

Promoting the Safety of Same sex Attracted, Intersex and Gender Diverse Children and Young People

Within Victoria and at the Commonwealth level, it is illegal to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation, inter-sex status or gender identity e.g. *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). Promotion of the safety and wellbeing of young people including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) is given in:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Catholic communities, including parishes and schools, are religious contexts in which the Catholic Church welcomes persons and families from a wide variety of backgrounds and divergent experiences. Given the different kinds of domestic environments in which members of the Catholic community live, it is important to retain the long-standing Christian commitment to welcome and hospitality, so that all people with whom we interact can be free of humiliation, exclusion and abuse of all kinds.

A national study on sexual health and wellbeing indicated that same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people found that:

- 61% of LGBTI young people reported experiencing verbal homophobic abuse
- 18% reported physical homophobic abuse
- 69% report other types of homophobia, including exclusion and rumours

Hillier et al 2010

HELPFUL KEY TERMS

Term	Meaning
Bisexual	A person who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of any sex or gender identity.
Gay	Primarily refers to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. The term has also been in use as a noun with the meaning 'homosexual man'.
Gender diverse	Refers to a person who does not identify as a woman or a man.
Gender identity	The way in which a person understands, identifies or expresses their masculine and feminine characteristics within a sociocultural context.
Homophobia	Irrational fear or hatred of, or aversion towards, lesbian, gay or bisexual people.
Intersex	Born with physical characteristics that do not fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies e.g. natural variations may include genital, chromosomal and a range of other physical characteristics. Sources: Ansara 2013, Intersex Human Rights Australia 2014
Lesbian	A woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women.
LGBTI	An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.
Same-sex attracted	Being romantically or sexually attracted to others of the same sex.
Sexual orientation	A person's physical, romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction to other persons.

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Sex	A person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as either male or female.
Transgender	Refers to people whose assigned sex at birth does not match their internal gender identity.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Intersex Human Rights Australia is an independent support, education and policy development organisation, by and for people with intersex variations or trait.

website: www.ihra.org.au

Youthbeyondblue provides information, resources and support for young people dealing with depression and/or anxiety.

phone: 1300 22 46 36 (24 hours, 7 days)

online chat: www.youthbeyondblue.com (3pm–12am)

Headspace (National Youth Mental Health Association) provides in person, online and telephone support and counselling to young people (12–25 years)

phone: 1800 650 890

website: <https://headspace.org.au>

REFERENCES

Hillier, L, Jones, T, Monagle, M, Overton, N, Gahan, L, Blackman, J & Mitchell, A 2010, *Writing themselves in 3: the third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, ARCSHS.



Version 1: July 2019
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