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Intersex Peer Support Australia

is an intersex peer support, information and advocacy group for intersex people and their families.

PFLAG+

(Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is a peer support group assisting parents, families, and friends of LGBTIQ+ people.

QLife

is a telephone peer support and referral line for LGBTIQ+ people and their loved ones.

Sydney Bisexual Network

is a volunteer run, grassroots organisation for bi+ people across Sydney.

The Gender Centre

provides a range of services, including specialist counselling, psychological and other allied health services for the transgender, gender diverse and gender questioning community.

TwentyTen

provides a range of support and specialist counselling programs to LGBTIQ+ young people and their families and carers.

[This brochure provides general information only. Always consult with a healthcare professional for personalized guidance on mental health issues.]



Further Information

The following phone services may be useful during a mental health crisis:

- **ACON:**
www.acon.org.au/what-we-are-here-for/mental-health/
Consult the website for the phone number of the office closest to you.
- **BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation:**
<https://blaq.org.au>
- **Intersex Peer Support Australia:**
0498 393 038
<https://isupport.org.au>
- **PFLAG+:**
1300 000 000
<https://pflagaustralia.org.au/about-us/>
- **QLife :**
1800 184 527
<https://qlife.org.au>
- **Sydney bisexual+ network:**
syd.bi.network@gmail.com
<https://sydneybiplusnetwork.org/bi%2B-scene-guide>
- **The Gender Centre:**
02 9569 2366 or 02 9519 7599
<https://gendercentre.org.au>
- **Twentyten:**
<https://twenty10.org.au>



Information for LGBTIQ+ Carers of people accessing mental health services

Information for mental health carers

A mental health carer is someone who provides support to a family member, partner or friend who is living with a mental health condition. All carers experience challenges navigating the mental health system but lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) carers may experience additional challenges due to stigma and discrimination. Research suggests that LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to take on a carer role, and that their caring role often begins earlier in life than people who aren't from the LGBTIQ+ community¹.

This brochure provides information on your rights and those of the person you care for when navigating the mental health system.

¹ Carers NSW, <https://www.carersnsw.org.au/about-caring/who-are-carers/diverse-carers/information-for-lgbtqi-carers>

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**Mental Health
Carers NSW**





The rights of LGBTIQ+ people who are accessing mental health services

The NSW health system recognises that LGBTIQ+ people, whether consumers or carers, have the same rights as everyone in the community to receive health information, care and treatment with compassion, respect, kindness, and confidentiality². The *Mental Health Act NSW 2007*³ requires health services to take into consideration the special needs of people based on their sexuality and/or sexual identity.



The rights of LGBTIQ+ mental health carers

Carers of people who are LGBTIQ+ or carers who identify as LGBTIQ+ have the same rights as all carers, whether they are partners, family members, friends or kinship relations.

If you have been nominated by the person receiving mental health care as the designated carer, or, if the service recognises you as the principal care provider, you have the right to be consulted during mental health assessments and care planning meetings.

You can find more information on 'Carer Rights' by using the QR code at the end of this brochure.

It is your decision if you would like to share information about your gender identity, sexuality, or relationship status with the service. If you choose to do so, you can expect that your information and relationship with the person receiving care and treatment is recognised and recorded by the treating team in the medical record. You can also ask to check that the information about you is recorded correctly in the medical record.

² NSW Health LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy 2022–2027

³ Section 68

You can ask services if they have any policies and procedures in place to support LGBTIQ+ carers, and/or an inclusion policy, and if so, if you can have a copy of them.

You and the person you care for should be treated with respect and feel comfortable at every service that you attend. If you don't like a service or don't feel comfortable, you have the right to change services, make a complaint against the service or appeal a decision.

There are several organisations that have authority to hear your complaints and disputes. An important step is understanding which person or organisation you want to complain about, and what type of complaint you have. Carers are able to request to see an Official Visitor in the first instance. Further information around lodging complaints can be found here: Chapter 10 Section D: Complaints organisations – MHCC Mental Health Rights Manual (<https://mhrm.mhcc.org.au/chapters/10-complaints-and-disputes-getting-help-to-resolve-them/10d-complaints-organisations/>)



Finding the right supports for LGBTIQ+ people

LGBTIQ+ organisations may be able to provide specialised support or referrals for you and the person you care for. When finding the right service, it is important to remember that many LGBTIQ+ organisations are not set up to support people with acute or severe mental health conditions. Specialist mental health treatment may be needed. If someone wants to refer the person you care for to an LGBTIQ+ organisation it is a good idea to ask questions about their services and how they match the person's current mental health needs.

NB: Not all the following organisations are specialist mental health services, but they may help you to find the right one. The links and telephone numbers are provided in the list at the end of this brochure. For links to more organisations go to the Mental Health Carers NSW website at <https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/resources/lgbtqia-carers/>

ACON

offers confidential, free to low-cost, and state-wide counselling, care coordination and peer support for sexuality and gender diverse people, aged 18 years or older.

BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation

is the NSW peak organisation for Aboriginal Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + Sistergirl and Brotherboy (LGBTQ+SB) Peoples and Communities.