

**Sexual  
Health  
Victoria**

Care  
Education  
Advocacy

# **LGBTIQA+ Inclusive Language Guide**



**This brochure refers to language in the context of LGBTIQ+ inclusion. This means language that recognises the diversity of sexuality, gender, bodies and relationships.**

**This resource was developed in consultation with members of the LGBTIQ+ community. We thank them for their time and ongoing commitment to education.**

**As society's understanding of sex, sexuality and gender expand, language will evolve. This document is intended for use as a general guide, and not as a definitive resource. It will require updating, and we encourage you to approach Sexual Health Victoria with any suggestions.**

## **LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language**

The way we communicate within our community is imperative to building a more inclusive society. A way to do this is by using language that is respectful, accurate and relevant to all. LGBTIQ+ identity is just one facet of people's lives. People may have words to describe their sex, sexuality and gender identity and expressions that don't fit within the scope of this resource.

Prejudice and exclusion can negatively affect the health and wellbeing outcomes of people of diverse genders, sexualities, and sex. Language, often unknowingly, is one of the forms this discrimination can take place.

## **Five Steps**

The following steps may be used as a guide to properly incorporate inclusive language into conversations.

### **Step 1 – OPEN**

Keep an open mind. Try to approach new ways of thinking about language with curiosity and empathy.

### **Step 2 – FOCUS**

Remember to focus on the person you are referring to and not the demographic group they may belong to.

### **Step 3 – CONTEXT**

Think about the context. Sometimes the informal language you use isn't inclusive of others.

### **Step 4 – ASK**

Sometimes, you may be unsure of the correct terminology. So, if relevant, ask respectfully.

### **Step 5 – CALM**

We may use language that is not inclusive. Keep calm, respond appropriately and understand the other person's perspective.



## **Inclusive Language 101**

### **Pronouns**

Pronouns are words that we use to refer to a person when talking about them, without using their name.

### **Common pronouns:**

- She/her
- He/him
- They/them

### **Neo pronouns:**

- Xe/Xir
- Ze/Zir

### **Example of how we use pronouns:**

“Hey everyone, I’d like you all to meet our new staff member Stevie. They are going to be working on our IT project for the next six months, please make them feel welcome.”

### **Why are pronouns important?**

No matter who we are, we all feel respected and affirmed when our correct pronouns are used, and this is particularly true for trans and gender diverse people.



## Sexuality & Gender Key Terms

**A lesbian** person is generally a woman who is romantically and/or sexually attracted solely to women. Some gender diverse people may also identify as lesbian.

**A gay** person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to other people of the same sex and/or gender. Sometimes this term is used as an umbrella term to refer to the broader community, interchangeably with 'LGBTIQA+' or 'queer'.

**A bisexual** person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender, and other genders.

**An asexual** person experiences little to no sexual attraction to others, although they may experience romantic attraction.

**A pansexual** person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to people regardless of gender.

**A heterosexual** or straight person is a person who is attracted to people of the opposite gender.

**Queer** is often used as an umbrella term to describe diverse genders and sexualities. This term has historically been used as a slur. While many people have chosen to reclaim this word, it may be offensive to others.

**Transgender, trans and gender diverse** are used as umbrella terms to describe people whose gender identity does not align with cultural expectations of the sex and gender they were presumed to be at birth.

**Non-binary** is an umbrella term describing people whose experiences of gender exist outside of cultural expectations of being a man or a woman.

**Cisgender** is a term used to describe people for whom their gender identity aligns with cultural expectations of the sex and gender they were presumed to be at birth.

**Brotherboy** is a word used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which can describe a gender diverse person who has a male spirit and takes on male roles within the community. How the word is used may differ among First Nations countries, communities, and individuals.

**Sistergirl** is a word used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which can describe a gender diverse person who has a female spirit and takes on female roles within the community. How the word is used may differ among First Nations countries, communities, and individuals.

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