

Sexuality and gender



Sex

Sex is defined as the two main categories (male or female) into which humans and many other living things are divided based on reproductive functions. It includes genetic, hormonal and physical characteristics.

For example, people will either have male sex parts such as a penis, female sex parts such as a uterus or vagina, or sometimes both (intersex). They may have XX chromosomes (female) or XY chromosomes (male). They may be high in testosterone (a male hormone) or they may be high in estrogen and progesterone (female hormones).

The word sex can also be used to describe the act of intimacy between people. It can be the physical contact between individuals involving sexual stimulation; sexual activity or behaviour. Sex is different to both sexuality and gender.

Sexuality

Sexuality is used to describe attraction, for example someone might be:

- attracted to the same sex (homosexual/gay/lesbian),
- attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual/straight),
- attracted to people of both male and female sexes (bisexual),
- attracted to people of any sex or gender (pansexual), or
- not attracted to anyone at all (asexual).

Gender

Gender describes how people identify. For example, cisgendered describes a person who identifies as the same gender as the gender they were assigned with at birth.

A transgendered/trans person is someone who identifies as a gender different to the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary is a term used to describe people who do not identify specifically as one gender or another. They might identify as both male and female, neither male or female, or something else.

Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is a diagnosis given when someone is experiencing pain or discomfort stemming from a mis-match between the gender they identify with, and the gender they have been assigned.

Not everyone who is transgendered or non-binary experiences this distress, but many do, and without support or treatment they can experience serious mental ill-health outcomes.

Discrimination

It is against the law to discriminate against people because of their sex, gender, or sexual preference.

'Hate speech' laws in Tasmania say that any conduct which offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules another person because of sexual orientation and gender identity is also illegal.

Family Planning is for every body

Here at Family Planning we believe that all people in all bodies have the right to high quality non-judgemental sexual and reproductive healthcare.

If you have questions about your own gender or sexuality, or you identify as LGBTI+ and need some help or advice, speaking with one of our doctors or nurses is a great start. We can put you in touch with organisations who can support you.

If you identify as LGBTI+ and need sexual and/or reproductive health care, you are very welcome to make an appointment with our friendly nurses or doctors.

For more information

- www.minus18.org.au/
- qlife.org.au/
- www.twenty10.org.au/resource-library/
- gendercentre.org.au/
- www.workingitout.org.au/
- headspace.org.au/
- www.lifeline.org.au/

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