

Topic 3: LGBTQI+ mental health and suicide prevention



LGBTQI+ affirmative training module



Learning Objectives

To have an appreciation of the lived experience of LGBTQI+ people and communities, including improved knowledge of mental health outcomes and barriers that impact access to services and mental health support.



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LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace

Part 1: LGBTQI+ mental health



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace

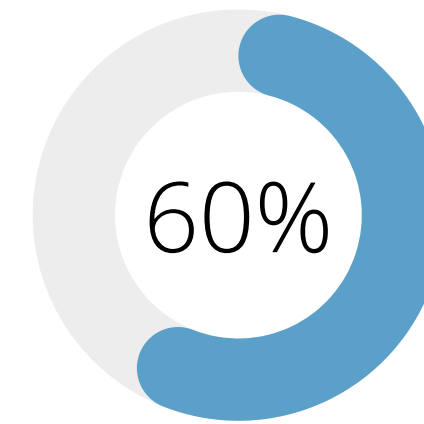
LGBTQI+ mental health

LGBTQI+ people are over-represented in mental health statistics of anxiety and depression, and have an increased risk of self-harm and suicide due to their experiences of stigma, discrimination, prejudice, abuse, violence, exclusion and isolation.

Compared to the general population, LGBTQI+ people are **over 6 times more likely** to be diagnosed with depression.

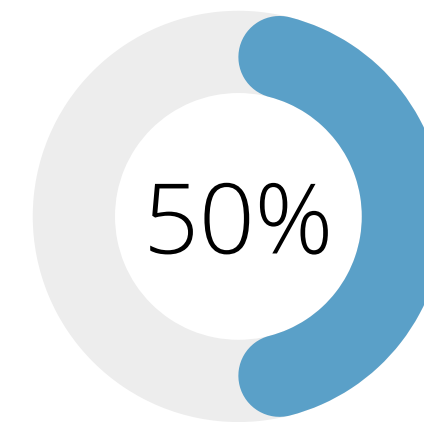
Transgender mental health

In an Australian survey of LGBTIQI+ people, around **60%** of transgender males and **50%** of transgender females reported having depression.



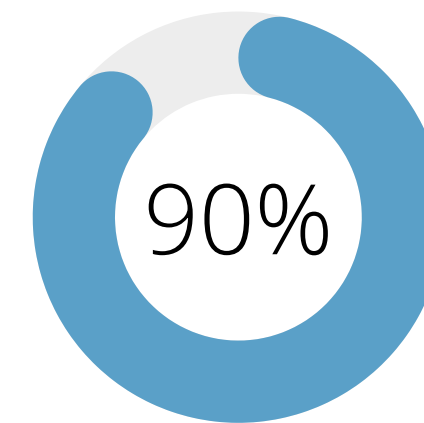
transgender males
reported having
depression

A 2007 survey of Australian and New Zealand transgender people found that almost **90%** had experienced at least one form of stigma or discrimination, including verbal abuse, social exclusion, receiving lesser treatment due to their name or sex on documents, physical threats and violence.



transgender females
reported having
depression

Almost **two thirds** of participants reported modifying their activities due to fear of stigma or discrimination. People experiencing a greater number of different types of discrimination were more likely to report being currently depressed.



transgender people
had experienced
discrimination



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Barriers to mental health support

#1

People forced to live as their inauthentic selves feel unable to enjoy their lives or achievements. Experts estimate that 30-60% of LGBTQ+ people experience depression during their lives because they don't feel safe to live in their true identity.

#2

LGBTQI+ people don't just come out to their loved ones. They come out repeatedly whenever they meet new people at their workplaces, after moving cities, or when they meet new acquaintances. There's always a chance they'll meet someone who doesn't accept their identity or will subject them to homophobic treatment. It leads to increased anxiety that affects their quality of life.

#3

Inaccessible treatments or lack of professional help contribute to an amplification of the following mental health struggles often faced by individuals within this community.

LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace

Part 2: **LGBTQI+ suicide prevention**



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace



LGBTQI+ affirmative training



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Suicidal behavior is a significant issue in the LGBTQI+ community

30.3%

of LGBTI+ people aged 18 and over
reported having attempted suicide at some
point during their lives

48.1%

of transgender and gender diverse people
aged 14 to 25 reported that they had
attempted suicide in their lifetime

77.6%

of bisexual people aged 18 and over
reported having thoughts of suicide in their
lifetime

Suicidal ideation

Compared to the general population, LGBTQI+ people are more likely to have thoughts of suicide, specifically:

- LGBTQI+ young people aged 16 to 17 were **over five times more likely** to have experienced suicidal ideation in the past 12 months
- LGBTQI+ people aged 18 and over were **over eighteen times more likely** to have considered attempting suicide in the previous 12 months



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Part 3: **Mental health strategies and services**



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace

Equal but not the same

Many services do not feel confident in supporting LGBTQI+ people and so endeavour to 'treat everyone the same'. However the mental health of LGBTQI+ people does not benefit from this framework as it does not create room for specific lived experiences of LGBTQI+ people, nor does it redress the barriers that reduce the ability of LGBTQI+ people to access mental health services.

