

## SEXUALITY – GUYS, GIRLS OR BOTH

### Sexuality

Sexuality is about your sexual preference or orientation: who you find attractive in a physical way, who you might want to have a relationship with and who you have sex with. There are a range of possibilities.

<b>Homosexuality is ...</b>	being sexually attracted to a person who is the same gender as you. Generally a woman who is homosexual is known as a lesbian and a man is referred to as being gay.
<b>Heterosexuality is ...</b>	being sexually attracted to a person who is the opposite gender to you. So, when a man who likes a woman or a woman who likes man. Also known as being 'straight'.
<b>Bisexuality is ...</b>	being sexually attracted to people from both genders, male or female.
<b>Transgender is ...</b>	a person who has a different gender identity to their physiological identity. For example, a person who has been born a male, actually identifies as a female in terms of how they feel.
<b>Asexual is ...</b>	A person who does not experience sexual attraction to other people
<b>Intersex is ...</b>	A term used for conditions in which a person is born with sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male eg. a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside.
<b>Queer is ...</b>	A re-claimed umbrella term used to describe the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender/transsexual communities.
<b>GLBTIQ is ...</b>	This is short for 'gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer'

### How do I know my sexuality?

Only you are able to know your own sexuality, about how you feel toward other people. But it can take a while to work out which 'tag' fits for you and that is okay. There are some people who never feel like they quite fit any of the tags or who find that their sexual preferences develop over time eg. a woman who was originally only interested in men may decide she is also interested in women. Everyone is different.

### Homophobia – a word about it

Homophobia is the term used to describe the irrational fear, hatred, aversion to or discrimination against people who are homosexual, or same sex attracted, or who are perceived to be homosexual or same sex attracted.

#### Homophobia can exist in a variety of forms

##### Personal:

Fear or hatred of homosexuality that exists as a thought inside someone's head. For example:

- Making a determined effort to dress or act in such a way as to not appear to be queer
- Having low self-esteem because of concerns around being queer.



### **Interpersonal:**

Behaviour of an individual towards others who are, or who are perceived to be lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender or queer. For example:

- Violence, physical harassment, name calling, anti-queer hate crimes.
- Jokes that misrepresent or put down queers, the suggestion that we should 'understand' when we are treated differently.

### **Institutional:**

The ways in which government, business, churches and other organisations discriminate against GLBTIQ people. For example:

- Policy or legislation that actively prevents same-sex couples from being able to adopt or marry
- Ignoring sexuality as a category on data collection sheets

### **Cultural:**

Social "norms" that support the idea that heterosexuality is inherently 'right' and anything else isn't. This is also known as 'heterosexism', the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and that everyone is heterosexual. For example:

- Asking a woman "do you have a boyfriend?" rather than "do you have a partner?" (ie assuming that they're straight).
- Failing to include positive queer role models in mainstream media.
- The most obvious example of heterosexism is the fact that we have to 'come out' as same-sex attracted. There is an assumption that everyone is heterosexual unless we prove otherwise.

Homophobia can be extremely hurtful and harmful, not only to your physical well being and safety but also to your mental health and happiness and to society as a whole.

If you are in immediate danger of physical harm call your local police or 000.

**This information is an extract from the ACON website**

**[www.acon.org.au/youth/Homophobia/what-is-homophobia](http://www.acon.org.au/youth/Homophobia/what-is-homophobia)**

## *Links*

Below are a number of great links to sites that expand on the information we have provided here.

### *Not So Straight*

**[www.notsotraight.com.au](http://www.notsotraight.com.au)**

A website specifically built to help young people find information and support about sex and sexuality.

### *ACON*

**[www.acon.org.au/youth](http://www.acon.org.au/youth)**

Provides information to young people about sexuality, sex, sexual health, ways to improve health and connect with other young people by providing a range of programs, workshops, resources and events.



## Coming Out Australia

### **www.comingoutaustralia.com.au**

A community focused website to provide information, resources and interactive activities for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people about "Coming Out".

## Oz Lounge.

### **www.ozlounge.com.au**

A gay and lesbian social networking site for young people.

## Gay and lesbian Counselling and Community Services

### **www.glccs.org.au**

Links to gay and lesbian telephone counselling services across Australia.

## Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW

### **www.glcsnsw.org.au**

Access to telephone counselling, information & referral services and support groups for gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender persons (GLBT) throughout NSW.

## Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby

### **www.girl.org.au**

Provides information on a number of issues regarding gay and lesbian rights.

## Cherrie

### **www.cherrie.e-p.net.au**

This is the site for lesbian magazine Cherrie which includes articles and stories from the magazine.

## Lemonkind

### **www.lemonkind.com**

Provides a variety of information for lesbian women in Australia such as an events calendar, love and sexuality, family and home, arts and culture, money and business, travel and leisure and activism and herstory. This site is not youth specific.

## Safety Partnership

### **www.safetypartnership.nsw.gov.au**

A site targeting the prevention of violence against gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual people.

## Twenty 10

### **www.twenty10.org.au**

Twenty 10 is an organisation for young (under 26) gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, same-sex attracted and gender-questioning people who are having problems at home or have recently become homeless.

