Transgender awareness fact sheet

Trans* Awareness Week aims to raise visibility and awareness of the transgender community through education and advocacy activities, leading up to Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on 20 November each year. TDOR memorialises victims of transphobic violence in the community.

‘Trans*’ and ‘transgender’ are umbrella terms that include transsexual, genderqueer, sistergirl, brotherboy and other diverse identities across intersectional boundaries. The true prevalence of the trans* population in Australia is not known, as not all gender diverse individuals experience gender dysphoria or identify as trans*, nor are they all out to their friends, families, colleagues and communities in the same way if at all. Trans* individuals may identify anywhere on the spectrum of sexual orientations including hetero, gay, lesbian, bi, pan, aromantic or asexual. Gender identity and representation are not related to sexual or romantic orientation.

Did you know?

- Transgender people experience significantly higher rates of non-physical and physical abuse compared with lesbians and gay men.
- Having gender dysphoria or being transgender are not mental health issues, however the stigma, stress and abuse endured by many trans* and gender diverse individuals may lead to mental health concerns.
- Not all trans* individuals elect to undergo hormone therapies or surgeries. This is between an individual and their health care providers. A person’s identity or status as trans* or gender diverse is not dependent on the kinds of treatments they may or may not receive.

What does the Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ employee network provide trans* employees?

- Support, guidance and assistance with work-related issues.
- Opportunity to network with other LGBTIQ+ employees and allies and be involved in events.
- A leading role and voice for cultural change in trans* acceptance at a whole-of-sector level.
- Advice and guidance to agencies and managers on how to implement trans*-friendly policies and practices, including how to support an employee in their transition.

What can allies do to support their trans* colleagues?

- Respect their privacy – Colleagues will share personal details with you as they choose. The Code of Conduct and privacy laws apply at all times. It is never your place to ‘out’ a trans* colleague to someone else.
- Call out transphobic behaviour or attitudes in the workplace. Don’t just accept or ignore it. Be a beacon for change.
- If they are transitioning, be respectful and call them by their chosen name and proper pronouns. If you aren’t sure, ask them what their pronouns are, and then use them. If you make a mistake, simply apologise, correct yourself, and move on.
- Support an employee or a colleague undergoing transition and take their lead on what that support needs to look like.
- Be mindful of Queensland’s anti-discrimination laws and the broad protections provided for individuals on the basis of gender.
- Remember, you don’t need to understand. You just need to be respectful.

Resources

- Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ employee network.
- A guide for trans* employees, their employers and colleagues – Anti Discrimination Commission Queensland.
- Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People – Australian Human Rights.
- LGBTI Mental Health statistics at a glance – National LGBTI Health Alliance
- Brisbane Gender Clinic

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