

*This is a list of common terms and definitions you will hear in the polyamorous community. This is not a complete list and is only intended to help understand some of the language one might frequently hear used in polyamory groups or relationships. Some terms have been created out of necessity to help people communicate about their relationships. Our language often lacks terms to describe or explain emotions and configurations of relationships you will find in polyamory.*

**Bisexual** 1 a: possessing characters of both sexes : hermaphroditic b: of, relating to, or characterized by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward both sexes 2: of, relating to, or involving both sexes (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Closed Marriage** : Marriages where there is no outer emotional relating or sexuality.

**Closed Group Marriage** 1: A group of individuals who describe themselves as married but may or may not be all primaries and who are closed to outside sexual relationships 2: A marriage in which fidelity is not equated with monogamy

**Closed Relationship** *n* : An agreement among the members not to get sexually and/or romantically involved with anyone outside the relationship

**Co-Housing Community** : a housing community built around a group philosophy. Each family has their own home that is privately owned, but there are community buildings and space. Often built around shared values or beliefs.

**Commitment** *n* 1 : to pledge or promise to do something 2 : dedication to a long-term course of action 3 : engagement 4 : involvement 5 : to put into charge or trust 6 : ENTRUST 7 : to carry into action 8 : PERPETRATE 9 : TRANSFER, CONSIGN; committal *n*; commit *vb*; committed *vb*; committing *vb*

**Commune** *n* 1 : a community 2 : interchange of thoughts and feelings 3 : converse; communal *adj* 1 : to be owned or shared by a community 2 : public

**Community** *n*, pl -ties 1 : a body of people living in the same place under the same laws; also : a natural population of plants and animals that interact ecologically and live in one place (as a pond) 2 : society at large 3 : joint ownership 4 : SIMILARITY, LIKENESS

**Compersion** *n* 1: taking joy or pleasure in someone else's joy, pleasure or happiness 2: feeling joy in the joy that others you love share among themselves, especially taking joy in the knowledge that your beloveds are expressing their love for one another, the term was coined by the Kerista Commune in San Francisco which practiced Polyfidelity, Kerista disbanded in the early 1990's

**Condom Commitment** *n* : an agreement to confine exchange of bodily fluids and barrier-free intercourse to a closed group which has previously been screened for sexually transmitted diseases. syn. safe sex circle

**Cooperative** *n* or *adj* 1 : willing to work with others 2 : of or relating to an association formed to enable its members 3: a cooperative association

**Courting** *n* or *vb* : The process by which people explore how it feels to form or join in a committed relationship. syn. dating

**Eros** *n* : refers 1: the Greek god of erotic love — compare Cupid 2: the sum of life-preserving instincts that are manifested as impulses to gratify basic needs, as sublimated impulses, and as impulses to protect and preserve the body and mind — compare death instinct 3 a: love conceived by Plato as a fundamental creative impulse having a sensual element b: often not capitalized : erotic love or desire (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Expanded Family** *n* : a relationship in which three or more partners consciously chose each other as family, partners may or may not live together, there is the potential for all family members to be sexual with each other if they mutually chose to do so but this is not a requirement for family membership, syn intentional family

**Family** *n, pl* 1: a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head 2 a: a group of persons of common ancestry : clan b: a people or group of peoples regarded as deriving from a common stock : race 3: a group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation 4a: the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children – (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Fidelity** *n* 1 a: the quality or state of being faithful b: accuracy in details (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Fluid Bond**: Of or related to practices which involve the exchange of bodily fluids, such as barrier-free sexual intercourse

**Group Marriage** *n* : a marriage involving more than two people

**Group Partner** *n* : a person of group marriage or relationship

**Group Relationship** *n* : a committed, loving relationship involving multiple partners

**Hinge** *n* or *adj*: Refers to VeEs, or similar dynamics in a more complex relationship, the “person in the middle”, more bonded to each end than they are to each other, is sometimes called the hinge. Without the hinge, the others people often go their separate ways.

