



# A Parent and Carer's Resource: Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Child

# Who is this resource for?



Cara-Friend have developed this guide to help parents/carers navigate the sometimes difficult road they may find themselves on when dealing with a child or young person who questions their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.

The first step in supporting your child around sexual orientation and gender identity issues is to understand and gain awareness in this area so that parents or carers can talk more knowledgeably and

with compassion with their child. Parents and carers cannot be expected to know everything around LGBTQ+ issues and therefore the most important thing to keep in mind is that to ask your child questions about it and to listen to them is okay and will be welcomed by your child. Listening to your child and allowing them to express themselves, and to self-identify, will not only empower them but also give you a greater insight into their own experience of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

# What are the aims of this resource?

The aims of this resource are dealt with across two sections:

## SECTION 1

To help parents and carers gain a better understanding and knowledge of the language, terminology and issues associated with LGBTQ+ young people.

## SECTION 2

To provide parents and carers with practical tips and measures on how to demonstrate their understanding and acceptance of their LGBTQ+ child.

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# Section 1: A Better Understanding of LGBTQ+ Young People

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## What do we mean by LGBTQ+?

- LGBTQ+ is an acronym for the following identities: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning.
  - It refers to a community or subsection of people that are not heterosexual and/or do not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.
  - It also refers to people who question their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. These people may be unsure about the specific term or label they wish to identify themselves as, but are certain they are not simply heterosexual or cisgender (see Glossary for more information on different identities).
  - The '+' in LGBTQ+ refers to the many other sexual orientations and gender identities which young people may identify as. These usually make up a significantly smaller proportion of the LGBTQ+ population than those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.
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# Issues faced by LGBTQ+ young people

Children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+ can face a range of challenges in addition to pressures already experienced by people their age. These include:



- Fear of 'coming out', i.e. telling someone they are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.
- Anxiety around how they will be perceived and accepted by their family if their sexual orientation and/or gender identity becomes known to their family.
- LGBT bullying, i.e. bullying which is directed at a person because of their perceived or actual minority sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Social isolation, i.e. a lack of friends because they have been left out due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Unsupportive or ill-informed school environment, i.e. teacher and other school staff not having the awareness and knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and language, religious concerns over LGBTQ+ identities, rigid gendered uniform policies, peers anti-LGBT language going unchallenged, issues accessing toilet and changing facilities safely.
- Poor educational achievement: some LGBTQ+ young people don't do as well as they should in school because they are not able to bring their whole selves to school each morning. This can lead to greater rates of truancy and dropping out.
- Increased risk of sexual exploitation, including grooming, particularly through online LGBT-specific apps on mobile phones, or websites.
- Increased risk of homelessness: some LGBTQ+ young people may be made homeless as a result of their parents or families not accepting them for who they are.
- Poorer mental health, due to social isolation and lack of acceptance for who they are, leading to self-harm and suicidal ideation.
- Risky behaviours, and unhealthy coping mechanisms, which can include unhealthy relationships, substance misuse, self-harm, and risky sexual encounters.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that young people identifying as LGBTQ+ have a supportive and loving home environment, with people, parents or carers who understand their identity (sexual orientation and/or gender identity) and accept them for who they are. In providing a safe and accepting home environment for your child you

can mitigate the above concerns and issues which can negatively affect their mental and physical health and wellbeing. It will also allow them to flourish as a young person in all aspects of their life. By bringing their fullest and truest self to the table that child or young person can thrive, not merely survive.

# What is sexual orientation?

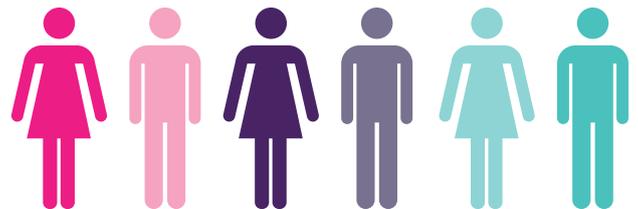
Sexuality and sexual orientation are two terms often used interchangeably, however they have very different meanings and should not be confused.

Sexuality: refers to a person's sexual drive. A person can be highly sexual or, on the opposite side of the scale, have a low sex drive. On this end of the scale young people may identify as asexual, if they don't experience any sexual desires or drive.

