

This toolkit was taken from Mental Health at Work -website closed June 2024. Mental Health at Work was curated by Mind and supported by the Mental Health At Work Leadership Council. We are also proud to work with the Mental Health & Productivity Pilot

LGBTQI+ Inclusivity in your organisation

Anyone can experience a mental health problem. **But people who identify as LGBTQI+ are more likely** to experience problems such as depression, anxiety, suicidal feelings, and other signs of poor mental wellbeing.

Fortunately, employers and workplaces are in a position to make a real difference to this.

Fist, some definitions

So what does **LGBTQI+** mean? You might see this acronym written many different ways, but this is the version we have chosen to use. It stands for the following:

- **Lesbian** – women who love other women;
- **Gay** – men who love other men (or an umbrella term for both men who love other men and women who love other women);
- **Bisexual** – someone who is attracted to people of more than one gender;
- **Transgender** – someone whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth;
- **Questioning** – someone who is exploring their identity, *or* **Queer** – an umbrella term for those who don't identify as straight, and those who don't identify as [cisgender](#) (although note that, while some LGBTQI+ people use this term, some consider it offensive);
- **Intersex** – someone who was born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

What about the plus? This covers a large range of sexual and gender identities which are still affected by the issues faced by the LGBTQI community. For example, this might include people who are asexual (those who do not feel a sexual attraction to others), or identities which have special cultural significance such as the South Asian gender of Hijra, or the two-spirit identity recognised by Native Americans. It also includes people who don't quite feel any of the other labels adequately explain their circumstance, but who **still might face discrimination on the basis of who they do (or don't!) love, sleep with, or have relationships with.**

What about mental health?

In the end, though, it's not really about memorising definitions. It's about considering real people, and whether all of your staff equally feel that they belong.

We've said that people identifying as LGBTQI+ are more likely to experience a range of problems related to their mental wellbeing. But it's important to note that someone's sexuality or gender identity doesn't cause these problems – but **the discrimination they face, the stigma associated with it, and the rejection they might experience** may play a role.

And we know that not being able to be yourself at work adds to the stress felt by LGBTQI+ people in their daily lives.

Seen from this point of view, it makes sense that **one of the best things employers can do to support a whole section of their workforce is to create a culture that is inclusive**

and welcoming, and where people of all identities are free to be themselves. Below, we've collected some resources that you can use and share in your organisation, aimed at improving your culture around LGBTQI+ lives and making your workplace inclusive for all

Resources in this toolkit:

[Ten ways to support LGBT employees](#)

Glassdoor have written a short article featuring 10 simple steps you can take to ensure your LGBTQI+ colleagues are included and represented at work. This includes tips such as looking closely at your benefits offerings to ensure non-straight families aren't being left out, supporting employees who are transitioning, and fostering a gender-neutral environment.

[Supporting someone who is LGBTIQ+](#)

This web page from Mind explores what you can do to help if an LGBTQI+ person tells you they are experiencing poor mental health. It is ideal to share with your colleagues so everyone is prepared to help if they need to.

[Dealing with hate campaigns: toolkit for journalists](#)

Sadly, social media is rife with anti-LGBTQI+ groups and individuals. It's possible that if your company puts out an inclusive message, you may find yourself being 'trolled' or receiving hateful messages. This resource was designed to help journalists, but the advice can be used by anyone experiencing abuse online because of their work.

[St Mungo's Diversity Networks](#)

Diversity networks are a great way to help staff from minority groups, like LGBTQI+ people, to find each other and have their voices heard. Homelessness charity St Mungos have shared their internal staff guide to their networks, which you can use as inspiration for promoting or creating your own networks.

[Things not to say series – LGBTQI+ issues](#)

For some light-hearted LGBTQI+ information, this series asks people the questions they dread hearing, and what it means to them. These short videos can be used as a way of starting conversations about treating LGBTQI+ people with respect in your organisation.