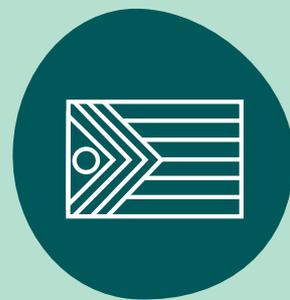


# Appendix H – Supporting people who identify as LGBTIQ+



Homelessness is hard enough, workers make it worse when they don't respect me by using my name and pronouns as I have told them. They also make it worse when they see my homelessness as secondary to what they call my gender problem, and say this to my face. Having nowhere to live is the issue. Who I am is not a problem it is my diversity and should be respected.

*Each person has their own unique experience and needs. It is important to understand the intersectionality between a person's gender, race, sexual identity, culture, experiences and circumstances. Workers may refer to multiple appendices to assist their understanding, engagement and support for each person they engage.*

## Overview

The acronym LGBTIQ+ is often used to refer to people with gender, sexuality and/or sex diversities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual, or other gender or sexual identities). Although people are often grouped together under the LGBTIQ+ umbrella, it is important to understand that each person has unique characteristics, experiences and needs that must be acknowledged and taken into consideration during any interaction.

LGBTIQ+ people have a higher risk of homelessness compared to heterosexual or cisgender people often due to rejection from family<sup>i</sup>. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) gay or lesbian people (34 per cent) and people with 'other' sexual orientations (21 per cent) were more likely to report at least one past experience of homelessness compared with heterosexual people (13 per cent)<sup>ii</sup>. A 2021 study by LaTrobe University found that 23.6 per cent of LGBTIQ+ young people had experienced one or more forms of homelessness in their lifetime and 26 per cent reported that their experience of homelessness was related to being LGBTIQ+<sup>iii</sup>. These figures are likely to underestimate the true extent of experiences of homelessness for LGBTIQ+ people<sup>iv</sup>. Many mainstream data collections in Australia do not adequately record diverse genders, sex characteristics, and sexuality<sup>v</sup>.

LGBTIQ+ are nearly four times more likely than non-LGBT people to experience violent victimisation, including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated or simple assault and about half are not reported to police<sup>vi</sup>.

LGBTIQ+ people are also at greater risk of experiencing sexual coercion which is further compounded by experiences of homelessness.

Although many LGBTIQ+ people live healthy and happy lives, research indicates that a disproportionate number experience poorer mental health outcomes and are at higher risk of suicidal behaviours than the general population. This is directly related to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and abuse on the basis of having an identity that falls within the LGBTIQ+ diversity<sup>vii</sup>.

In Australia, there are limited policy and programs that provide LGBTIQ+ specific support to people experiencing homelessness<sup>viii</sup>. Public and other mainstream services may create challenges and/or lack appropriate options (e.g. gender neutral toilets or accommodation welcoming of transgender and gender diverse people). Not all support options will be recognised as safe, appropriate, accessible or welcoming for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing homelessness. Therefore, it is important that a worker fully explain available support options so the person can make an informed decision.

It is important to provide a respectful and inclusive response when providing support or care. Workers should not assume a person's gender, sex, or sexual orientation by the person's appearance, behaviour or formal documentation. It is for the individual to disclose this information to the worker if they choose to.

# Worker Resources

The National LGBTI Health Alliance has developed a guide for inclusive practice to assist workers engage effectively with LGBTIQ+ people who may be experiencing homelessness<sup>ix</sup>: The *LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Guide for Homelessness and Housing Sectors in Australia* can be found: <https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LGBTI-Inclusive-Practice-Guide.pdf>

The Australian Institute of Family Studies developed a guide that outlines why inclusive communication matters and what works to ensure inclusive communication. The Guide supports practitioners to use this evidence in their decision making. A copy of the Guide can be found: <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/inclusive-communication-lgbtq-clients>

## Engagement strategy

### Things to consider before engaging:

- Understand the difference between sex, gender, sexual orientation, and variations of sex characteristics. For example 'cisgender' refers to a person whose sex assigned at birth aligns with their gender identity<sup>x</sup>.
- The Australian Institute of Family Studies' LGBTIQ+ Glossary of Common Terms can be found: <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/lgbtqi-glossary-common-terms>.
- Be aware that disclosure about sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or innate variations of sex characteristics, may be particularly sensitive for people, may put their safety at risk, and possibly have been a part of their experience in becoming homeless.
- Be mindful that respectful language can differ between age groups, as terminology changes. Avoid making age-based assumptions, and reflect the language that the person uses.

- Be aware that the LGBTIQ+ populations are very diverse. Multiple intersectionalities (e.g. sexuality, gender, sex characteristics, physical and cognitive ability, race, ethnicity, religion, class, age) can combine to impact people's lived experience in many different ways, including but not limited to experiences of stigma, discrimination, and oppression<sup>xi</sup>.