**Sexual orientation usually refers to the gender/ genders of the person someone is sexually attracted to, for example:**

- Females attracted to females are lesbian or gay.
- Males attracted to males are gay.

- Males/females attract to both genders are bisexual.
- People attracted to other people, regardless of gender are pansexual.
- Queer can also be used by young people to identify their sexual orientation. This usually means they identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or pansexual, or perhaps that they are unsure of which specific identity they wish to take on as their own.



# What is gender identity?

We often equate gender with biological sex. This is not always the case. Knowing the difference between these is an important first step to understanding young people who are transgender, including non-binary and gender fluid.

- Gender identity: refers to how a person feels about their gender. It is a deeply felt, innate, personal sense of self. People mostly identify as male and female, however there are other gender identities beyond this traditional binary, including non-binary, where someone may feel uncomfortable as either male or female. Someone is considered transgender when their gender identity does not align with their biological sex (or sex assigned at birth). Gender identity is emotional and psychological.
- Biological sex: this is the medical or biological term associated with primary sex characteristics, such as genitalia, hormones, chromosomes, etc. It is physical. When a baby is born they are deemed to be male or female based primarily on the appearance of their genitalia. We call this sex assigned at birth. Some people who are assigned male/female at birth may develop and at some point have a different gender identity to this sex assigned at birth, and that is when the person is transgender. Transgender is concerned with how someone identifies, and does not require any medical intervention in to the biology or physicality of biological sex.
- Gender presentation refers to how an individual presents themselves to the world. They can present themselves as masculine, feminine, androgynous or anywhere in between these.

# What does transgender mean?

People whose personal gender identity does not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth are called transgender or trans. People whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth are called cisgender.

Trans is a term often used as shorthand for transgender. Because it is based on how someone identifies differently from their assigned sex at birth it also acts as an umbrella term for specific gender identities, including gender-fluid, non-binary, trans male, trans female, etc. (see Glossary for more information on these identities).

Transgender is a term we use to describe someone's experience of gender, however an individual does not have to identify as transgender. Just because someone's gender identity is different to their

biological sex does not mean they wish to be identified as transgender. They can simply identify as their gender identity: male, female, non-binary, etc.

Transgender people often experience gender dysphoria, which is a discomfort and distress that arises from feeling they are in the incorrect body, or from someone misgendering them.

Being transgender is a distinct experience from being lesbian, gay or bisexual. Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different things. Though someone can be transgender and gay, for example, it does not mean that because someone is gay they are transgender.

## Transitioning

Transitioning is a process of changing one's assigned gender at birth to more accurately align with one's gender identity. It is a complex process which occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, legal and medical changes: telling one's family; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; changing pronouns, hormone treatment, surgery, etc.

It's important to remember that not all transgender people wish to medically transition. Being transgender is not dependent on medically transitioning, rather simply identifying differently from your sex assigned at birth.

## Being LGBTQ+ is NOT a choice!

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender is not a choice. This point cannot be emphasised enough. A young person does not choose to be different, to seem cool or stand out from the crowd. It is not a phase they will eventually grow out of. If a young person is LGBTQ+ it is simply because that is who they are. The only choice a young person has, with regards to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, is to be themselves - openly and honestly. This is a brave step for a young person, particularly when it might involve being singled out or bullied. It is important for those supporting young people through 'coming out' or transitioning, that they do not attempt to quell someone's identity as this can have very negative effects on a person's mental and physical health.

## Coming Out

Coming out is the term we use to describe the process of telling others around you that you are LGBTQ+. Someone may come out by telling friends or family that they are gay, bisexual or lesbian, and some people may also come out by telling friends or family that they are transgender, gender fluid or non-binary. Coming out is not a one-off event in someone's life, however the point when someone tells their parents, carers and/or family is considered a milestone event in an LGBTQ+ person's life. Coming out is, however, an ongoing process where clarification is needed to correct someone's perception or assumption that you may be 'straight' or cisgender, particularly when you

meet new people, make new friends, start in a new class or school, etc. How someone responds to any individual's coming out will have a lasting impact on the LGBTQ+ young person, particularly when it is with influential adults in their life, such as parents, carers, teachers and youth workers.

For more information on different identities under the LGBTQ+ umbrella please refer to our glossary of terms at the end of this resource. If you are unsure how a young person identifies don't be afraid to ask. There is a great power in listening to young people and allowing them to self-identify, rather than making assumptions.

