. Contact the residents at queerstudieshouse@middlebury.edu for more info.

In addition, confidential meetings can be set up with MOQA members or QSH residents for any student that would like a safe, non-judgmental place to discuss issues related to sexuality, gender and coming out. This is also a tool for incoming students who would like to learn more about the LGBTQA community and/or would like to start a dialogue around queer issues

**A note on Lingo: Preferred Gender Pronouns**

Language can be difficult to navigate when discussing topics related to sexuality and gender. In order for individuals decide how they want to be addressed and how to define themselves (or choose not
to), we often ask attendees at events or meetings to share their **preferred gender pronouns**. Just because someone looks like a “she” or a “him” doesn’t mean that that person identifies as such, so it’s important to know which pronouns people use to refer to themselves. As you meet other students during your days at Middlebury, be sensitive to how people would like to be addressed and specify how you would like people to address you.

**Gender pronouns** refer to how you are addressed in the third person. She/her and he/him are both options associated with a specific gender. Some individuals prefer **gender-neutral pronouns**, such as they/them or ze/hir (pronounced “zee” and “hеar”).

**Last Words...**

This informational packet was designed and written by MOQA members and QSH residents. We wrote it specifically for entering first-years, in particular international students. We are really excited to welcome you into our campus. We want to help make this transition as smooth as possible for you, and we hope that we get to serve as a useful resource during your time at Middlebury.

*Watermark picture was originally posted on Al Bawaba News*