Gaining an appreciation of LGBTQI+ people, their lived experiences, and how this impacts on their mental health can support mental health and suicide prevention workers and organisations to provide equitable services to LGBTQI+ people and communities.



Mental health strategies



Intersectionality

- identify, acknowledge, and respect the diversity of LGBTQI+ people and communities
- recognize individual experiences as fundamental to appropriate care
- any 'one-size fits all' approach is disruptive to help seeking and deficient in their ability to meet the specific needs of LGBTQI+ people

Access

- LGBTQI+ people and communities must receive welcoming, equitable and inclusive care
- poor mental health outcomes for LGBTQI+ people are compounded by being turned away from a service because of the lack of knowledge, skills and confidence from service providers

Lived experience

- LGBTQI+ people and communities are acknowledged as the experts in their own lives which have been shaped by personal and cultural history of both stigma and resilience
- peer participation is core to good mental health and suicide prevention for LGBTQI+ populations

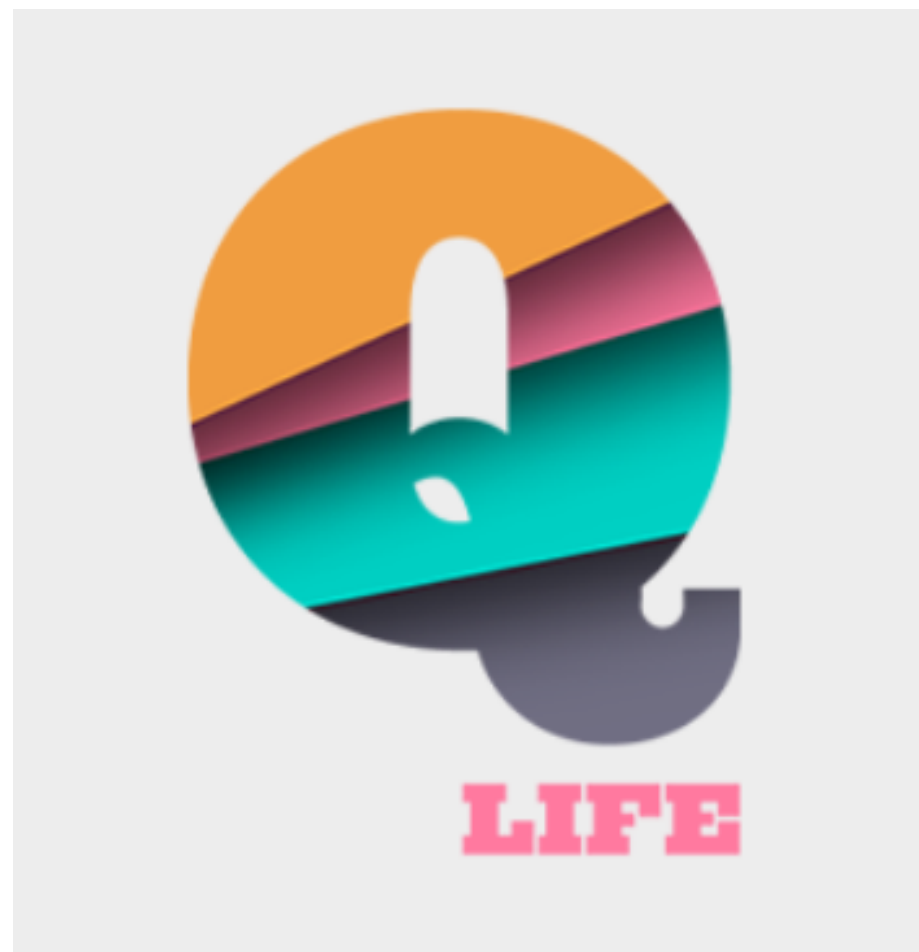
Mental health services



QLife

counselling and referral service for LGBTQI+ individuals

- call 1800 184 527
- online chat



Lifeline

support for anyone having a personal crisis

- call/text 13 11 14
- online chat



Suicide Call Back Services

for anyone thinking about suicide

- call 1300 659 467



Part 4: **What can I do?**



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace

A conversation can make a difference

LGBTQI+ people may experience instances of prejudice, stigma, and discrimination that others do not. You can help others by providing support during times of stress, grief, loss, relationship breakdown and when we're under work or financial pressure.

