



# A Teacher's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice

# Who is this resource for?



Cara-Friend have compiled this resource to assist teachers and all school staff. It is designed to instruct staff in how to support young lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender students within the school environment.

It is necessary to understand and gain knowledge in this area as young people are more frequently “coming out” during the post-primary school years. The manner in which a teacher and/or school

react to what can be difficult and challenging circumstances for the young person will have direct repercussions on young people who identify as LGBTQ+.

It is also necessary to be informed of LGBTQ+ issues so as to make the school environment a more welcoming environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender young people - regardless of whether someone has come out or not.

## What are the aims of this resource?

The aims of this resource are dealt with across three sections:

### SECTION 1

To provide greater context on why creating a supportive and accepting environment for LGBTQ+ young people is important.

### SECTION 2

To help teachers and school staff gain a better understanding and knowledge of the language, terminology and issues associated with LGBTQ+ young people.

### SECTION 3

To provide teachers and school staff with practical tips and measures on how to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of LGBTQ+ young people.

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# Section 1:

# Why LGBTQ+ Young People Need Specific Support in Schools

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**When we look around our schools and our classrooms we more often than not see no representation of LGBTQ+ identities.**

Efforts are made to ensure there is visible balance and inclusion given to people of different physical abilities, ethnic backgrounds, genders and cultures, however LGBTQ+ identities are often left out of this. Lack of visibility can create the impression that school is an unwelcoming environment for someone to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Similarly when we think of conversations had in school, between teachers and students, it might be difficult for us to recall any positive conversations regarding the topics of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The curriculum too is one which can give the impression that LGBTQ+ identities do not exist in Northern Ireland

and our schools. For all these reasons it is necessary to make some effort to change that, so that we can combat feelings of isolation, being abnormal or unnatural, or that how someone identifies is contrary to what is acceptable.

In addition to this we need to be aware that home is not always a safe and accepting place for young people to be themselves. Unfortunately some home environments are not a welcome place for those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. This makes ensuring school is an open forum for LGBTQ+ issues, and an accepting place for young people as they are, all the more important.

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# Evidence-Based Need

In September 2017 the Department of Education published its report on the experiences of LGBTQ+ students, aged 16-21, in Northern Irish post-primary schools. 532 LGBTQ+ young people were surveyed as part of this research. The following statistics from the report paint an unpleasant picture of those experiences in our secondary schools:



**48% of respondents had experienced bullying as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.**

**39% of these had reported the bullying to school staff. 54.1% of these in turn felt 'unsupported' or 'very unsupported' by the member of staff's response.**

**The main forms of bullying experienced by LGBT young people were name calling, lies or false rumours, being isolated by other pupils or being hit/kicked/pushed/shoved around.**

**38% stated they were made feel uncomfortable by teachers through their use of inconsiderate or derogatory language, taking a heteronormative approach, poor coverage of LGBT issues, etc.**

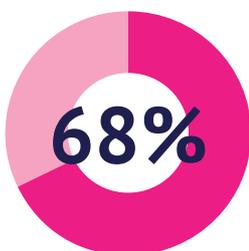
**63% said they felt the school environment had a negative impact on their emotional well-being.**

**67% of young people said they did not feel welcomed or valued within school as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.**

**6% of young people had to move school because of how their school had managed issues relating to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.**



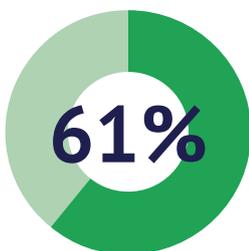
In December 2017 Cara-Friend and Youth Action published 'Still Shouting'. This was a report based on a survey of 260 LGBTQ+ young people in Northern Ireland, aged 12-25. Some of the findings were different in terms of particular statistics, which could be accounted for by the difference in age range. Nonetheless the picture is a similar one, with additional information around implications of exclusion on LGBTQ+ young people's mental health:



68% of LGBTQ+ youth had experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity



72% of LGBTQ+ young people experienced negative attitudes in school around their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



