

# LGBTQIA+ HEALTH



LGBTQIA+ is a commonly used umbrella term in Australia. But these patients are not a homogenous group. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or asexual (LGBTQIA+)\* can face unique challenges in accessing quality primary care. They are less likely to access health services due to experiences of stigma and discrimination.

Information about sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status can be highly personal and, in some cases, sensitive. Disclosure may pose a risk to an LGBTQIA+ person's safety, health and wellbeing, and their connections to family and community. GP practice staff need to communicate sensitively and keep disclosed information confidential.

The broad concepts of sex, gender and sexuality are important in understanding the experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ patients.

The principles of patient-centred care, consent, non-discrimination, bodily autonomy and respect are central to quality healthcare for people who are LGBTQIA+.

LGBTQIA+ patients feel most included when the following elements are displayed in clinics:

- Affirmative approach: Provide a welcoming reception to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families.
- Beyond assumptions: Use open questions that do not assume someone is heterosexual.
- Signal inclusivity to all clients: Place LGBTQIA+ related posters or stickers in your rooms.

## LGBTQIA+ people face disproportionate health risks in a number of areas

([LGBTIQ+ Victorians | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/LGBTIQ+Victorians)), including:

- A higher current smoking rate among both LGBTQIA+ adults and young people
- Higher levels of substance abuse disorders
- Higher rates of mental ill-health and suicide
- Higher rates of experiencing family violence
- Higher rates of eating disorders and body image concerns.

## The primary care sector can support LGBTQIA+ people through:

- Sexual health checks
- Mental health checks/plans
- Sexuality and/or gender identity
- Government funded immunisations for men who have sex with men (MSM)
- PrEP treatment
- General advice on other LGBTQIA+ issues.

\* Variations of the acronym LGBTQIA+ exist.

<b>Change Idea templates</b>	Change idea templates identify focus areas for quality improvement activities through the use of practice data. Please contact your Quality Improvement Consultant to assist in identifying change ideas for your practice	
<b>PDSAs</b>	Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles provide a framework to help develop, manage, and test quality improvement activities identified in change idea templates. Your Quality Improvement Consultant can assist in developing your PDSA templates.	
<b>HealthPathways links</b>	HealthPathways aims to guide best-practice assessment and management of common medical conditions, including when and where to refer patients, with guidance on what information is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ Health suite</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQA+ Overview</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTQIA+ Fertility and Parenting</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQA+ Sexual Health</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQA+ Referral</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQA+ Friendly Clinics</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQA+ resources</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Transgender Health and Gender Diversity Referral</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Transgender Health and Diversity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Register for HealthPathways</a></li> </ul>
<b>eLearning resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The National LGBTI Health Alliance offers a number of professional development, education and training courses</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Understanding LGBTIQ - Gpex</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">RACGP - Sexual health and gender diversity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contemporary Transgender and Gender Diverse (TGD) Health for GPs (Online training)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">E-Learning Module: Trans Primary Care</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">‘Doing it Better’: LGBTIQA+ Resources for Healthcare Professionals - Sunbury Cobow Community Health</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Palliative Care eLearning</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Webinar: the Lean On Me report - LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rainbow Health Australia   Training Programs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Melbourne GP, Dr George Forgan-Smith’s YouTube channel aims to help healthcare professionals better understand matters of LGBTQIA+ health</a></li> </ul>	
<b>PHN Exchange reports</b>	PHN Exchange provides a visual analysis for general practice specific data analytics. These are benchmarked against all Murray PHN data sharing practices. See how your practice is tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">PHN Exchange</a></li> </ul>
<b>Pen CS – CAT4 recipes</b>	CAT4 recipes are designed to give new and experienced users a simple step by step guide to a particular problem or question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CAT Recipes - PenCS Help</a></li> </ul>