If a young person is unsure you can refer them to our website ([www.cara-friend.org.uk](http://www.cara-friend.org.uk)) for more information.

## Fears and feelings LGBTQ+ young people can face:

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ can have many fears and feelings around accepting who they are and how others will react. From the difficulty of telling someone for the first time, to fear of being bullied or outed to others without consent. It is often a very stressful time and these emotions and feelings can be present for extended periods which can greatly affect the mental health of the individual.

- Fear of "Coming Out" to friends, family, church, school or society.
- Fear for being misunderstood and/or rejected by those closest to them.
- Feeling they are letting their family down.
- Feeling isolated, alone or lonely as a result of a poor peer network.
- Geographical isolation.
- Fear of or being bullied by peers.
- Feeling the use of alternative coping strategies, such as self harm, are the only way they can deal with negative emotions.



Again, if you as a parent or carer can provide a loving and accepting response and environment for your child then you can largely eliminate these fears and feelings as listed here.

## Section 2: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LGBTQ+ CHILD

This section aims to give practical tips and advice on how you can demonstrate to your child that telling you is okay and that you will love and care for them no matter what. An important tone to aim for in talking with your child is to communicate that you love them

because of who they are and how they identify, not in spite of this. In other words you want to let your child know that being LGBTQ+ is an important part of who they are which makes them unique and wonderful, and just as worthy of love and care because of this.



# Responding to Your Child Coming Out

For parents/carers who are unaware of the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of their young person, being told that your child is LGBTQ+ can be shocking or even difficult. It can leave a parent or carer with many unanswered questions, feeling overwhelmed, or even concerned about their child's wellbeing. A young person will have thought long and hard before telling a parent/carer. They may even have spoken to friends, youth workers or teachers. Telling parents/carers can often be very daunting and how they react will leave a lasting impression.



## How to react:

- Take a deep breath and listen to your child. Listen to all that they have to say. Perhaps what they have to say is very brief, or maybe they will want to talk a lot about how they are feeling and how it has affected them.
- Accept what they are saying. Don't try to convince them that they don't know what they are talking about, or question the legitimacy of what they are saying. They are telling you about how they feel and who they are.
- Reassure them that you love them no matter what, and that you are very happy that they have told you, and that they felt comfortable and confident enough to take this step. Recognising the difficulty your child has had in getting to this point will make them feel good about themselves and assure them that they have made the right decision in telling you.
- Ask them any questions you might have, with sensitivity to tone and content of what you are asking. Don't ask them anything intrusive, rather try and create an open flow of communication where they can feel comfortable talking about their own concerns or feelings.
- Remember that it is the child or young person's feelings which matter most here. The best way you can support them is by listening to them and supporting them. Demonstrate empathy and compassion about their own journey to get to this point.
- Recognise that this is a big moment in their life, a point from which all other conversations about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity will become much easier.
- If you feel you don't know enough about their own identity, demonstrate that you wish to learn more about it in order to understand and support them better. Ask them about it.

## Things you can say:

These statements and responses are meant to give examples of how to demonstrate positivity, compassion and support. It's important, of course, that you mean them. You will of course have concerns, but that can be dealt with at a later stage. For this conversation the most important thing is to respond well and ensure it is a positive experience for you child.



- I love you no matter what
- I'm here to listen to you
- I understand talking about this is difficult but I'm here to listen
- I want to understand how you feel
- You can talk to me about this anytime
- I'm proud of you for telling me
- I'm happy you felt you could talk to me about how you feel
- You are never alone, I'm here for you
- I'm always here to listen and help in any way I can
- I don't know a lot about this but I want to learn, tell me more

## Things to consider in your own time:

- Understand that you did not cause your child to be LGBTQ+ in any way. Understand also, that nothing you or they can do can change them to being 'straight' or cisgender. The only impact you can have is to be a loving, accepting and celebratory parent or carer.
- Address any negative stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people which you may have held in the past. LGBTQ+ people are not a homogenous group. They are as diverse and varied as everyone else.
- Accept that you, like your young person, are on a journey. It may take time to come to terms with this information. Find support, talk to someone about it. You can talk to other parents or carers, or to professionals.
- Adjust your expectations for your child. But not too much. Perhaps your child won't have that church wedding you always dreamed for them, but that's not to say they won't be happy and secure.
- Give yourself a pat on the back. You have raised or cared for an articulate, confident young person who has the maturity and self-awareness to be able to come out as LGBTQ+.
- If you need more information, guidance or support, then feel free to contact Cara-Friend via our website, email or telephone. We will be happy to chat and to help in any way we can.