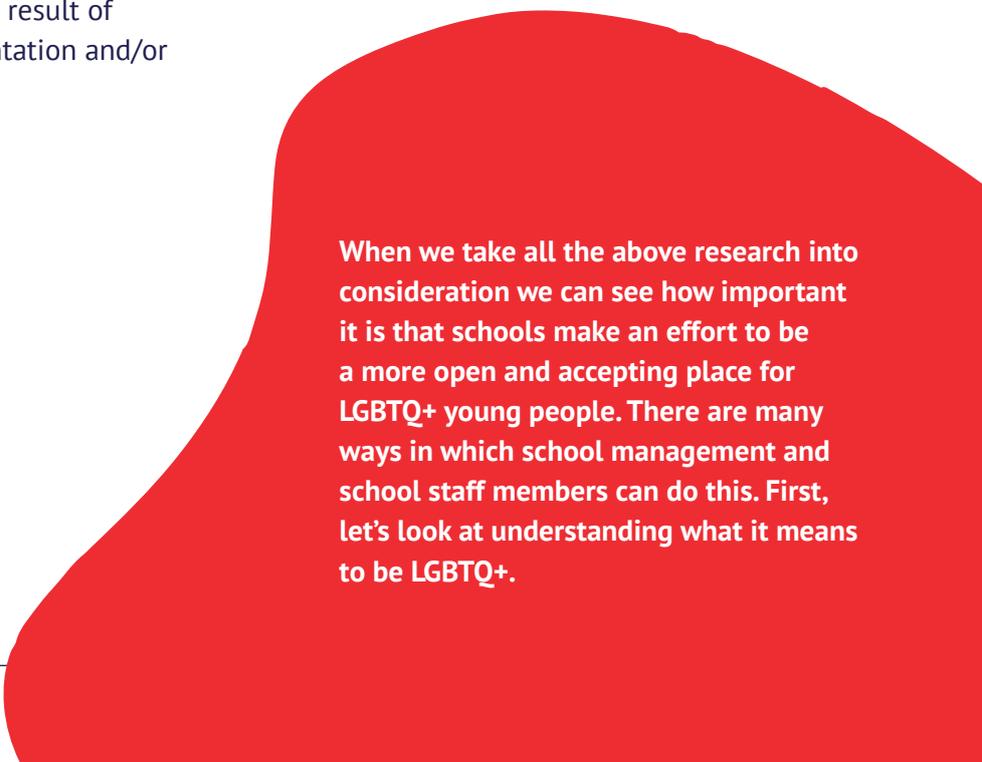
61% of lesbian, bisexual and gay young people reported contemplating suicide, with 25% of all respondents saying they had attempted suicide because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



90% of transgender young people reported contemplating suicide with 49% of all transgender young people having attempted suicide.



52% of young people noted self-harming as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



When we take all the above research into consideration we can see how important it is that schools make an effort to be a more open and accepting place for LGBTQ+ young people. There are many ways in which school management and school staff members can do this. First, let's look at understanding what it means to be LGBTQ+.

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## Section 2: A Better Understanding of LGBTQ+ Young People

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### What do we mean by LGBTQ+?

- LGBTQ+ is an acronym for the following identities: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning.
- It refers to a community or subsection of people that are not heterosexual and/or do not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.
- It also refers to people who question their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

These people may be unsure about the specific term or label they wish to identify themselves as, but are certain they are not simply heterosexual or cisgender.

- The '+' in LGBTQ+ refers to the many other sexual orientations and gender identities which young people may identify as. These usually make up a significantly smaller proportion of the LGBTQ+ population.

### Issues faced by LGBTQ+ young people

**Students who identify as LGBTQ+ can face a range of challenges in addition to pressures already experienced by people their age. These include:**

- Fear of 'coming out', i.e. telling someone they are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.
  - LGBT bullying, i.e. bullying which is directed at a person because of their perceived or actual minority sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
  - Social isolation, i.e. a lack of friends because they have been left out due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
  - Unsupportive or ill-informed school environment, i.e. teacher and other school staff not having the awareness and knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and language, religious concerns over LGBTQ+ identities, rigid gendered uniform policies, peers anti-LGBT language going unchallenged, issues accessing toilet and changing facilities safely.
  - Poor educational achievement: some LGBTQ+ young people don't do as well as they should in school because they are not able to bring their whole selves to school each morning. This can lead to greater rates of truancy and dropping out.
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- Increased risk of sexual exploitation, including grooming, particularly through online LGBT-specific apps on mobile phones, or websites.
- Increased risk of homelessness: some LGBTQ+ young people may be made homeless as a result of their parents or families not accepting them for who they are.
- Poorer mental health, due to social isolation and lack of acceptance for who they are, leading to self-harm and suicidal ideation.
- Risky behaviours, and unhealthy coping mechanisms, which can include unhealthy relationships, substance misuse, self-harm, and risky sexual encounters.
- It is of paramount importance that this high risk minority group have sustainable, positive and relevant support to ensure their specific needs are understood and met with the necessary support and signposting within and outside the school environment.

