



Terminologies

The words “LGBTI” or “LGBTIQ” have been used in different countries to explain a community that consists of people who identify as:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender and gender diverse
- Intersex
- Queer.

But what do these words mean?

Here are some explanations of the word “LGBTIQ” to help you understand its meaning:

Lesbian: it is a word to describe women who love other women. Lesbian couples are two women who are in a loving and committed relationship. Some lesbian couples have children and raise their children just like any other family.

Gay: it is a word to describe men who love other men. Some women also call themselves gay women instead of lesbian, and this is fine. Gay couples are two men who are in a loving and committed relationship. Just like lesbian couples, some gay couples have children and raise their children just like any other family.

Bisexual: it refers to people who love both men and women. They can have a romantic relationship with either a man or a woman. Some people think that bisexual people

cannot make up their mind. This is not true. They know who they are attracted to and who they love.

You may have heard the word “pansexual”. While the word “bisexual” usually means to love both men and women, pansexuals love all people no matter their sexuality and gender identity. Understanding the difference between the two can be confusing. It is important for us to respect their identity, and to not discriminate against them just because their identity and relationships are different to us.

Trans or transgender: this word refers to people who are born a man or a woman, but feel that they belong to a different gender. In this case, if someone is born a man but feel that they are a woman then they will be called a trans-woman. Similarly, if someone is born a woman but feel that they are a man, then they will be called a trans-man.

Many people think that trans people are confused or have a psychological illness. This is not true. Trans people know who they are from an early age. In addition, the World Health Organisation does not consider being trans or transgender as a psychological illness. The trans community has the same rights as anyone else.

Gender diverse: it is a word to describe people who do not feel that they are a man, nor a woman, nor transgender. This is because they don't feel that their gender identity follows the definition of man, woman, or trans. They know who they are, and they are comfortable with their gender. Just like trans or transgender, they have the same rights as anyone else.

Intersex: it is a natural biological condition where a person cannot be identified as either male or female. It's natural, meaning they are born that way. Many intersex babies went through surgery because the doctor and parents feel that they have to "fix" them. This can create psychological harm because they have been told from day one that there is something wrong with their body. Malta is the only country in the world that does not allow surgery on intersex babies. Intersex individuals are to be treated with dignity based on human rights; they should not be discriminated against because of who they are.

Queer: this is an English word that has been used by some people to inform other people that they are not heterosexual. This means that, instead of calling themselves gay, lesbian, or bisexual, they called themselves queer. It is ok if you are a bit unsure about this word, because it does not always translate well to other languages. What you need to remember when someone says they are queer is that they are telling you they are not heterosexual, and that is ok. Queer people, just like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex, are to live without discrimination.

What is sex, and what is gender? How are these different to sexuality?

It can be confusing to separate the word "sex" from "gender" and "sexuality". Here are some explanations of these words:

Sex: it refers to our biology. It can be physical and genetics (male = XY chromosomes and female = XX chromosomes). However, there are people whose biology does not follow the male and female biology. As discussed before, intersex are people whose biology are neither male or female, and it is a natural condition that must be embraced as part of human bodies.

Gender: it refers to how we feel inside regarding to our gender (or the way we see ourselves as a man, a woman, or transgender). Our biological sex is not always the same as our gender. Some people feel that they are born in the wrong body. As discussed before, trans or transgender are people whose gender is different to their biological sex (or physical sexual organs), and they are to be welcomed as part of our society.

Sexuality: it is about who we are attracted to and who we love. Our sexuality is different to our gender. For most people, if they are born a man, they are attracted to and love women. Similarly, if they are born a woman, they are attracted to and love men. These are heterosexuals.

But there are people who are attracted and love people of the same gender. A man can be in a relationship with another man (gay), and a woman can be in a relationship with another woman (lesbian). Some people are attracted to men and women (bisexuals), and some people are attracted to all genders (pansexual). All of these are part of human sexuality.

In short, our biology or our sex, our gender, and our sexuality are all part of who we are. We may be different, but we are to treat each other with love and respect because all of us are human beings.

Myths around LGBTIQ communities

There are many misunderstandings around the LGBTIQ communities. Some of them include:



"People become LGBTIQ because they have been influenced by others."

This is not true. There is no evidence to support this assumption. Your friend and family member may have not told you of their identity because they are not sure of how you are going to react. Many people are afraid

that they will be rejected by their family and friends, and they don't want to lose them. A friend or a family member may not tell you until they can trust you. They have always known their identity, and being with other LGBTIQ people can give them strength and courage to be who they are. Because of this, they are not being influenced by others, but being with other LGBTIQ people can make them feel safe, accepted, and loved.