## What not to say:

Saying the wrong thing will damage your relationship with the young person. Negative and hurtful comments or using homophobic/transphobic language will not make your child change their mind about who they are, as stated earlier - it is not a choice. If they feel rejected or under attack they are more likely to shut down and not communicate with you in the future. Here are examples of things not to say:

### **"It's just a phase."**

- If a young person "comes out" as being LGBTQ+ they have been thinking about it for a long time and questioning themselves internally. Saying "it's just a phase" makes them feel like they have not been heard or understood.

### **"You are too young to make decisions like that."**

- The majority of young people who identify as LGB know from 12 years.
- Trans/Transgender young people will have an awareness from 3 years and up.

### **"We aren't going to talk about this again."**

- Cutting the lines of communication is not helpful and makes the young person feel both they and their information are not important.
- Having a parent shut you down and not want to communicate will cause relationship problems between parent or carer and young person.

### **"You need more life experience before you can be sure."**

- If you are 'straight'/heterosexual ask yourself this question - at what age did you choose to be 'straight'? How did you know you weren't gay unless you got more life experience? The answer is simple - we all have an internal awareness of who we are.

### **"You are just looking for attention."**

- The young person isn't looking for attention they are looking for acceptance, understanding and love from parents/carers.

### **"It's always something with you."**

- This is a very negative comment which makes the young person feel it is all their fault.

### **"You disgust me - get out."**

- Hurtful language can be deeply damaging, causing emotional turmoil and distress. Your child's safety is of paramount importance. Anything that you could say or do to put that in danger should be avoided at all costs.

### **"It's all my fault."**

- Some parents/guardians will make it all about themselves and therefore they aren't really listening to their young person. The suggestion that anyone can be at 'fault' also communicates that you think it is a negative development.



# If Your Child Hasn't Come Out Yet

You might wonder if your child is LGBTQ+. While it is impossible to know if your child is lesbian, gay or bisexual from their behaviours or how they present themselves, it can be apparent that a child is experiencing gender dysphoria should they be transgender. Children who are transgender often display signs of dysphoria from as young as 3 years old. Quite often this can be as straightforward as a child telling you that they are not a boy or not a girl, for example. Advice and support around this issue can be obtained from Cara-Friend or from our partners in SAIL NI (see the last section for organisations which can help).

If you think you're child is lesbian, gay, or bisexual, it's important to give them the space and time to figure it out for themselves, while making the

environment for them to do so as comfortable and accepting as possible. Often asking a child whether they are lesbian, gay or bisexual is not the best course of action as the child or young person may not be ready to say it themselves, or not comfortable enough with themselves to talk about it. The best way to demonstrate to them that they can talk to you about sexual orientation (and indeed gender identity) is to speak positively about relevant issues or stories which may come up in the media, on television or through family and friends' experiences. Demonstrating that you are accepting of LGBTQ+ identities in general can create a climate where a young person feels that telling you about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity won't be a big deal or a negative experience.

## Additional Challenges

When a young person "comes out" as being LGBTQ+ they often have to deal with challenges that do not affect their 'straight' and cisgender peers. Parents/guardians may feel slightly "out of their depth". Extra support and understanding are advisable in the following areas:



### Dating

- Try to accept your child's choice of partner.
- Seeing your son date a boy or daughter date a girl may take time to get used to, but normalising and accepting it as soon as possible will help you both.

### 'Coming Out' to family and friends

- Respect the fact that it is your child's information. It is up to them when and how they tell others.
- Do not tell others without your child or young person's permission, even if your intentions are good, it is not your information to distribute.

### Transitioning

- Transitioning is when a transgender person starts to change their gender expression to be more in line with how they feel and which gender identity they align with.
- This can involve changing dress and clothing to become more masculine, feminine or androgynous.
- It can also involve changing their preferred name and the pronouns which they wish to be referred to with, e.g. he/him, she/her, they/them.

Your child may wish to avail of services through a gender identity clinic or service. All medical intervention should be sourced through your GP with referrals.