## What is sexual orientation?

Sexuality and sexual orientation are two terms often used interchangeably, however they have very different meanings and should not be confused.

Sexuality: refers to a person's sexual drive. A person can be highly sexual or, on the opposite side of the scale, have a low sex drive. On this end of the scale young people may identify as asexual.

**Sexual orientation usually refers to the gender/genders of the person someone is sexually attracted to, for example:**

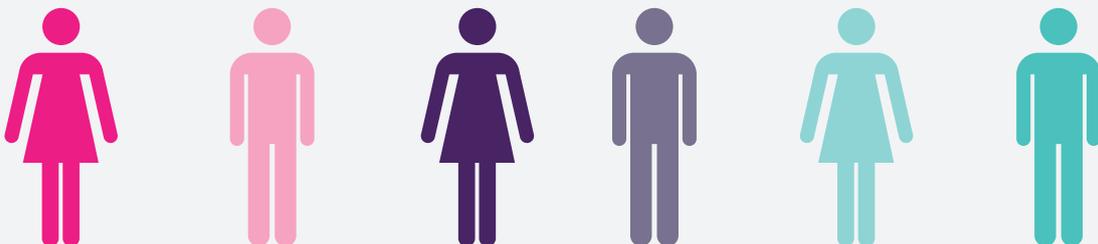
- Females attracted to females are lesbian or gay.
- Males attracted to males are gay.
- Males/females attract to both genders are bisexual.
- People attracted to other people, regardless of gender are pansexual.



# What is gender identity?

We often equate gender with biological sex. This is not always the case. Knowing the difference between these is an important first step to understanding young people who are transgender, including non-binary and gender fluid.

- Gender identity: refers to how a person feels about their gender. It is a deeply felt, innate, personal sense of self. People mostly identify as male and female, however there are other gender identities beyond this traditional binary, including non-binary, where someone may feel uncomfortable as either male or female. Someone is considered transgender when their gender identity does not align with their biological sex (or sex assigned at birth). Gender identity is emotional and psychological.
- Biological sex: this is the medical or biological term associated with primary sex characteristics, such as genitalia, hormones, chromosomes, etc. It is physical. When a baby is born they are deemed to be male or female based primarily on the appearance of their genitalia. We call this sex assigned at birth. Some people who are assigned male/female at birth may develop and at some point have a different gender identity to this sex assigned at birth, and that is when the person is transgender. Transgender is concerned with how someone identifies, and does not require any medical intervention in to the biology or physicality of biological sex.
- Gender presentation refers to how an individual presents themselves to the world. They can present themselves as masculine, feminine, androgynous or anywhere in between these.



# What does transgender mean?

People whose personal gender identity does not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth are called transgender or trans. People whose gender identity aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth are called cisgender.

Trans is a term often used as shorthand for transgender. Because it is based on how someone identifies differently from their assigned sex at birth it also acts as an umbrella term for specific gender identities, including gender-fluid, non-binary, trans male, trans female, etc. (see Glossary for more information on these identities).

Transgender is a term we use to describe someone's experience of gender, however an individual does not have to identify as transgender. Just because someone's gender identity is different to their

biological sex does not mean they wish to be identified as transgender. They can simply identify as their gender identity: male, female, non-binary, etc.

Transgender people often experience gender dysphoria, which is a discomfort and distress that arises from feeling they are in the incorrect body, or from someone misgendering them.

Being transgender is a distinct experience from being lesbian, gay or bisexual. Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different things. Though someone can be transgender and gay, for example, it does not mean that because someone is gay they are transgender.

## Transitioning

Transitioning is a process of changing one's assigned gender at birth to more accurately align with one's gender identity. It is a complex process which occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, legal and medical changes: telling one's family; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; changing pronouns, hormone treatment, surgery, etc.

It's important to remember that not all transgender people wish to medically transition. Being transgender is not dependent on medically transitioning, rather simply identifying differently from your sex assigned at birth.

