

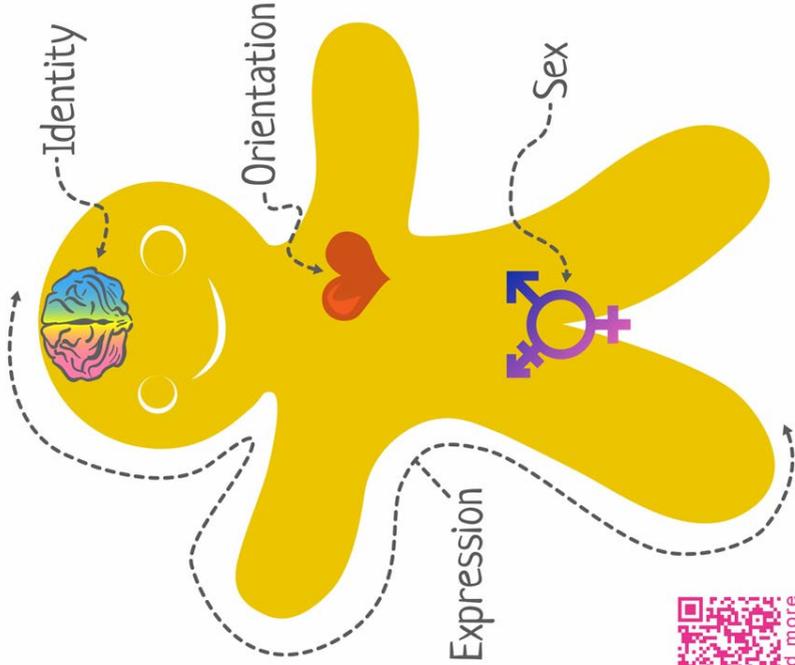
BASIC GUIDE: **SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY**



Schools should be happy places where all young people can focus on their education. However, anti-LGBTI bullying is common and can affect young people's attendance and work in school. This leaflet provides some information and answers to questions you may have about what being 'LGBTI' really means.

The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com



Gender Identity



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender Expression



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



Biological Sex



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual Orientation



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.



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HELPFUL DEFINITIONS: WHAT IS...?

LESBIAN: A woman who is attracted to other women.

GAY: A person who is attracted to people of the same sex – this can apply to men and women.

BISEXUAL: A person who is attracted to both sexes – this can apply to men and women.

TRANSGENDER: A person whose gender identity or behaviour is not the same as the sex they were given at birth.

INTERSEX: A person who is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit the typical definitions of female or male.

SEX: Refers to a person's biological characteristics that make them male, female or intersex.

GENDER: Refers to the roles and behaviours that society associates with men and women.

STRAIGHT: A person who is attracted to people of the opposite sex.

HOMOSEXUAL: A person who is attracted to people of the same sex – this can apply to men and women.

HETEROSEXUAL: A person who is attracted to people of the opposite sex.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Everyone has a sexual orientation. It is based on whether a person is attracted to someone of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both.

GENDER IDENTITY: Everyone has a gender identity and it is based on what they feel like inside – male or female or both or neither. A person's gender identity may or may not be the same as the sex they were given at birth and it may be different from how everybody else sees them.

GENDER EXPRESSION: How a person demonstrates their gender through the ways they act, interact, dress and behave.

L - Lesbian

G - Gay

B - Bisexual

T - Transgender

I - Intersex

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE LGBTI?

- Being LGBTI is completely natural and nobody really knows why some people are and others are not. Being LGBT is not an illness and nobody chooses to be LGBT, some people are just born that way.



HOW CAN I TELL IF SOMEONE IS LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL?

You can't tell just by looking at someone whether they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. There are people of all races, ages and family backgrounds who are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Just because a boy has some feminine qualities or a girl is a little masculine, it does not mean that he or she is gay or lesbian.



WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE TRANSGENDER?

- There is no single reason why a person is transgender and it is not an illness. Hormones, genetics and how a person feels inside make up their gender identity.



DO GAY MEN WANT TO BE WOMEN? DO LESBIAN WOMEN WANT TO BE MEN?

No. Being gay or lesbian means a person is attracted to people of the same sex and this is known as a person's sexual orientation - this is different to a person's gender identity.



WHAT IS ANTI-LGBTI BULLYING?

- Anti-LGBT bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour that is aimed at a person because he or she is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex or because people think they are. Anti-LGBTI bullying is very serious and can be extremely harmful.



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ANTI-LGBTI BULLYING?

- Bullying is a serious issue with extremely damaging effects. Bullying can lead to anything from skipping class and missing school to depression, self-harm, substance abuse and even suicide. As many as 1 in 6 LGBTI people in South Africa have attempted suicide at some point. So, speaking out about being bullied, or someone you know who is being bullied is essential.



CAN LGBTI PEOPLE BE ‘CURED’?

- There is nothing to cure – being LGBTI is completely normal.



I THINK I MIGHT BE LGBTI - WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- First, don't worry – it's completely normal. If you're confused or worried, find someone you trust to talk with about your feelings. This might be hard at first but it will help. You could talk to your parents, a friend, a family member, a teacher or anyone you feel comfortable talking with. You can seek help from a local LGBTI support group (see Triangle Project below).



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED BECAUSE THEY ARE LGBTI?

- Being bullied can be very upsetting and it is important that you tell the person you know that you love and support them. More help is available from **Triangle Project**.

LGBTI SUPPORT SERVICES

TRIANGLE PROJECT: Based in Cape Town, Triangle offers health and support services to LGBTI people and their families. **Helpline number:** 021 712 6699 – it is open daily from 1-9pm and calls are answered by friendly, trained professionals who will ensure your privacy.

Web: www.triangle.org.za

FREE GENDER: Free Gender is a black lesbian organization based in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. As human rights defenders, Free Gender challenges stigma, exclusion, and discrimination in terms of sexual identities and gender expressions.

Tel: [021 362 9491](tel:0213629491)

Email: freegender2008@gmail.com

Web: freegender.wordpress.com

GENDER DYNAMIX: Based in Cape Town. Provides resources and assistance for transgender persons and their employers, families and partners.

Tel: [021 633 5287](tel:0216335287)

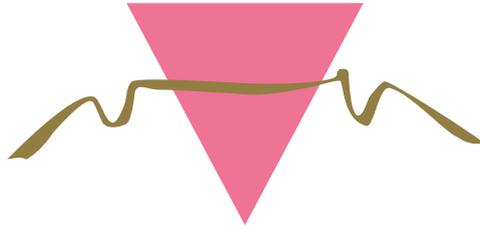
Web: www.genderdynamix.org.za

IAM (INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING MINISTRIES): IAM supports and empowers the LGBTI community, parents, family and friends and people living with HIV/AIDS to stimulate dialogue in building welcoming, affirming and inclusive faith communities.

Tel: [021 975 8142](tel:0219758142)

Email: info@iam.org.za

Web: www.iam.org.za



triangle project

Challenging Homophobia
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