**Hot Bi Babe [HBB]** *n* : mythical creature [female] that some couples search for as for the Holy Grail.

**Husband** *n* : a male partner in a marriage or committed relationship

**Inclusive Relationship** *n* : a relationship in which all partners agree to include more lovers into their relationship

**Intentional Family** *n* : a relationship in which three or more partners consciously chose each other as family, partners may or may not live together, there is the potential for all family members to be sexual with each other if they mutually chose to do so but this is not a requirement for family membership, syn expanded family

**Intimate** *n, adj* 1 a: intrinsic , essential b: belonging to or characterizing one's deepest nature 2: marked by very close association, contact, or familiarity

3 a: marked by a warm friendship developing through long association b: suggesting informal warmth or privacy 4: of a very personal or private nature (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Intimate Network** *n* : individuals who desire friendship and perhaps sex with their lover's and other friend's, forming a web of varying connections within a social circle

**Intimate Partner** *n* : a close romantic or sexual connection or relationship

**Intimate Relationship** *n* : term that assumes romantic or sexual connection

**Jealousy** *n or adj* 1 : the opposite of compersion 2 : negative, angry feelings that a group or an individual can provoke in another group or individual 3 : demanding complete devotion 4 : suspicious of a rival or of one believed to enjoy an advantage 5 : VIGILANT; jealously; jealous adj

**Line Marriage** *n* : a term from the works of Robert A. Heinlein, science fiction writer, meaning a marriage that from time to time adds younger members, eventually establishing an equilibrium population, spouses dying off at the same rate as new ones are added, this is a different form of familial immortality than the traditional one of successive generations of children

**Lovestyle** *n* : the design or structure of a sexuallove relationship, like the term lifestyle, it implies a conscious choice. syn. Relationship Orientation

**Mixed Relationships** *n* 1 : relationships that have heterosexual and homosexual members 2 : relationships that have people from different races and cultures

**Metamour** is a term used by some polyamory people to refer to their partner's partner.

**Monogamy** *n* 1 archaic : the practice of marrying only once during a lifetime 2: the state or custom of being married to one person at a time 3: the condition or practice of having a single mate during a period of time (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

**Multi-partner Relationship** *n* : the practice of having more than one intimate or sexual relationship at one time.

**New Paradigm Relating** *n* : a philosophy of relationship which emphasizes using the relationship to consciously enhance the psychological and spiritual development of the partners, characterized by responding authentically in the present moment, honoring individual autonomy, equality, honesty and self responsibility.

**New Relationship Energy (NRE)** *n* or *adj*: energy that flows between partners in a “new” relationship, the excitement and discovery that occurs during this time as opposed to old relationship energy that is part of a more settled, stable, comfortable time in the relationship

**One True Way Polyamorist** *n* : a person who believes there is only one right way to be polyamorous often based on their own moral judgments (most believe there are many ways to be poly)

**Open Marriage** *n* : a marriage where spouses are allowed to have romantic relationships and/or sex with others outside the marriage

**Open Group Marriage** *n* 1: A group of individuals who describe themselves as married, but may or may not be all primaries and who are open to outside romantic and/or sexual relationships

**Open Relationship** *n* : a relationship where partners are allowed to have romantic relationships and/or sex with others outside the relationship

**Partner** *n* 1 : Short for life partner(s). Gender-free, heterosexual assumption free term for someone with whom one is romantically involved with 2: SPOUSE or SPICE 3: ASSOCIATE(S), COLLEAGUE(S) 4: two or more persons who dance together 5 : one who plays on the same team with another 6: one of two or more persons contractually associated as joint principals in a venture–partnership *n*

**Plural Marriage** *n* : 1: a marriage between three or more people 2:a name often applied to Mormon-style polygyny, all the wives may live together or each may have her own home

**Poly** *n* or *adj* 1 : many or several 2 : Short for Polyamory 3: The relationship orientation of people who love and want to be intimate with more than one person at a time 4: A relationship that is non-monogamous relationship 5: A person that is either in or at least interested in a multi-partnered relationship and family

**Poly activist** *n* : a person interested in taking action intended to counteract the political, social and religious enforcement of monogamy; Poly activists help promote greater awareness of Polyamory as a legitimate relationship choice; poly activism *n*

**Polyamorous** *n* 1 : practicing polyamory 2 : of or characterized by polyamory

**Polyamory** *n* 1: the state or practice of having more than one open romantic relationship at a time (2008). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

2: romantically loving more than one person at a time 3: responsible non-monogamy based on honest open communication and conscious choices

**Polyandry** *n* 1 : the state or practice of having two or more husbands at the same time 2 : the mating of one female animal with more than one male; polyandric *adj*; polyandrist *n*

**Poly-Family** *n* 1 : a group polyamorous people all the people living in or sharing life experiences in the same home or household 2 : a social unit consisting of multiple romantically involved adults (may or may not all be sexually/romantically involved with each other) 3 : when children are present the term includes others adults, besides

blood or birth parents, who are responsibly involved with the child or children, most adult take an active role in child rearing  
4 : a group of people related by common commune, tribe, clan, lineage, ancestry, relatives, commitment or marriage  
5 : a sharing of living expenses and property