## Being LGBTQ+ is NOT a choice!

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender is not a choice. This point cannot be emphasised enough. A young person does not choose to be different, to seem cool or stand out from the crowd. It is not a phase they will eventually grow out of. If a young person is LGBTQ+ it is simply because that is who they are. The only choice a young person has, with regards to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, is to be themselves - openly and honestly. This is a brave step for a young person, particularly when it might involve being singled out or bullied. It is important for those supporting young people through 'coming out' or transitioning, that they do not attempt to quell someone's identity as this can have very negative effects on a person's mental and physical health.

## Coming Out

Coming out is the term we use to describe the process of telling others around you that you are LGBTQ+. Someone may come out by telling friends or family that they are gay, bisexual or lesbian, and some people may also come out by telling friends or family that they are transgender, gender fluid or non-binary. Coming out is not a one-off event in someone's life, however the point when someone tells their parents, carers and/or family is considered a milestone event in an LGBTQ+

person's life. Coming out is, however, an ongoing process where clarification is needed to correct someone's perception or assumption that you may be 'straight' or cisgender, particularly when you meet new people, make new friends, start in a new class or school, etc. How someone responds to any individual's coming out will have a lasting impact on the LGBTQ+ young person, particularly when it is with influential adults in their life, such as parents, carers, teachers and youth workers.

## Fears and feelings LGBTQ+ young people can face:

Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ can have many fears and feelings around accepting who they are and how others will react. From the difficulty of telling someone for the first time, to fear of being bullied or outed to others without consent. It is often a very stressful time and these emotions and feelings can be present for extended periods which can greatly affect the mental health of the individual.

- Fear of "Coming Out" to friends, family, church, school or society.
- Fear for being misunderstood and/or rejected by those closest to them.
- Feeling they are letting their family down.
- Feeling isolated, alone or lonely as a result of a poor peer network.
- Geographical isolation.
- Fear of or being bullied by peers.
- Feeling the use of alternative coping strategies, such as self harm, are the only way they can deal with negative emotions.

For more information on different identities under the LGBTQ+ umbrella please refer to our glossary of terms at the end of this resource. If you are unsure how a young person identifies don't be afraid to ask. There is a great power in listening to young people and allowing them to self-identify, rather than making assumptions.

**If a young person is unsure you can refer them to our website ([www.cara-friend.org.uk](http://www.cara-friend.org.uk)) for more information.**



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# Section 3: Practical Ways to be an LGBTQ+ Inclusive School

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Teachers and school management have a duty of care for each and every young person at their school. A good school is one which puts its young people and their wellbeing first. The school environment is not an appropriate place for an employee to work out their personal beliefs on whether they think a particular sexual orientation or gender identity is moral or not. Every student deserves a safe, welcoming and accepting environment for them to come to learn in every day. School is one of the places where young people spend a large chunk of their time and life. Teachers and schools, therefore, have a responsibility to ensure they do their best for all students, including LGBTQ+ young people. Remember Department of Education research shows that 67% of LGBTQ+ students don't feel welcomed or valued in their own schools because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## Visibility

Sometimes we hear from school management teams or teachers that their schools don't have LGBTQ+ students in them. This is extremely unlikely. The general proportion of the population accepted to be LGBTQ+ is 10%, with up to 1% identifying as transgender. Just because teachers and school management aren't aware of a student or students openly identifying as LGBTQ+ does not mean that this isn't the case. Perhaps the school environment is not one where they feel comfortable being open about who they are.

Responding well to an LGBTQ+ student is very important, but being proactive is even better! Visibility of LGBTQ+ identities is an important factor in how comfortable a student who is LGBTQ+ feels in that setting. Visibility is an easy one to improve upon. Here are some tips:

- The use and inclusion of LGBTQ+ emblems and symbols in school is a great and easy way to give visibility to those identities.
  - Marking or taking part in various events throughout the year aimed at highlighting LGBTQ+ issues and identities, such as Pride (which currently take part in Derry-Londonderry, Belfast and Newry), LGBT Awareness Week (which is co-organised across NI by Cara-Friend) and Trans Visibility Day.
  - Use of LGBTQ+ inclusive posters announcing that the school is a safe space for everyone, including LGBTQ+ young people. Cara-Friend have these freely available for all schools upon request.
  - Special lesson plans which cover LGBTQ+ topics, issues or stories. For example, in history why not discuss Alan Turing and the role he played in WW2? Or in a politics lesson why not cover the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement internationally?
  - Refer to different types of relationships (such as gay or lesbian) in the context of examples given in class, rather than only referring to heteronormative examples.
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# Responding to Coming Out

If a student in your school comes out to you as being lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender it usually means that they hold you in high regard and have placed a lot of trust in you. If they haven't come out to you but you are aware that they are LGBTQ+ because of an incident or their being outed by someone else, then the same guidance below is applicable. It's all about creating a responsive, respectful and caring environment for the young person to talk about it.

