

CNI Network Training Module

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

How are we to react when we meet someone who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ)? Confused and distant, or compassionate and with love?

Regardless of our interpretation of the Scriptures we are called to love one another. We need to understand the language of the LGBTQ community and respect them.



Language

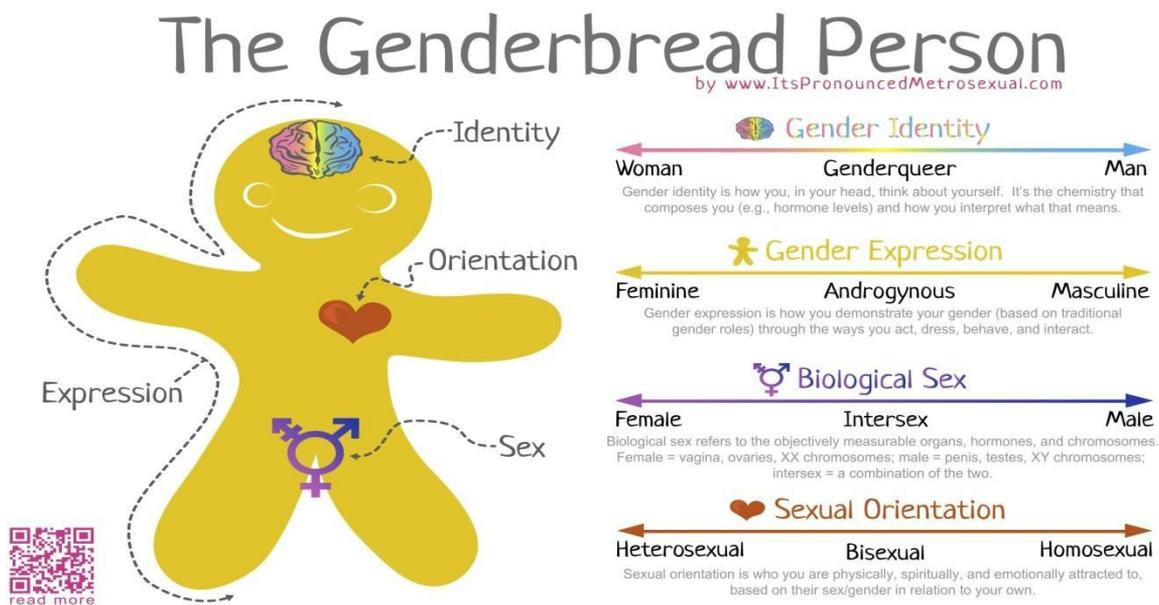
Title	Description
Lesbian	A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.
Gay	A person who is attracted primarily to members of the same sex. Although it can be used for any sex (e.g. gay man, gay woman, gay person).
Bisexual	A person who is attracted to both people of their own gender and another gender. Also called “bi”.
Transgender	It is frequently used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth or the binary gender system. This includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueer, drag kings, drag queens, two-spirit people, and others.
Queer	Individuals who challenge both gender and sexuality regimes and see gender identity and sexual orientation as overlapping and interconnected. It can also be used as a collective term for those who are not heterosexual (or cisgender).

You can also see that the issue of language is complex and is emerging. The use of the mnemonic LGBTQ can extend to well over 30 other labels: one needs to show respect for these are people’s lives.

This starts to promote questioning about what is sex and gender.

Label	Description
Sex	Categorised by the person's reproductive organs
Gender	A term which refers to the ways in which we each manifest masculinity or femininity. It is usually an extension of our “gender identity,” our innate sense of being male, female, etc.

This diagram highlights some of the differences.



Typically we may presume that gender and sex are the same - now we understand that this is not always the case.

Moreover, many question whether being gay is authentic. The Royal College of Physicians have stated that: "It is not the case that sexual orientation is immutable or might not vary to some extent in a person's life. Nevertheless, sexual orientation for most people seems to be set around a point that is largely heterosexual or homosexual. Bisexual people may have a degree of choice in terms of sexual expression in which they can focus on their heterosexual or homosexual side ... The College believes strongly in evidence-based treatment. **There is no sound scientific evidence that sexual orientation can be changed.**" http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02_2014.pdf

How many people identify as LGBTQ in the UK?