### Questioning

- The questioning period is when a young person questions themselves internally about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Allow them the space and time they need to do this.
- There is no fixed time frame of how long this will take.

### Bullying

- LGBTQ+ young people are easy targets for bullies simply because they do not conform to social norms as we live in a heteronormative society where the default expectation is that everyone is 'straight' and cisgender.

- If your child is being bullied verbally, physically or online it must be reported to authorities. Failure to do so may have serious repercussions on their mental well being, self esteem and confidence.

### School environment

- Schools have a huge part to play in the life of a young person.
- If your child has certain needs that are not being met then parents/carers may have to speak to school authorities to discuss a way forward. Issues such as:
  - Uniform policy
  - Bathrooms
  - Changing rooms
  - Physical education
  - Bullying
  - Homophobic/ Biphobic/ Transphobic language

### Coping strategies

- Young people may have developed a variety of coping strategies to help them deal with coming to terms with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Some coping strategies are not healthy - such as self harm, drugs and alcohol. Rather than removing a coping strategy, help your child or young person find a healthier one.
- It is important the young person gets help with these in a safe and confidential manner.

### Poor communication

- All parties must keep the lines of communication open. Let your young person know you are happy and willing to talk about how they feel. This may be slow so be patient: give them time and space Use open questions like:
  - How does that make you feel?
  - What are you thinking right now?
  - What can I do to help?

# Additional Support From LGBTQ+ Organisations:

## Cara-Friend

Cara-Friend is the LGBTQ+ youth service for Northern Ireland. They work with LGBTQ+ young people aged 12-25 and offer a variety of supports, including LGBTQ+ youth groups and one-to-one support. They also deliver the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme (see brochure on website) which offers organisational support and guidance for schools; one-to-one support for LGBTQ+ students; Gay-Straight Alliance support; and ShoutOut anti-bullying workshops, which tackle negative attitudes among young people towards LGBTQ+ identities. Cara-Friend is any individual or organisation's one-stop shop for support, guidance and signposting when wishing to better support LGBTQ+ young people.

[www.cara-friend.org.uk](http://www.cara-friend.org.uk)

**Belfast LGBT Centre Office: (028) 9089 0202**

**Foyle LGBT Centre Office: (028) 7128 3030**

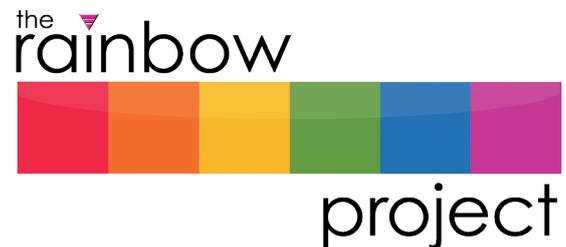
## The Rainbow Project:

The Rainbow Project: is an LGBTQ+ health organisation that works to improve the physical, sexual, mental & emotional health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people in Northern Ireland. One of their core services is free counselling for LGBTQ+ people.

[www.rainbow-project.org](http://www.rainbow-project.org)

**Belfast LGBT Centre Office: (028) 9031 9030**

**Foyle LGBT Centre Office: (028) 7128 3030**



**SAIL NI:**

SAIL NI is a support organisation for the families of transgender and gender variant people in Northern Ireland. They directly support families across the region, as well as advocating for trans people and their families at a regional, national and European level.

[www.sailni.com](http://www.sailni.com)

**Belfast Trans Resource Centre: (028) 9532 0023**

**GenderJam:**

GenderJam support and advocate for the young trans community in Northern Ireland. They are working to make the region better for trans, non-binary, questioning and intersex people. They also run trans-specific social drop-in groups for those aged under 25 in Belfast and Newry.

[www.genderjam.org.uk](http://www.genderjam.org.uk)

**Belfast Trans Resource Centre: (028) 9099 6819**

**MORE INFORMATION**

Cara-Friend's website is a wealth of information with numerous resources available for free download:

- A Young Person's Guide to Coming Out
- A Parent & Carer's Resource: Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Child
- A Teacher's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice
- A Youth Worker's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice
- Guide to Tackling LGBT-Phobic Bullying
- Guide to Transitioning in Education and Youth Services
- LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme
- Gay-Straight Alliance Toolkit

# Glossary of Terms

## Androgynous

A term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly 'female' nor 'male', usually based on appearance.