## A good reaction to someone disclosing that they are LGBTQ+ to a teacher or staff member would involve:

- Signposting to other organisations for additional or more specialised support. This is particularly important as teachers cannot be expected to know everything! There is a list of external organisations towards the end of this resource.
- Listening to what the student is saying. Allow the student to express themselves and to self-identify. If you don't understand what the young person is saying then just ask them what it means. It is better to ask and listen, rather than assume or dismiss. Listening to the young person will empower them. Remember: you may be the first adult they have ever spoken to about their identity.
- Asking supportive questions and not interrogating the young person.
- Giving the young person time to think and speak. Talking about these issues can often be emotionally difficult and even embarrassing for the young person. Time and space are just as important as a supportive and willing advocate.

- Respect their confidentiality. A student identifying as LGBTQ+ is not a child protection concern in and of itself. Outing them to parents, carers or other staff members may put them and their wellbeing at risk. If there are additional issues related to the young person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity then these must, of course, be addressed appropriately.

**It is very important for your student to hear positive and supporting comments. Try to use compassionate and encouraging language. Your initial reaction is extremely important and will set the tone for future interactions. Here is some helpful language you can use. This could also be helpful for someone who is struggling with their identity or is facing discrimination and/or bullying because of their being LGBTQ+:**

- Thank you for telling me.
- I understand talking about this is difficult but I'm here to listen.
- I want to understand how you are feeling.
- You can talk to me about this anytime.
- I'm proud of you for telling me.
- I'm happy you felt you could talk to me about how you feel.
- I will help in any way I can.

**Here are some questions you may want to think about when speaking to a young person who has just come out to you.**

- Do you have a supportive and understanding peer network?
- Do you feel isolated in any way?
- Are you being bullied?
- Are you out to your parents?
- How have your parents taken the news?
- What would you like me to do next?
- Would you like me to contact outside organisations on your behalf?

## Signposting

If you feel unable to support the young person beyond the initial conversation then signposting to an external organisation is a good idea. We encourage all schools to signpost to Cara-Friend for any advice, guidance or support. The same advice, guidance and support is also available from Cara-Friend to teachers and school staff members too.

**As social isolation is a big problem among LGBTQ+ youth, LGBTQ+ specific youth groups can provide a great safe, support for the young people to avail of. There are a number of them all around Northern Ireland run by the Education Authority and Youth Action NI. Cara-Friend run LGBTQ+ youth groups in the following areas:**

- Belfast
- Derry/Londonderry
- Ballymena
- Cookstown
- Armagh
- Newry



Sometimes a group setting is not the most appropriate place for a young person to avail of support, and may need more confidential and targeted support from one of our youth officers. Cara-Friend staff will travel to any school in Northern Ireland to speak to students who are having difficulties with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Cara-Friend staff are always at hand to speak to teaching staff who would like more information or support in person or by phone. We also respond to queries by email. Check out our website ([www.cara-friend.org.uk](http://www.cara-friend.org.uk)) for more information. You can also check out our LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools brochure on the website to see a full range of services available (for free) to schools across Northern Ireland.

## How to make your school LGBTQ+ Inclusive:

- Use inclusive signs and symbols like posters, flyers, flags and notice boards. Creating a noticeboard with visible information will communicate to the young person their school environment is more inclusive than they might have thought.
- Encourage debate and talk about the issues in the classroom - awareness creates acceptance.
- Think about your school's uniform policy - can it be more inclusive or are you forcing young people to 'out' themselves so they can wear an appropriate uniform. Having a flexible uniform policy future-proofs your school in accommodating a transgender student.
- Think about changing facilities within the school - how could you make a student feel more comfortable in this environment, particularly if they are non-binary or are transitioning.
- Think about toilet facilities - create at least one gender neutral toilet that can be accessed by anyone. Young people may not feel comfortable in same-sex toilets for a variety of reasons that can be linked to their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- School policies and procedures - amend these now to ensure there are clear paths to follow when issues potentially arise in the future.
- Use and record preferred names of transgender students to make them feel accepted for who they are. If it is school policy only to record legal names, then think about how staff can still use preferred names on a day-to-day basis in the classroom, playground and corridor.
- Try to understand and use the correct pronouns for those young people transitioning in your school.
- Create a Gay/Straight Alliance for students - where all students can talk about issues that affect them.

