

# allsorts of Coming Out



A '**Coming Out**' Resource for Young People who are **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (+)** or **Unsure/Questioning** their Sexual Orientation



Funded by



Welcome to the **Allsorts of Coming Out** resource, written by and for young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual+ (**LGB+**) or unsure of their sexual orientation.

In today's world, there are many out LGB+ children, young people and adults however most of us are still living in and growing up in communities where the norm is to be straight/heterosexual. We know that the reality for many people will be very different to the assumptions that are made about them so the young people of Allsorts Youth Project wanted to come together and share their **stories**, **ideas** and **tops tips** about what sexual orientation and coming out means to them.

You might be reading this thinking '***I don't know who I am yet***' or '***I came out a while back and think I might want to use a different term***' or, you might be certain that you are LGB+ but haven't told anyone yet.

Whoever you are, wherever you are on your journey, **this resource is for you**. It is a space to help you understand your own feelings, consider some of the ways in which you might want to talk about your experiences and have the confidence to share who you are with others if or when you feel ready. We know this resource won't give you all the answers and we know that your journey is going to be individual to you, but we hope this helps you along your path.

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# What does *Sexual Orientation* Mean?



How sexual orientation is defined can be **different for every person**. Some people think of it as who we are sexually and romantically attracted to and who we have relationships with. Others may see it as describing the people we want to have sexual relationships with but we may not have a romantic connection, or vice versa.

The more we unpick what it might mean to us as individuals, the more it becomes easier to sort through. **Working out sexual orientation can be a confusing time**, particularly if the people around us assume who we might be attracted to. This sometimes happens when people look at our gender expression and think we might be attracted to a certain gender when in fact these are separate things. For example, someone may look at a masculine woman and assume that she is a lesbian or look at a feminine man and assume he is a gay. Equally, someone may look at a feminine woman or masculine man and assume they are straight.



The reality is that **assumptions are not always correct**. It can add unfair pressure and uncertainty to those who are exploring who they feel attracted to.

Many people see sexual orientation as a **spectrum** or **colour wheel** with lots of different ways of feeling attraction. This is can be really helpful as it means that there aren't the two assumed choices - gay or straight. It shows that there are **many ways we can explain and explore sexual orientation** and that it can be something fluid.



There are lots of different words that we could use to describe our sexual orientation and it might feel a bit mind boggling and overwhelming! Lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, androsexual, straight, fluid and queer, to name a few.

There can be a lot of pressure to find a term that 'fits' you and explains who you are but remember, **there is no pressure to use a particular label** to explain your sexual orientation and no-one should force a label upon you.

**You have the power** to own the terms which feel right for you. Every person has a different journey of exploring who they are attracted to and it is a usual part of growing up. Our exploration of sexual orientation can be a personal one and at times can feel like we muddle through. We hope by sharing some of these journeys, you may find some similarities in what you are experiencing or have experienced so far.

# Feeling Unsure?

Sometimes it can feel like we have to know who we are attracted to and know which term we want to use. **There is pressure**, particularly as teenagers, to know everything about ourselves and be ready to explain who we are to other people. The thing is, it can take time and **that is okay**.

Feeling unsure about who we are attracted to is a **normal part of growing up**, even though it might not be spoken about much. You might feel like in your school or other communities that everyone knows who they fancy and it is a hot topic of conversation. You might feel left out or not know how to participate in the conversation, or even feel pressured to share how you are feeling. This can be even more difficult if you are unsure or questioning your sexual orientation.



It might feel like a race to find out who you are and share it with the world but it is okay to take it slowly. There is no rush to announce who you are attracted to even if everyone else seems to be doing it. **Take your time, breathe, and go easy on yourself.**

Many people, young and old, have questions about their sexual orientation and through **talking, exploring** and **connecting** with others, you can find out a little more about who you are. Sometimes we might feel sure of who we are, come out as one thing and then realise, over time, that the term we are using doesn't fit any more. It does not make you any more or less valid to use different terms at different times. Part of the human experience is **constantly learning about ourselves**, and that includes sexual orientation.



**I was scared to come out at first for a variety of different reasons. I went through lots of labels... lesbian, bisexual, asexual just to name a few... but eventually I found one that seemed to fit me. Coming out is not a onetime thing and coming out as pansexual was probably the best thing. I didn't feel I had this secret anymore and it was like a weight had been lifted. I'm no longer scared to come out; I'm proud of myself and my sexuality. If I had one piece of advice to give my younger self, it would be to not be scared; it's okay to take your time with coming out and if it changes over time that's totally okay and you are 100% valid!**



**Oakley, 24**

# What does *Coming Out* Mean?

**Coming Out** means telling other people about your sexual orientation.




Most of us are in a society where people generally assume that the default is straight. Coming out is saying **we are something different to that**. For people who are straight, usually they will not need to come out. However, for some trans people, the words they use to describe their sexual orientation may shift after they come out as a gender they previously didn't openly identify as.