### Strategies for engagement:

- Introduce yourself in a friendly manner, stating your name and the agency/organisation you work for.
- Share your pronoun/s to demonstrate understanding and build rapport with the person.
- Use gender neutral language until the person discloses how they would like to be addressed. Ask the person what name they are most comfortable for you to use including their preferred pronoun/s. Then use their name and pronouns as they described, throughout the engagement.
- If you are unfamiliar with the language the person is using to describe their identities and/ or experiences, then tell them and ask for clarification. Note the terminology and explanation to assist with referrals to services they may request<sup>xii</sup>.
- Ask questions that are person-centred and focus on the person's needs and safety.
- Allow the person to share their story and listen without judgement or providing advice.
- Don't make assumptions about the type of service that the person may wish to access. Ask the person what their specific needs are, and what they are comfortable engaging with. If they request a referral to a service, refer the person on their self-identified gender and choice.

## RESOURCES

### CRISIS SUPPORT

Name	Service	Contact Details
<a href="#">Ask Izzy</a>	A website directory that connects people who are in need with nearby services such as housing, food, health care and legal services in their local area.	<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://askizzy.org.au">https://askizzy.org.au</a>
<a href="#">Link2Home</a>	A statewide telephone service providing information, assessment and referral to specialist homelessness services, temporary accommodation and other appropriate services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week every day of the year.	<b>Phone:</b> 1800 152 152 <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/are-you-homeless">https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/are-you-homeless</a>

## RESOURCES

Name	Service	Contact Details
<a href="#">The Gender Centre</a>	Provides transgender and gender diverse people assistance with housing, income, health, employment, education and training, counseling, support groups, advocacy and building the strength and resilience of the community.	<b>Phone:</b> 02 9519 7599 or 02 9569 2366 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:reception@gendercentre.org.au">reception@gendercentre.org.au</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://gendercentre.org.au/services">https://gendercentre.org.au/services</a>
<a href="#">Twenty10</a>	Provides emergency and transitional accommodation, case management, information and referrals, counselling and social support programs for LGBTIQ+ young people.	<b>Phone:</b> (02) 8594 9555 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:info@twenty10.org.au">info@twenty10.org.au</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://twenty10.org.au/">https://twenty10.org.au/</a>

## OTHER SUPPORT

Name	Service	Contact Details
<a href="#">ACON</a>	Provides a range of services including mental health, drug and alcohol, family and domestic violence, ageing as well as HIV and sexual health education prevention and testing services to LGBTQ communities. ACON also provides counselling, care coordination, peer support to people living with HIV. ACON works to improve the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:acon@acon.org.au">acon@acon.org.au</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://acon.org.au/">https://acon.org.au/</a>
<a href="#">Intersex Human Rights Australia</a>	Provides mental health and wellbeing services, confidential fee-free, short-term counselling to people with innate variations of sex characteristics and their family members.	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:info@ihra.org.au">info@ihra.org.au</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://ihra.org.au/">https://ihra.org.au/</a>
<a href="#">QLife</a>	Provides anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.	<b>Phone:</b> 1800 184 527 <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://qlife.org.au/">https://qlife.org.au/</a>
<a href="#">Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline</a>	Available 24/7 for anyone from the LGBTIQ+ community whose life has been impacted by sexual domestic and/or family violence.	<b>Phone:</b> 1800 497 212 <b>Website:</b> <a href="https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au/family-violence">https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au/family-violence</a>
<a href="#">Reach Out</a>	An online, anonymous and confidential, range of support options including one-to-one peer support and moderated online communities, to tips, stories and resources.	<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au/family-violence">https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au/family-violence</a>

- i AO Hill, A Lyons, J Jones, I McGowan, M Carman, M Parsons, J Power and A Bourne, *Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia*, Latrobe University, 2021.
- ii Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *General Social Survey: Summary Results* [data set], ABS website, 2015.
- iii AO Hill et al., *Writing Themselves in 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia*.
- iv LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, *Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTIQ+ People*, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, 2021.
- v AO Hill et al., *Writing Themselves in 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia*.
- vi A Flores, L Langton, I Meyer and A Romero, 'Victimization rates and traits of sexual and gender minorities in the United States: Results from the National Crime Victimization Survey 2017', *Science Advances*, 6(40), 2020, doi: 10.1126/sciadv.aba6910.
- vii LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, *Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTIQ+ People*.
- viii AO Hill et al., *Writing Themselves in 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia*.
- ix Andrews and McNair, *LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Guide for Homelessness and Housing Sectors in Australia*, The University of Melbourne and National LGBTI Health Alliance, 2020.
- x L Daniele, *Equity before the law bench book – Trans and gender diverse people and people born with diverse sex characteristics*, Judicial Commission of New South Wales, 25 October 2022. [The reference is to a title for part of a publication (a periodical).]
- xi Andrews and McNair, *LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Guide for Homelessness and Housing Sectors in Australia*.
- xii Ibid.