# How to deal with LGBT-phobic bullying

LGBT-phobic bullying is bullying behaviours targeted towards people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer. It can include verbal abuse, physical abuse or cyber-bullying. LGBT-phobic bullying can also be directed towards those who are perceived as being LGBTQ+ though the target of this bullying may

not identify as LGBTQ+ themselves, either because they are not LGBTQ+ or because they have not fully come out yet. An environment that allows the root cause of bullying to go unchallenged is an unsafe one - not just for the target of the bullying behaviour, but also for other LGBTQ+ students who may not be the target in one particular incident.

## Here are some tips for tackling bullying behaviours targeted towards an LGBTQ+ student or young person:

- Don't tolerate homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying - challenge it right away even if that means stopping a sporting event or subject lesson.
- Educate the person demonstrating bullying behaviour - they may come from a homophobic family background or they may simply not have the awareness to know what language they are using.
- Provide tailored support for the target of the bullying behaviour, which directly addresses the motivational factor for the bullying behaviour, i.e. don't sweep the fact that they were called a homophobic or transphobic slur under the carpet: this could be your only chance to provide support to someone who is struggling with their identity.
- If LGBT-phobic bullying is widespread or has become a problem within a class or year group then address it by naming it and condemning it. Consider also doing some group-based work with the class or year group to raise their awareness of LGBTQ+ identities and the implications of bullying someone because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. (See Cara-Friend's resource on tackling LGBT-phobic bullying on our website, or consider booking a ShoutOut workshop with us).
- Remember that using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language in any context is a type of untargeted bullying behaviour and should be challenged. It is unacceptable for young people to use words such as 'faggot', 'dyke', 'tranny', etc.
- Using 'gay' as a negative or pejorative term is also isolating for those who may - openly or not - identify as LGBTQ+. This should also be challenged.

## External Support From LGBTQ+ Organisations:

### Cara-Friend

Cara-Friend is the LGBTQ+ youth service for Northern Ireland. They work with LGBTQ+ young people aged 12-25 and offer a variety of supports, including LGBTQ+ youth groups and one-to-one support. They also deliver the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme (see brochure on website) which offers organisational support and guidance for schools; one-to-one support for LGBTQ+ students; Gay-Straight Alliance support; and ShoutOut anti-bullying workshops, which tackle negative attitudes among young people towards LGBTQ+ identities. Cara-Friend is any school's one-stop shop for support, guidance and signposting when wishing to better support LGBTQ+ young people.

[www.cara-friend.org.uk](http://www.cara-friend.org.uk)

**Belfast LGBT Centre Office: (028) 9089 0202**

**Foyle LGBT Centre Office: (028) 7128 3030**



### The Rainbow Project:

The Rainbow Project: is an LGBTQ+ health organisation that works to improve the physical, sexual, mental & emotional health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender people in Northern Ireland. One of their core services is free counselling for LGBTQ+ people.

[www.rainbow-project.org](http://www.rainbow-project.org)

**Belfast LGBT Centre Office: (028) 9031 9030**

**Foyle LGBT Centre Office: (028) 7128 3030**

### SAIL NI:

SAIL NI is a support organisation for the families of transgender and gender variant people in Northern Ireland. They directly support families across the region, as well as advocating for trans people and their families at a regional, national and European level.

[www.sailni.com](http://www.sailni.com)

**Belfast Trans Resource Centre: (028) 9532 0023**



### GenderJam:

GenderJam support and advocate for the young trans community in Northern Ireland. They are working to make the region better for trans, non-binary, questioning and intersex people. They also run trans-specific social drop-in groups for those aged under 25 in Belfast and Newry.

[www.genderjam.org.uk](http://www.genderjam.org.uk)

**Belfast Trans Resource Centre: (028) 9099 6819**

### MORE INFORMATION

Cara-Friend's website is a wealth of information with numerous resources available for free download:

- A Young Person's Guide to Coming Out
- A Parent & Carer's Resource: Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Child
- A Teacher's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice
- A Youth Worker's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice
- Guide to Tackling LGBT-Phobic Bullying
- Guide to Transitioning in Education and Youth Services
- LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme
- Gay-Straight Alliance Toolkit

# Glossary of Terms

## Androgynous

A term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly 'female' nor 'male', usually based on appearance.

