

LGBTQI+ affirmative training module

# **Topic 1:**

# **LGBTQI+**

# **awareness**





# Learning Objectives

Gain a basic understanding of diverse bodies, gender, gender identity and sexuality.

- Understand that there is a difference between gender and sexuality.
- Identify the difference between the L, G, B, T, Q, I and the + of LGBTQI+.





# Contents

01

02

03

04

05

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What does  
LGBTQI+  
mean?

Important terms  
and concepts

Human rights

Stereotypes

Unconscious bias



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace



Part 1:  
**What does LGBTQI+  
mean?**



LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace



# **LGBTQI+ is an acronym meant to encompass a group of diverse sexualities and genders.**



Queer is often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use queer to describe their own gender and/or sexuality if other terms do not fit. For some people, especially older LGBT people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was used as a discriminatory term.





# LESBIAN

**A lesbian is someone who is a woman/woman-aligned person who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women/woman-aligned individuals.**



Individuals may have varying personal definitions or relationships to the terms discussed in this module.





# G

## **GAY**

**A gay person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender as themselves.**

**This term is often used to describe men who are attracted to other men, but some women and gender diverse people may describe themselves as gay.**







# BISEXUAL

**A bisexual person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of their own gender and other genders.**

**The term 'bi+' is also sometimes used to describe the multiplicity of bisexualities.**





# TRANS

**A trans (short for transgender) person is someone whose gender does not exclusively align with the one they were assigned at birth.**

**Trans can be used as an umbrella term, but not everyone uses it to describe themselves. For example, a man who was assigned female at birth might refer to himself as ‘a trans man’, ‘a man with a trans history’ or just ‘a man’. It’s important to use the terms someone uses to describe themselves.**



A large white letter 'Q' is centered within a purple square. To the right of this square, a photograph shows the silhouettes of several people standing with their arms raised in the air, set against a bright sunset or sunrise sky with a low sun creating a lens flare effect.

# QUEER/ QUESTIONING

**The 'Q' in LGBTQI+ is used here as 'Queer and questioning.'**

**Rather than be locked in to a certainty, some people are still exploring or questioning their gender or sexual orientation.**

**People may not wish to have one of the other labels applied to them yet, for a variety of reasons, but may still wish to be clear, for example, that they are non-binary or non-heterosexual. It is important these individuals feel welcome and included in the acronym and communities spaces.**



# QUEER/ QUESTIONING

The use of queer can differ between different groups and generations. For some people, especially older LGBTIQ people, 'queer' has negative connotations because of its historical use as a discriminatory term.

The term has been reclaimed in recent years and is increasingly used, particularly by younger LGBTIQ+ people, in an empowering way or to describe themselves.



If a person tells you they are **not comfortable** with you referring to them as queer, **don't**.

Always respect individual's preferences when it comes to identity labels, particularly ones with troubled histories like this.



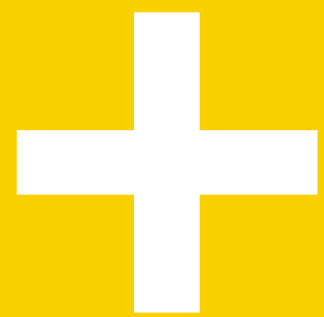


# INTERSEX

An intersex person is born with atypical natural variations to physical or biological sex characteristics such as variations in chromosomes, hormones or anatomy. Intersex traits are a natural part of human bodily diversity. Not all intersex people use the term intersex.

Intersex people have a diversity of bodies, genders and sexualities. 1.7 per cent of children born in Australia are estimated to be born with an intersex variation. There are many different intersex variations, which may or may not be evident at birth, and which have their own terms.





# PLUS (+)

**The “plus” stands for other gender identities and sexual orientations that are not included in the initials.**

**For instance asexual, non-binary and pansexual, among others.**



## Part 2: **Important terms and concepts**



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**Gender, sex, and  
orientation are all  
different concepts.**

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# GENDER

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**Gender** is part of how you understand **who you are** and how you interact with other people.

Many people understand their gender as being a man or a woman. Some people understand their gender as a combination of these or neither.

Gender can be **expressed in different ways**, such as through behavior or physical appearance. A person's gender does not necessarily mean they have particular sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.



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# SEX

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**Sex** refers to a person's **biological** sex characteristics. This can also be referred to as a person's 'assigned sex' at birth.

This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics.



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# Orientation

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**Sexuality** or sexual orientation describes a person's sexual attraction to others.

**Romantic attraction** or romantic orientation describes a person's romantic attraction to others.



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# SOME CORE TERMS

## ALLY

An ally is a person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQI+ community. Active allies are people who take action in support and respect of the LGBTQI+ community.

## ASEXUAL

An asexual person may experience no/limited/fluctuating sexual attraction, but may experience romantic attraction towards others.

## PANSEXUAL

A pansexual person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of all genders, binary or non-binary.