For example, a trans woman assigned male at birth who is a **lesbian** (woman attracted to women) might have referred to herself as **straight** before coming out as trans. The language changes, but the **attraction stays the same**.

Coming out can also mean our own process of realising we are LGB+ and this can be **coming out to ourselves**. You might know that you are not straight and have come out to yourself as a lesbian for example. This in itself can sometimes be challenging or scary, but remember, once you have come out to yourself, **there is no rush to tell other people**.



## Max, 16

 I used to insist and stubbornly say that I was only into girls, but as I've transitioned and grown to accept myself, I've realised that it's ok for me to also like boys. I learnt that it doesn't make me less masculine and it won't make me "camp". I think part of the reason I did this was because I wanted to know exactly where I was with my sexual orientation. Although it can be hard and confusing, there's no rush to name your feelings. It's good to be able to accept change with sexual orientation, just don't stubbornly stick like I did! Five years ago I came out for the first time and I've changed since, it's like peeling an onion layer by layer as I've discovered myself - sometimes the onion may make you cry but in the end it's tasty (unless you don't like onions). After coming out at school, I had become known as "the gay one" (or "the lesbian" for some) but it wasn't nice to have this factor determining my personality. If I could give advice to my younger self I would've told him to wait a bit, sometimes it's not worth it, and it's ok to not be sure.



Young People at Allsorts described coming out as:



**'Telling people who I  
have always been'**



**'TELLING PEOPLE I'M NOT STRAIGHT'**



**'SHARING MY SEXUAL ORIENTATION  
WITH OTHER PEOPLE'**



**'BEING ABLE TO BE WHO I AM'**



**'Telling someone you identify as  
something different'**



**'BEING HONEST  
ABOUT MYSELF'**

Staff at Allsorts described coming out as:



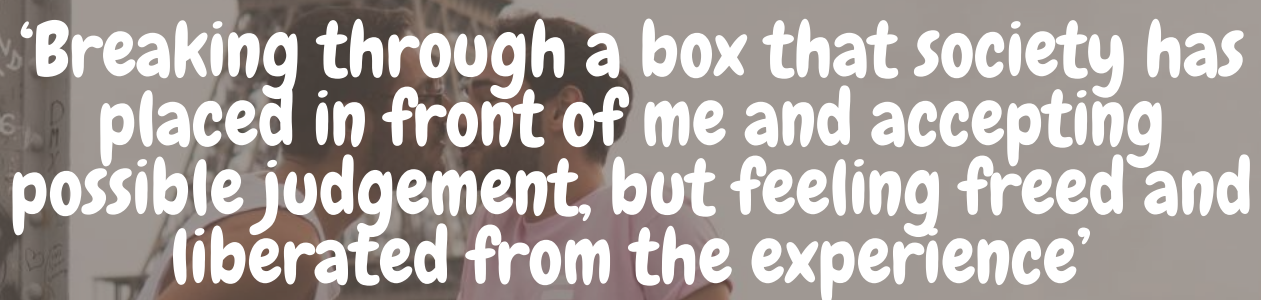
**'MAKING A BOLD CHOICE TO LET SOMEONE KNOW YOU BETTER'**



**'BEING UNAFRAID OF WHO I AM AND MAKING IT EASIER FOR OTHER PEOPLE TO BE THEMSELVES'**



**'PUTTING TRUST AND FAITH IN THOSE AROUND ME TO LOVE ME UNCONDITIONALLY'**



**'Breaking through a box that society has placed in front of me and accepting possible judgement, but feeling freed and liberated from the experience'**



**'BEING TRUE TO ONESELF AND LIVING YOUR TRUTH WHATEVER OPPOSITION YOU MAY FACE'**

# Billijean

## Deputy CEO of Allsorts



Thinking back, the first time I came out to someone was in the early 90s, I was around 18. I had **built up the courage over a few months** to tell my best friend at the time.

We had booked tickets to go to a gig at the O2 in London. Whilst travelling down to London on the train from the Northeast, I remember my stomach churning, **I was so nervous**. The gig was brilliant and after we went for a drink in one of the nearby pubs and it was the perfect opportunity.

I said Maxine I have something to tell you **'I am gay'** I remember filling up with so much emotion that I started to cry. Maxine started to also cry and I can still remember what she said. 'why didn't you tell me before you dafty?' I can remember **the weight lifted from my shoulders** it was such a **relief**. I knew that this was the beginning of me being honest with myself and my life would be so much **happier**.