## Asexual

A sexuality characterised by lack of sexual attraction or lack of a desire for partnered sexuality.

## Biphobia

The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are bisexual.

## Bisexual (Bi)

A person who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to both males and females.

## Cisgender

A term used to describe people who, for the most part, identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

## Closeted

Describes a person who has yet to 'come out of the closet', i.e. they are not open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## Coming Out

The process of telling someone about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It is not a one-time event as an individual must come out countless times over the course of their lifetime.

## Gay

A word used to describe someone of either gender who is physically, romantically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same gender. More often used for males attracted to males.

## Gender Expression

Refers to how someone expresses their gender. This may refer to how an individual dresses, their general appearance, the way they speak, and/or the way they carry themselves.

<p><b>Gender Fluid</b></p> <p>When someone is gender fluid it means that they do not have a fixed gender identity.</p> <p>They have a gender identity which can change daily, weekly, monthly - or less regularly.</p>	<p><b>Gender Non Conforming</b></p> <p>A person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.</p>
<p><b>Gender Identity</b></p> <p>An individual may have a gender identity which is different to or the same as their biological sex. Gender identity is a personal, deeply felt sense of one's own gender. It is important to note that an individual's gender identity is completely separate from their sexual orientation. Everyone has a gender identity, regardless of whether someone is transgender or otherwise.</p>	<p><b>Gender Role</b></p> <p>A societal expectation of how an individual should act, think and/or feel based upon their biological sex.</p>
<p><b>Gender Neutral</b></p> <p>A term used to describe facilities that any individual can use regardless of their gender (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms) This term can also be used to describe an individual who does not subscribe to any gender (sometimes referred to as 'Gender Queer').</p>	<p><b>Heteronormative</b></p> <p>A viewpoint or approach which assumes heterosexuality as the default, 'normal' or preferred sexual orientation, as opposed to one of many possibilities.</p>
	<p><b>Heterosexual</b></p> <p>People whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex (also known as 'straight')</p>
	<p><b>Homosexual</b></p> <p>People whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to people of the same sex (see also 'gay' and 'lesbian')</p>
	<p><b>Homophobia</b></p> <p>The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are gay or lesbian.</p>

<b>Intersex</b>	People who naturally (without medical intervention) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female.	<b>Outing</b>	The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation, but often based on disclosures made) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. This is considered inappropriate.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman or girl whose physical, romantic and emotional attraction is to other women or girls. Some lesbians identify as gay women.	<b>Out</b>	When someone is 'out' their sexual orientation and/or gender identity is not secret, and is disclosed comfortably by an individual.
<b>LGBT-phobia</b>	The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are LGBTQ+.	<b>Pansexual</b>	Not limited in sexual orientation with regard to biological sex, gender or gender identity.
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	An acronym which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning. This term acts as an umbrella term for the entirety of the community or subsection of the population whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual and/or whose gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth.	<b>Pronouns</b>	Pronouns are how we refer to someone in the third person, e.g. 'he', 'she' or 'they'. If someone is transgender then their gender identity is different to the sex assigned at birth, so an individual may choose to be referred to using different pronouns to that of their legal biological sex.
<b>Non-binary</b>	A gender identity which does not fall into the traditional gender binary of 'male' and 'female'. Non-binary is an umbrella term and can describe a wide range of identities and experiences.		

<p><b>Queer</b></p>	<p>Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves. It is not universally accepted within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless someone self-identifies that way.</p>
<p><b>Questioning</b></p>	<p>The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.</p>
<p><b>Sex Assigned at Birth</b></p>	<p>When a baby is born the sex of male or female is assigned to it based primarily on the appearance of their genitalia. A child can also be intersex.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>The term used to describe an individual's physical, romantic, sexual and emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual ('straight') orientations.</p>
<p><b>Trans or Transgender</b></p>	<p>An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Someone who was assigned male at birth may identify as female and therefore would be considered transgender. Note it does not have anything to do with alterations made to bodies, it relates to gender identity.</p>
<p><b>Transition</b></p>	<p>Transitioning is a process of changing one's birth sex to more accurately align with one's gender identity. It is a complex process which occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, legal and medical changes: telling one's family; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; changing pronouns, hormone treatment, surgery, etc.</p>
<p><b>Transphobia</b></p>	<p>The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who are transgender.</p>

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