<b>Health services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</a> – has a list of organisations that provide health services for the LGBTIQ+ community on their members webpage</li> <li>• <a href="#">Thorne Harbour Health</a> – (formerly known as VAC) an organisation that has a long history working with LGBTI communities and people living with or affected by HIV. Thorne Harbour Health also runs a clinic called Equinox, a peer led trans and gender diverse and non-binary health service.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Women’s Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE)</a> – A Victoria-wide, free, generalist information, support and referral service run by women for women.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Star Observer LGBTI Community Organisations and Services Directory</a> – A state-by-state list of community services and organisations.</li> <li>• <a href="#">TransHub</a> - a digital information and resource platform for all trans and gender diverse people.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Minus18</a> – for same-sex attracted and gender diverse young people in Australia.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Royal Children’s Hospital Gender Service</a> – for gender questioning young people.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Q Life</a> – A national telephone and web counselling and referral service for LGBTIQ+ people.</li> </ul>
<b>Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">RACGP - Transgender health</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">RACGP - Care of older LGBTI people</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">RACGP - LGBTIQ+ Family abuse and violence</a></li> </ul>
<b>Language guide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SHV_InclusiveLanguageGuide_Public.pdf (shvic.org.au)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Research matters: What does LGBTIQ mean?</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ+ communities: Glossary of common terms</a></li> </ul>
<b>Sexual health</b>	<a href="#">LGBTIQ+ - Sexual Health Victoria</a>
<b>Carer resources</b>	<a href="#">Carer Gateway – national online and phone service that provides practical information and resources for carers</a>
<b>Trans and gender diverse (TGD) people supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">TransHub</a> – Clear and easy information about gender affirmation and health for trans and gender diverse people.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Your Community Health: Trans and Gender Diverse in Community Health Program</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Australian Professional Association for Trans Health (AusPATH)</a></li> </ul>
<b>Older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Inclusive Services for LGBT Older Adults</a> – A practical guide to creating welcoming agencies</li> <li>• <a href="#">Silver Rainbow</a> – provides national coordination and support activities promoting the wellbeing of older LGBTIQ people and the delivery of the awareness training to the aged care sector.</li> </ul>

Rainbow tick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Rainbow Tick</a> – is a quality framework that helps health organisations show that they are safe, inclusive and affirming services and employers for the LGBTIQ+ community. Accreditation is provided through independent assessment, provided by Quality Innovation Performance and Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.</li> </ul>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">First Nations &amp; LGBTIQ (withrespect.org.au)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Home - Black Rainbow</a></li> </ul>
Social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">QLife</a> – counselling and referral service for LGBTIQ+ people that provides early intervention, peer-supported phone and web-based services to people of all ages. 1800 184 527</li> <li>• <a href="#">Wingmen</a> – mental health support hub for gay men</li> <li>• <a href="#">MindOUT</a> – develops and delivers national suicide-prevention initiatives aimed at building the capacity of the mental health and suicide prevention sectors to meet the support and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQ+ populations</li> <li>• <a href="#">headspace</a> – provides early-intervention mental health services to people aged 12–25, including a number of resources for LGBTIQ+ people</li> <li>• <a href="#">beyondblue</a> – provides several mental health resources for LGBTIQ+ people</li> <li>• <a href="#">ReachOut</a> – online mental health organisation for young people and their parents that provides practical support, tools and tips, including for LGBTIQ+ people</li> <li>• <a href="#">Rainbow Door</a> – A Victorian-based, free LGBTIQ+ helpline. Rainbow Door provides information, support, and referral by trained counsellors and can speak to people about suicidal thoughts, concern for others, or bereavement by suicide. 1800 729 367</li> <li>• <a href="#">Queerspace</a> – Counselling, case management, advocacy, research, training, professional development and consultancy. (03) 9663 6733</li> <li>• <a href="#">CHARLEE</a> – A suicide prevention hub made by LGBTIQ+ people who have thought about suicide, lived through suicide attempts, supported others in distress and live with the pain of loss through suicide.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Carers Australia</a> – has branches who provide support and resources for LGBTIQ+ carers</li> </ul>
Useful links for LGBTIQ+ patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ACON</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTIQ+ support services</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Ending HIV – PreP</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">LGBTI+ support - Better Health Channel</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy   Victorian Government (www.vic.gov.au)</a></li> </ul>
Multicultural fact sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">AGMC Inc – LGBTIQ Multicultural / CALD Support and Advocacy</a></li> </ul>

For further information or support please contact your local [Quality Improvement Consultant](#), email: [gpsupport@murrayphn.org.au](mailto:gpsupport@murrayphn.org.au) or visit the general practice support page on our [website](#)