"LGBTIQ people suffer from psychological illness."

Many people think that being LGBTIQ means they are suffering from psychological illnesses. The World Health Organisation does not consider same-sex attraction and transgender as a psychological illness. Many LGBTIQ people have experienced hatred from other people. This can be physical, such as being hit for being LGBTIQ, and emotional, such as people gossiping about them and stopping being friends with them. This can create psychological stress. The stress comes from people's negative attitudes and hatred towards LGBTIQ people, not because of who they are as a person.



"People choose to be LGBTIQ."

To be LGBTIQ is not a choice, because many LGBTIQ people know who they are and who they love from an early age. However, many LGBTIQ people choose not to tell people of their identity for these reasons:

- They are afraid that their family and friends are going to reject them;
- They are afraid that their community will reject them;
- They are afraid that people they work with will make fun of them, or they will get fired;
- They are afraid that strangers will hurt them physically, verbally, and emotionally.

Being LGBTIQ is not a choice; it is part of their identity. LGBTIQ people are the same as everyone else. Because of this, LGBTIQ people are to live without fear and to be treated with respect and dignity.



"LGBTIQ should not be parents and work with children."

There are some people who think that LGBTIQ people are contagious and must not be around children. There is no study to show that children of LGBTIQ parents will become LGBTIQ. There is also no study to show that students of LGBTIQ teachers will become LGBTIQ. Instead, studies have shown that these children are more accepting of people regardless of their gender and sexuality. LGBTIQ parents can show their children the importance of being kind to each other, and to not discriminate against people. Teachers and parents are to teach acceptance and to treat each other with respect and love.



"LGBTIQ people are against nature."

There are people who say that being LGBTIQ is against nature. This is not true:

- According to science, many animal species have same-sex relationships and they are accepted as part of the group;
- Being born intersex is a natural condition;
- Trans and gender diverse people are aware from when they are young that their gender is different to their body.
- Throughout history, there are stories of same-sex relationships, trans people and intersex people playing an important role in their society and being accepted as part of their community.

Being LGBTIQ is part of nature. Because of this, LGBTIQ people are to be treated with respect and dignity without being hurt and discriminated against based on human rights.



“LGBTIQ people have a difficult life.”

This is a common myth. Many LGBTIQ people live a happy life. The difficulty comes from people who cannot accept who they are as a person and who they love. This can come from their family, their community, and the general society. Because of this, it is important for us to love our LGBTIQ family, friends, and community so we do not make life difficult for them. By loving and accepting them, we can create a society that is kind and supportive of each other, no matter of who they are and who they love.

LGBTIQ in Australia

In Australia, it is illegal to discriminate against people because they are part of the LGBTIQ community. The Sex Discrimination Act (1984) and the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill Act 2013 are Federal laws that protect people who identify as LGBTIQ from being discriminated against because of their identity.

But many LGBTIQ people still experience hatred and discrimination because of who they are and who they love. It is illegal to discriminate, harm, and hurt people because they are LGBTIQ. Harm can be:

- Physical violence: including spitting, slapping, pushing, shoving, hitting, and physically hurting someone.
- Emotional violence: including making fun of, saying negative comments, gossiping, refusing to talk to them and bullying them.

In Australia, LGBTIQ rights are protected under the law. We must treat LGBTIQ people with respect and dignity, free from discrimination and harm. This is to follow the basic human rights.

If you have concerns about discrimination based on LGBTIQ identity, you can contact:

Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218, NSW 2001
1300 656 419

www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti

Or, contact the Human Rights Commission in your State and Territory:

Victoria

Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission

1300 292 153

<https://humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au>

New South Wales

Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW

1800 670 812

www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au/

Queensland

Queensland Human Rights Commission

1300 130 670

<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/>

South Australia

Equal Opportunity Commission SA

(08) 8207 1977

<https://eoc.sa.gov.au/>

Western Australia

Equal Opportunity Commission WA

(08) 9216 3900

<http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/>

Tasmania

Equal Opportunity Tasmania

(03) 6165 7515

<https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/>

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission

1800 813 846

<https://adc.nt.gov.au/>

ACT

ACT Human Rights Commission

(02) 6205 2222

<https://hrc.act.gov.au/contact-us/>