## CISGENDER

A cis (pronounced 'sis', short for cisgender) person is someone whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth – someone who isn't trans or gender diverse.

## NON-BINARY/AGENDER

A person who is non-binary is someone whose gender is not exclusively female or male.  
A person who is agender has no gender.

## HETEROSEXUAL

A heterosexual or 'straight' person is someone who is attracted to people of the other binary gender to themselves.





## Part 3: **Human Rights**



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# LGBTQI+ RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

Discrimination against LGBTI+ people undermines the human rights principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.





# HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Protecting the human rights of LGBTQI+ people includes obligations to:

- **Protect** individuals from homophobic and transphobic violence
- **Prevent** torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment
- **Prohibit** discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- **Safeguard** freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly for LGBTI+ people





## Part 4: **Stereotypes**



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# Stereotypes & the diversity of the LGBTQI+ community

The problem with any stereotype is that it condenses the complex and diverse narratives of the people in that community. The LGBTQI+ community include people of all appearances, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and ages.

Stereotypes are something that are constantly reinforced when you make assumptions about people. In contrast to sensational representations in media, physical representation (how you cut your hair, the clothes you wear, how you walk, how you talk, etc.) has nothing to do gender identity or sexual orientation.

While a comment may be intended as light hearted, for the person on the receiving end, those words may cut deep. The constant exposure to micro-aggressions and stereotypes can lead to people feeling excluded.

By thinking more about how our words might do harm and recognizing how someone might experience a space differently, we can start to make spaces safer for everyone.



# Scenario: Kai

Kai feels out of place arriving for her first day at work because the staff member addressed her as “sir” when meeting for the first time, an experience that is common due to her short hair, but always upsetting.





**What contributed to Kai's stress?**

Kai may have experienced a great deal of bias and stigma in her life because of her gender expression. She is constantly on alert in unfamiliar places, and has come to expect mistreatment.

**What could have been done to prevent this situation?**

This situation could have been prevented by training all staff to use gender-neutral terms (see Table below), and to always speak respectfully, as comments may easily be overheard. Gendered comments can create an unwelcoming environment and may result in people feeling excluded.

Instead of...	Use...
How can I help you sir/ma'am/miss?	How can I help you?
How are you guys/girls?	How are you all doing? How is everyone?
Can you ask him if he's checked in?	Can you ask if they've checked in?



# Scenario: Arya

Arya is a transgender woman enquiring about MCCWA's services. The staff member has never met a transgender person before and finds himself very curious about Arya. He repeatedly catches himself staring at her. While taking Arya's history, the staff asks, “You know, at first I thought you were a real woman. Do you take hormones? Have you had the surgery yet?” Arya angrily responds, “I don’t think that has anything to do with MCCWA services.”





### **Why did the staff upset Arya?**

Arya was at MCCWA to discuss MCCWA services; therefore, her history of gender-affirming medical care was not relevant in this context. The questions about hormones and surgery came from curiosity rather than from a MCCWA-related need. Also, by implying that Arya is not a “real” woman, and by staring at Arya, the staff member was communicating the view that Arya is abnormal.

### **What could the staff have done differently?**

Confusion and curiosity are normal, as we live in a society in which one of the earliest ways we categorize people is by perceived gender. You can avoid being overly intrusive by avoiding questions that are not relevant to MCCWA services. Simply acknowledging to oneself that confusion and discomfort are normal when encountering patients with identities and life experiences that are unfamiliar can help reduce anxiety. One can be honest with the patient about a lack of experience, while expressing a desire to work together and a willingness to learn. You can also explicitly ask the patient to let them know immediately if they do anything that is upsetting or offensive, and then apologize if they do make a mistake.

### **How could the staff member apologize?**

He could say, “I am so sorry for my mistake. I did not mean to offend you.” It is not always possible to avoid mistakes. Simple apologies can go a long way in repairing relationships.



## Part 5: **Unconscious bias**



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# Unconscious Bias

**Everyone has unconscious bias and everyone is affected by bias.**

It is the associations and automatic assumptions, negative or positive, that everyone makes about other people or groups of people based on cultural stereotypes, rather than careful considerations.

Effectively managing bias in the workplace can increase our creativity and performance, and support effective communication and work fulfilment.

Unconscious bias or “hidden bias” is created and reinforced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. It is often interpreted as the first impression and intuitions we have when interacting with other people. Unconscious bias is deeply ingrained into our thinking and emotions and is outside of our control.



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# Three tips for managing your bias

## Tip # 1

Slow down your thinking.  
*E.g. What is the basis of my feelings or thoughts?*

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## Tip # 2

Ask counter factual questions.  
*E.g. What are some alternative understandings?*

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## Tip # 3

Assess the outcomes of the prejudiced attitude/belief.  
*E.g. How do my current beliefs serve me? What are the costs of maintaining my current perspective? How might it benefit me to change?*



# **You have completed: "Topic 1: LGBTQI+ awareness"**



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