These includes instances of:

- Homophobic attitudes in others
- Pressure to conform to heterosexual or cisgender standards and in some cases active attempts to 'convert' them out of their identity status
- Rejection from family and friends
- Acts of public aggression and/or violence in the home based on their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Rejection from places of worship or exclusion from other community groups (such as sporting teams)

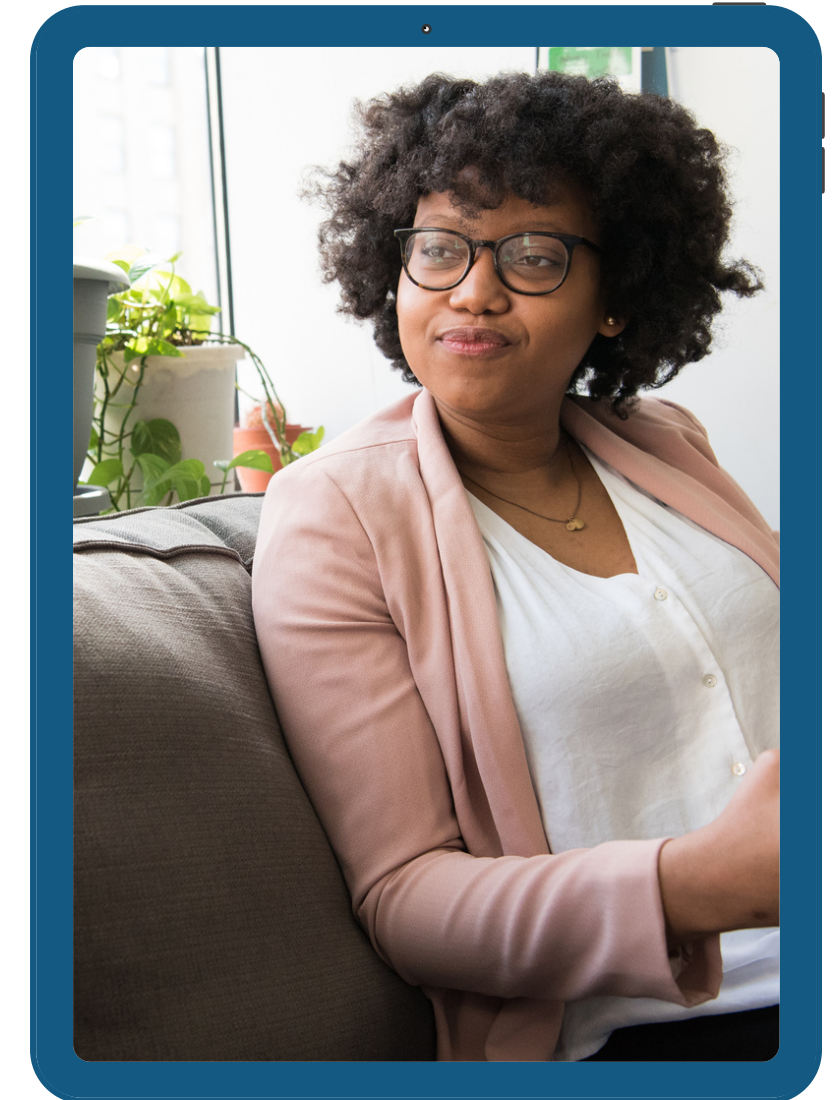
Step 1: Ask how they are doing

- Help them open up by asking questions like **“How are you going?”**, **“What’s been happening?”** or **“I’ve noticed that you’re not quite yourself lately. How are you travelling?”**
- Make an observation. Mention specific things that have made you concerned about them, like **“I’ve noticed that you seem really tired recently”** or **“I’ve noticed you saying you don’t feel supported. How are you going?”**
- If they don’t want to talk, let them know that you care and that you’re available whenever they need a listening ear. You could say, **“I’m always here but is there someone else you’d be comfortable talking to?”**



Step 2: Listen with an open mind

- Emphasise that you're here to listen not judge
- Take what they say seriously
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence
- Encourage them to explain what's going on: **“Have you been feeling this way for a while?”**, **“It sounds like that would be really tough. How are you going with managing it?”**, **“So, what was that like?”** or **“What's been happening?”**
- Don't make assumptions or apply unprompted labels or conclusions about their identity. If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally
- Let them know you're asking because you're concerned about them



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Step 3: Encourage action

- “Where do you think we can go from here?”
- “What would be a good first step we can take?”
- “What do you need from me? How can I help?”
- “Do you think it would be useful if we look into finding some professional or other support?”
- Good options for action might include talking to family, a trusted friend, or an appropriate health professional or LGBTIQ+ services.



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Step 4: Check in

- Remember to check in and see how the person is doing in a few days' time
- Ask how they're coping with the situation or feelings and if they need support to manage it
- If they haven't done anything, keep encouraging them and remind them you're always here if they need a chat
- Understand that sometimes it can take a long time for someone to be ready to see a professional for support
- Try to reinforce the benefits of seeking professional help and trying different avenues



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**You have
completed:**
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