## Asexual

A sexuality characterised by lack of sexual attraction or lack of a desire for partnered sexuality.

## Biphobia

The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are bisexual.

## Bisexual (Bi)

A person who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to both males and females.

## Cisgender

A term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

## Closeted

Describes a person who has yet to 'come out of the closet', i.e. they are not open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## Coming Out

The process of telling someone about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It is not a one-time event as an individual must come out countless times over the course of their lifetime.

## Gay

A word used to describe someone of either gender who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same gender. More often used for males attracted to males.

## Gender Expression

Refers to how someone expresses their gender. This may refer to how an individual dresses, their general appearance, the way they speak, and/or the way they carry themselves.

<p><b>Gender Fluid</b></p> <p>When someone is gender fluid it means that they do not have a fixed gender identity.</p> <p>They have a gender identity which can change daily, weekly, monthly - or less regularly.</p>	<p><b>Gender Non Conforming</b></p> <p>A person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.</p>
<p><b>Gender Identity</b></p> <p>An individual may have a gender identity which is different to or the same as their biological sex. Gender identity is a personal, deeply felt sense of one’s own gender. It is important to note that an individual’s gender identity is completely separate from their sexual orientation. Everyone has a gender identity, regardless of whether someone is transgender or otherwise.</p>	<p><b>Gender Role</b></p> <p>A societal expectation of how an individual should act, think and/ or feel based upon their biological sex.</p>
<p><b>Gender Neutral</b></p> <p>A term used to describe facilities that any individual can use regardless of their gender (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms) This term can also be used to describe an individual who does not subscribe to any gender (sometimes referred to as ‘Gender Queer’).</p>	<p><b>Heteronormative</b></p> <p>A viewpoint or approach which assumes heterosexuality as the default, ‘normal’ or preferred sexual orientation, as opposed to one of many possibilities.</p>
	<p><b>Heterosexual</b></p> <p>People whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex (also known as ‘straight’)</p>
	<p><b>Homosexual</b></p> <p>People whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to people of the same sex (see also ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’)</p>
	<p><b>Homophobia</b></p> <p>The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are gay or lesbian.</p>

<b>Intersex</b>	People who naturally (without medical intervention) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female.	<b>Outing</b>	The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation, but often based on disclosures made) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. This is considered inappropriate.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman or girl whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to other women or girls. Some lesbians identify as gay women.	<b>Out</b>	When someone is 'out' their sexual orientation and/or gender identity is not secret, and is disclosed comfortably by an individual.
<b>LGBT-phobia</b>	The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are LGBTQ+.	<b>Pansexual</b>	Not limited in sexual orientation with regard to biological sex, gender or gender identity.
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	An acronym which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning. This term acts as an umbrella term for the entirety of the community or subsection of the population whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual and/or whose gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth.	<b>Pronouns</b>	Pronouns are how we refer to someone in the third person, e.g. 'he', 'she' or 'they'. If someone is transgender then their gender identity is different to the sex assigned at birth, so an individual may choose to be referred to using different pronouns to that of their legal biological sex.
<b>Non-binary</b>	A gender identity which does not fall into the traditional gender binary of 'male' and 'female'. Non-binary is an umbrella term and can describe a wide range of identities and experiences.		

<p><b>Queer</b></p>	<p>Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves. It is not universally accepted within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless someone self-identifies that way.</p>	<p><b>Trans or Transgender</b></p>	<p>An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Someone who was assigned male at birth may identify as female and therefore would be considered transgender. Note it does not have anything to do with alterations made to bodies, it relates to gender identity.</p>
<p><b>Questioning</b></p>	<p>The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.</p>	<p><b>Transition</b></p>	<p>Transitioning is a process of changing one's birth sex to more accurately align with one's gender identity. It is a complex process which occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, legal and medical changes: telling one's family; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; changing pronouns, hormone treatment, surgery, etc.</p>
<p><b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b></p>	<p>When a baby is born the sex of male or female is assigned to it based primarily on the appearance of their genitalia. A child can also be intersex.</p>	<p><b>Transphobia</b></p>	<p>The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are transgender.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>The term used to describe an individual's physical, romantic, sexual and emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual ('straight') orientations.</p>		

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