Statistics are limited as the Office of National Statistics asked how many people about their sexual identity and not about sexual orientation and/or attraction. The percentage in the UK varies between 4-7% with a higher proportion in certain regions such as Manchester and London; nevertheless, you will encounter LGBTQ individuals. Lesbian young people are up to six times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth. Young gay men are 30 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts: some have made as many as 9 unsuccessful attempts to kill themselves. The highest rates of suicide are among those who are isolated from support. One study in the UK found that 34% of transgender adults had attempted suicide at least once and almost 14% of transgender adults had attempted suicide more than twice. This higher risk of suicide is related to experiences of discrimination, including stigma, transphobia and bullying.

You can be that support for them. How?

The word homosexuality is quite a recent introduction into our vocabulary. In 1867 it was introduced to describe what was then considered a disease. Medical professionals now no longer deem it to be a disease. The word homosexual was first introduced into the Revised Standard Bible in 1946. This may have affected our interpretations of some of the scriptures.

- With LGBTQ individuals, as we wouldn't ask heterosexual people questions about their sexuality, please don't ask LGBTQ individuals.
- If they are transgender, ask them which **pronoun** they wish to be used - it's very important to them. Many may prefer to be called 'they'; if in doubt just use their name - don't 'mis-gender' them.
- The Association of Christian Counsellors (and the Royal College of Physicians) have agreed that it is unethical to undertake reparative or conversion therapy. This form of therapy means praying for them to become 'straight'.

If they do disclose that they want to 'come out' as LGBTQ then provide the signposts for that support:

- <http://lgbt.foundation/information-advice/coming-out-support/>
- <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-area>
- <https://lgbt.foundation/get-support/>

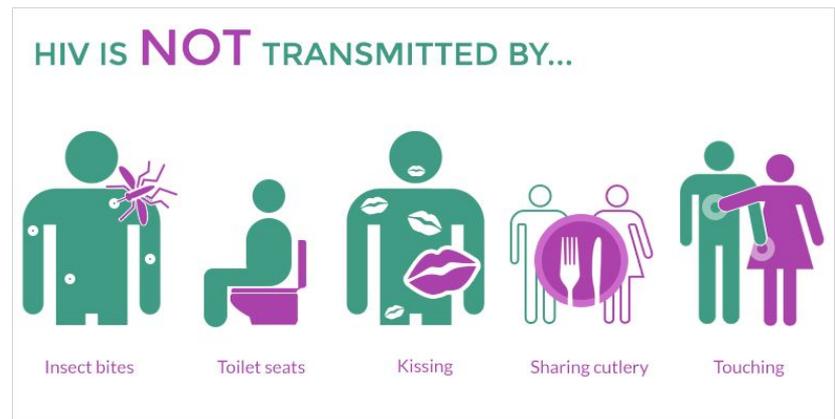
If they have children who identify as LGBTQ then you could offer them details to contact a number of agencies across the country:

- Friends & Families of Lesbians and Gays (<http://www.fflag.org.uk/>) offer telephone support to all parents (including Transgender and Bisexuals); other parents groups also exist (<http://www.fflag.org.uk/index.php/support/parent-groups>)
- If they are Christian parents then Diverse Church, based in London but spread over the whole country, support parents through social media and local meetings (<http://diversechurch.website/parents-of-lgbt-folk/>)

HIV

The stigma of being diagnosed with HIV can be very distressing to LGBT people, so people who have just been diagnosed will often need a lot of emotional support.

If they are worried about HIV then suggest this webpage:



<http://www.hivaware.org.uk/facts-myths/hiv-statistics> or

<http://www.avert.org/hiv-transmission-prevention/myths>

Myths

Myth No. 1: [I can get HIV by being around people who are HIV-positive.](#)

Myth No. 2: [I don't need to worry about becoming HIV positive -- new drugs will keep me well.](#)

Myth No. 3: [I can get HIV from mosquitoes.](#)

Myth No. 4: [I'm HIV-positive -- my life is over.](#)

Myth No. 5: [AIDS is genocide.](#)

Myth No. 6: [I'm straight and don't use IV drugs -- I won't become HIV-positive.](#)

Myth No. 7: [If I'm receiving treatment, I can't spread the HIV virus.](#)

Myth No. 8: [My partner and I are both HIV positive -- there's no reason for us to practice safer sex.](#)

Myth No. 9: [I could tell if my partner was HIV-positive.](#)

Myth No. 10: [You can't get HIV from oral sex.](#)