**Polyfidelity** *n* : a group in which all partners are primary to all other partners and sexual fidelity is to the group; shared intent of a lifelong run together. More primary partners can be added with everyone's consent. The term was coined by the Kerista commune

**Polygamous** *adj* 1 : practicing polygamy 2 : of, engaging in or characterized by polygamy

**Polygamy** *n* : the practice of having more than one wife or husband at one time; polygamist *n*;

**Polygynous** *adj* 1 : practicing polygyny 2 : of, engaging in or characterized by polygyny

**Polygyny** *n* 1 : the state or practice of having two or more wives at the same time 2 : the mating of a male animal with more than one female

**PolyWog** : A person new to and exploring and experiencing polyamory.

**Poly Virgin** : A person who has never been in a polyamorous relationship.

**Primary Partner or Relationship** *n* 1 : the closest relationship type, the person(s) given the most time, energy and priority in a person's life; includes high level of intimacy, attraction and commitment as demonstrated by strong bonding, often live together can be committed by marriage or commitment ceremony

**Quad** *n* : A multiple partnered relationship with four members

**Relationship Orientation** *n* 1: The preference for sexual relationships or lovestyles which are monogamous, non-monogamous, intimate network, Polyfidelitous, etc. 2: The design or structure of a sexual love relationship. Like the term lifestyle, it implies a conscious choice. syn. Lovestyle

**Safe Sex** *n* : sexual activities in which precautions have been taken, as by the use of a condom, to minimize the chances of spreading or contracting a sexually transmitted disease. 2008 Dictionary.com Unabridged

**Safe Sex Circle** *n* : an agreement to confine exchange of bodily fluids and barrier-free intercourse to a closed group which has previously been screened for sexually transmitted diseases

**Secondary Partner or relationship** *n* : a person of polyamorous orientation that is intimately involved in your life but usually not daily, the person provide emotional support may or may not provide economic support, there may be some sharing of resources, goal and life paths but they are few as compared to primary partners

**Serial Monogamy** *n* : a succession of monogamous partners over time

**Sex Positive** *adj* : a person who is comfortable with own sexuality and sexuality in general

**Spouse** *n* : a persons husband or wife

**Swing Club** *n* 1 : a meeting place where recreational sexual activity take place 2 : an organization that support, encourage and promotes recreational sexual activities

**Swinger** *n* : a person who participates in swinging

**Swinging** *vb* 1 : Relationship style in which a married or primary partners enjoy and engage in sex with other couples, individuals and/or groups with an emphasis on sexual pleasure and not on emotional connectedness. 2: Recreational sexual activity, sometimes called sport sex, where partner's or participant's agree to have casual sex with each other's partners. There is usually no emotional involvement.

**Tantra** *n* : 1 Hindu or Buddhist scriptures dealing with techniques and rituals including meditative and sexual prictices 2 :TOUCH 3 : Yoga spiritual discipline 4 : SENSATION 5 : FEEL

**Tertiary** *n* or *adj* 1 : of third rank, importance, or value 2 cap : of, relating to, or being the earlier period of the Cenozoic era 3 : occurring in or being the third stage

**Tertiary Partner** *n* : a person of polyamorou orientation that is intimately involved in your life erratically, the person provides limited emotional support, usually does not provide economic support, sharing of resources, goal and life paths

**Tertiary Relationship** *n* or *adj* : a relationship which may include emotional support or sexuality on a one-time or highly erratic schedule, attention or energy is given in bursts but the relationship is not a consistent part of a persons life

**Tolerance** *n* 1 : the act or practice of tolerating; esp : sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from one's own 2 : the allowable deviation from a standard (as of size) 3 : the body's ability to become less responsive over time to something tolerant *adj* tolerantly *adv*

**Triad** *n* 1: any three person lovestyle. 2: three people involved in some way; most often used in a committed sense; in some cases involving ceremonies of commitment 3 : a union or group of three usu. closely related persons or things

**Triangle** *n* 1: (or equilateral triangle) relationship where three people are each involved with both of the others, sometimes also called a triad 2 : a plane figure that has three sides and three angles : a polygon having three sides 3 : something shaped like a triangle; triangular *adj*; triangularly *adv*

**Troller** *n* : a person who comes into the poly community trolling for sex.

**Twittterpated**: A term for NRE (new relationship energy) from Bambi. Infatuation with a lover in your life.

**Vee** *n* : three people, where the structure puts one person at the bottom, or hinge" of the vee, also called the pivot point; in a vee, the arm partners are not as commonly close to each other as each is to the pivot