

Our Community and Service Providers

Many members of the LGBT community often do not access preventative screening programs or disclose their sexual or gender identity to their service provider.

Not everyone has to disclose their sexuality or gender identity – however it can assist both you and the service provider to achieve a holistic and informed approach to the service you require. **Without all the information it is like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle with pieces missing.**

Many people are reluctant to disclose due to past experiences or the fear of heterosexism and homophobia which lead to stigma and discrimination. There are laws to protect people from discrimination based on sexual and gender identity, that are overseen by the Anti Discrimination Commission QLD (ADCQ) www.adcq.qld.gov.au

The ADCQ work to promote equality of opportunity and to protect people from unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment and public vilification.

Impact of discrimination on the LGBT community

- Rejection from family and friends
- Social stigma
- Depression and anxiety
- Social Isolation.

These can then lead to issues for LGBT community members such as:

- LGBT people smoke more
- alcohol and illicit drugs are used more often and longer in life
- less likely to access preventative health checks
- more issues with mental health
- issues around self esteem and confidence, and
- issues around body image and weight.

These all impact on health and well being and these are important pieces of information for the service provider to have, so that they can provide a holistic service. Then your life becomes **a jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces in place.**

Contacts

LGBT

- **QAHC** 1800 177 434
www.qahc.org.au
- **National LGBT Health Alliance**
www.lgbthealth.org.au
- **Your Voice Box**
www.yourvoicebox.com.au
- **Domestic Violence**
Women: 1800 811 811 Men: 1800 600 636
www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/crimePrevention/dv/Same_Sex.htm

Lesbian

- **QAHC** 1800 177 434
www.qahc.org.au/lesbian
- **Girl2Girl** is a lesbian health website that provides safe sex information for women having sex with women.
www.girl2girl.info
- **Lesbian Health**
(03) 8344 6077
Health and Health Care for Lesbian, Bisexual and same sex attracted women including sexuality and parenting.
www.dialog.unimelb.edu.au

Gay Men

- **QAHC** 1800 155 141
www.qahc.org.au/sex
- **Men.org** 1800 155 141
www.men.org.au

Transgender

- **QAHC** 1800 177 434
www.qahc.org.au/transgender

Bisexual

- **Australian Bisexual Network**
www.members.optusnet.com.au/~ausbinet
- **ALSO Foundation-US**
www.secure.also.org.au/resources/bisexual/bisexual_health



Our Health – Our Community



Getting the best from your Service Provider

A resource for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community

Creating Change
Celebrating Diversity
Maintaining Confidentiality

QAHC's Creating Inclusive Services Package

Look for the **Speak Freely Here** resources at your service provider

How do you find an LGBT friendly service provider?

Make enquiries and get recommendations from family and friends who may have accessed services, LGBT organisations, LGBT websites that may have local information, other LGBT friendly service providers, LGBT social and support groups.

Look for advertisements in the LGBT press.

And finally to make sure they are LGBT friendly, visit or call the service and ask questions.

A good LGBT friendly service provider is:

- local, with good availability and who offers service options, then they can offer you what you need
- careful of privacy and confidentiality and understands your concerns regarding these
- knowledgeable of LGBT issues and experiences, promotes a healthy sexual and gender identity, uses gender specific language appropriately and can refer you to appropriate services, and
- able to provide continuity of care, this is important if you have ongoing issues.

It is important to find a service provider who treats you with respect, makes you feel safe and who values and welcomes your involvement in your care.

It makes for a much better experience when your service provider takes the time to listen to your concerns, answers your questions while explaining things in a way that you understand, allows your partner or friend to accompany you and offers written information to take home.

All of these things encourages you to **Speak Freely** to your service provider.

Look for the **Speak Freely Here** resources at your service provider

How will I know if they are LGBT friendly?

Look for visible diversity and confidentiality statements or policies and grievance procedures that are visible or explained to you.

There may be LGBT press or LGBT friendly resources and information about local LGBT social and support groups at the service, either in the waiting room or the office. LGBT friendly services often advertise in the LGBT press.

Their service brochure states that they work with the LGBT community, have LGBT specific services or LGBT community are represented on resources.

The staff and resources use language that does not assume heterosexuality, they talk to you in a non judgmental and culturally sensitive way or there may be visible LGBT staff working in the service.

What are some of the areas that are specific issues for a member of the LGBT community?

For LGBT people in general there are several health issues associated with being from a minority group and from the LGBT community in particular, these are some of the major ones:

- increase instances of anxiety and depression
- excess use of drugs and alcohol
- increased chances of issues with heart health due to lifestyle
- fitness, Weight and Body Image: these all contribute to heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other health issues
- safer Sex and the risk of STIs and HIV, and
- vaccination.

Risks of Cancer, often due infrequent access to preventative screening:

- for Women: Breast and Gynaecological, and
- for Men: Prostrate, Testicular, Colon and Anal Cancer and HPV.

Transgendered people also have the added risks from hormones and possible silicone injections.

How do I get the best from a service provider?

- Make an appointment for the appropriate length of time: sometimes you may need more than the usual appointment time to discuss your issues.
- Before your visit write down all the questions you want to ask: it can be hard to remember everything once you get to the appointment.
- Take a friend or family member with you if you need support: having support can make it easier to talk to the service provider and others may ask questions we forget.
- Be prepared to answer some questions about your needs: even an LGBT friendly service provider may not have all the information about our community.
- Be on time or even early: You then don't feel rushed and can have a more pleasant appointment.
- Explain clearly why you are at the service and what you want: only then can the service provider be clear about what you expect from them.

Tips on establishing a good relationship with your service provider

- Communication is the key to a good consultation
- Be honest about your history, it helps give the whole story
- Find a service provider you are comfortable disclosing to
- Be patient if they are busy, you may need more time another day
- Treat them with respect and expect to get the same
- Work with your service provider to achieve the best possible outcome
- Give permission to make referrals if necessary
- Talk to the service provider about what you want from them.

Help your service provider to deliver you the best service that they can by giving them all the information required.

Provide all the pieces to the jigsaw puzzle so that you may complete it together.