

LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer / Questioning, Asexual (LGBTIQ+) people are estimated to make up 11% of the population.

The Productivity Commission Inquiry Report on mental health recognises that LGBTIQ+ people:

- are more likely to face **stigma and discrimination**
- are at higher **risk of poor mental health** and suicidal behaviours
- need improved and safe access to appropriate services** with a well-trained workforce

There is enormous diversity within the LGBTIQ+ communities and some carry an even greater burden, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, trans and gender diverse people (especially young trans people), and people with an intersex variation.

The **Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people (2020)** report found that in the past 12 months in Australia:

- 57%** of participants had been treated unfairly because of their sexual orientation
- 78%** of trans and gender diverse participants had been treated unfairly because of their gender identity
- 40%** of participants experience social exclusion due to their sexual orientation or gender identity

Experience:

- 35%** experienced verbal abuse
- 24%** harassment (eg spat at or offensive gestures)
- 12%** sexual assault
- 4%** physically attacked

The Writing Themselves In survey of LGBTIQ+ young people in Victoria found that:

- Less than half talked about their sexual identity or gender identity
- 42%** experienced verbal / **23%** sexual / **10%** physical harassment
- 81%** experienced high or very high psychological distress in the past four weeks
- 24%** had attempted suicide - **48%** in the transgender community according to a national survey

Definitions of terms

Inclusive language guide: vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide

- Gender diverse** - umbrella term for people whose gender is different to that assigned at birth
- Gender identity** - the gender that someone identifies with
- Sex identity** - how you see and express yourself sexually
- Binary** - identifying exclusively as either male or female
- Non-binary** - do not exclusively identify as a woman or a man (can identify as a mixture of both, or neither, or as gender fluid)
- Trans or Transgender** - a person whose gender identity does not align to the gender they were assigned at birth (can be binary or non-binary)
- Cisgender** - gender identity aligns with the gender they assigned at birth
- Intersex** - people born with biological sex characteristics that don't fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies
- Queer** - sexuality and/or gender identity is not heterosexual or cisgendered (may be offensive to some)

Individual discrimination - an individual's access to human rights is limited, decreased or removed

Structural and systemic discrimination - broader conditions and inequalities in society that limit opportunities, resources and wellbeing, including:

- heteronormativity** (the assumption that anything outside of heterosexual experiences and relationships is not normal)
- cis-genderism** (the assumption that anything outside of cisgender experiences and relationships is not normal)
- homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and intersex-phobia** (unreasonable fear of people with diverse sexualities and gender identities)

Intersectionality - when people have several characteristics that put them at higher risk of stigma, discrimination and violence

Minority stress - stigma, discrimination and heteronormativity create an environment which pressures LGBTIQ+ people to conceal their sexuality or gender identity



It is important to note that stigma, minority stress, discrimination and lateral violence can also occur between and within LGBTIQ+ communities, and is sometimes due to internalised homophobia, transphobia and intersex-phobia.

Gippsland PHN services and supports

Gippsland Pathways is for use by primary care professionals in Gippsland, providing information on local referral pathways and access to resources



Support for **Rainbow Tick Accreditation** and training.

It's awesome when people don't make assumptions. It doesn't take much to make our lives easier.
- Community member

LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing



Impacts on health and wellbeing



Of LGBTIQ+ Victorians, the [Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32](#) states:

- 43%** Had experienced abuse within an intimate relationship
- 38%** were abused by a family member
- 34%** felt discriminated or were treated unfairly by others in the last year
- 36%** faced social exclusion in the past year
- 21%** experienced homelessness

Health issues are more common among LGBTIQ+ people when compared to the general population:

- 2.1** times as likely to have a disability or long-term health condition (38% v 18%)
- 1.7** times more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety or depression by a doctor (45% v 27%)
- 2.2** times more likely to have sought professional help for a mental health problem in the previous year (37% v 17%)
- 4.2** times more likely to have had high or very high levels of psychological distress in the past four weeks (54% v 13%)
- 18%** struggled to manage their alcohol and other drug use

Higher risk of suicide and self-harm, especially among young people

More people in rural and regional areas rated their health as **fair or poor**

People who also had a disability and/or a multicultural background **were more at risk**

The **Gippsland Rainbow Brick Road Report** (2023) highlights health impact:

- 67%** had concerns or serious concerns for their mental health
- 30%** had concerns or serious concerns about their physical health
- 25%** felt that they did not have access to general health and medical services in their immediate location
- 53%** were accessing general and medical services outside their immediate area
- 45%** were not able to access mental health support in their immediate location
- 25%** had experienced discrimination, harassment or mistreatment when seeking medical attention or support

Gender-affirming care describes the journey or process for a person, from gender assigned at birth to the gender with which they identify

How can we improve?



- Access to regionally based gender affirming care
- Education and training for health professionals to increase access to evidence-based clinical practice
- Mental health services are tailored to meet the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community
- Suicide and self-harm prevention initiatives are developed and implemented for the LGBTIQ+ community
- Services including abortion and cancer screening are accessible, welcoming, safe and inclusive
- Embed LGBTIQ+ voices in all health and wellbeing planning and co-design
- Build a peer workforce

LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice resources, education and training



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| LGBTIQ+ Health Australia | Chatsafe |
| Rainbow Health Australia | Suicide Prevention |
| Minus 18 | Out and About |
| Val's LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care | Transcend Australia |
| Intersex Human Rights Australia | Transgender Victoria |
| Rainbow Door | Thorne Harbour Health Victoria |
| QTIBPoC PROGRAM | ACON |
| Resources for GP supervisors: gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/lgbtqia-inclusive-healthcare | Black Rainbow |
| The Royal Children's Hospital, Understanding gender diversity | Trans 101 |

Crisis support is available via the following services



Lifeline	13 11 14	Access to crisis support and suicide prevention services.
QLife	1800 184 527	Anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.
13YARN	13 92 76	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander crisis support line for people feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping.