This was only the beginning though **I had a lot more 'coming out' to do**. The most terrifying people that I had to tell was my siblings and my parents. My sister was really good about it and so supportive. One of my brothers found it hard as he has certain views which don't align with mine.





However, over time he has really made the effort and when I have had girlfriends he has been really supportive, especially if they like footy ha!!

Telling my parents was the hardest, I struggled with depression and anxiety worrying if they would accept me or not. I ran away from my life in the Northeast for a while when I was about 22 and worked in Spain for two years. This is when my mam found out about me and my sexuality. My mam came to visit me in Spain and my girlfriend at the time told my mam I was gay!! Stole my glory ha!! Looking back, I didn't mind, it had to happen. My mam held me and kissed me and said "Oh pet I've always known; don't worry I love you. Don't worry your dad will be ok" which was all I needed to hear.



# What does Coming Out Feel Like?

Coming out will feel **different for everyone**, and can bring up a wide range of emotions, even for just one person! Coming out to a friend might feel different to coming out to a relative or employer, and that is **totally normal**. Some of the words that the young people and staff at Allsorts used to describe coming out were;

**Awkward** **PERSONAL** **Relief**  
**UNCOMFORTABLE** **EXHAUSTING**  
**Safety** **PRESSURED** **Unfair**  
**EXPOSING** **TRUST** **Freedom**  
**Honesty** **Journey** **Integrity**  
**Uncertainty** **Transparency**  
**Anticipation** **vulnerability** **Angry**  
**Liberating** **Apprehensive** **FEAR**  
**Nervous** **Stressful** **Repetitive**  
**Exciting** **Rejection** **Validating**  
**CONFUSED** **SCARY** **Truth** **Irritable**

# Myth Busting

## "You only come out once"


Many LGB+ people will come out **over and over again** throughout life. This might be at school, in college or university, at work, to family members, religious communities or online. Coming out is **not a one time thing** and as our relationship circles expand, as does the number of people we may come out to. Remember, **coming out is your choice**. You should never feel like you have to come out to people, and only do so **if you feel ready** to.



## 'It's just phase'


This is a phrase that many LGB+ people have heard over the years when coming out, **particularly when we are young**. Not only is this undermining our experiences but it also makes us feel invalid. For some people, using terms like LGB+ is a part of **exploration**. For others, it is **lifelong**. Whether coming out as LGB+ is exploration or permanent, we **must always be listened to** and **supported** no matter what words we use to describe our sexual orientation. If you are coming out as LGB+ and you change your mind later on, **that is valid**. If you come out as LGB+ and that's how you identify forever, **that's great too!** Both are valid and both are a part of learning more about who we are.

# Isaac, 21


 In 2014, at the age of 15, I had the unfortunate realisation that I was slightly somewhat **utterly smitten with my best friend**. Since meeting him last year, the nagging crush had only grown and despite having had all this time, I had still been completely unsuccessful in deciphering his sexuality. It was because of this that 'coming out', to some extent at least, now felt **unavoidable**.

Of course, I couldn't just ask him directly, so my next best plan was to instead interrogate his friends and demand they take pity on my poor gay soul by keeping it secret. The first friend I asked had no idea, describing his sexuality as "the eighth wonder of the world: yet to be discovered". So I just tried another, and another, and another, until I had effectively 'come out' to the entire friendship group but him.

I had always considered my sexuality as simply being **my own business** so hadn't felt much desire to risk telling people before I had a reason to do so. And although I had never viewed this as keeping a secret, I couldn't have anticipated **how nice it would feel to be able to talk openly about it**, even if just to comment how dreamy a male character was while watching films (Ghibli's Howl <3).





 Later that year, a jerk in class mockingly asked if I was gay and I replied that I was bi, effectively shutting him up. Around the same time my parents were asking me about potential girlfriends, and I told them that **it wouldn't have to be a girl** and that **I didn't think gender played a role in whether I fancied someone.**

Just like that, I had come out to my friends, family, and most people in the school were probably aware. Thankfully, I lived in Brighton and was lucky and privileged enough to be **surrounded by accepting people** who really didn't care one way or another if I was bisexual. Even though the romantic endeavour didn't pan out – I confessed to him before anyone else could and he tearfully told me that he was straight – **we're still good friends** and without this whole event, who knows when I'd have realised **how freeing it would be to come out.** 



# Myth Busting

## ‘Being LGB+ is a choice’

Who we are attracted to, romantically and/or sexually, **is not a choice**. There is an assumption that we choose to be LGB+, when in reality we know that attraction is something that **occurs naturally without any choice**, just like it does with those who are straight. What we do choose is when and how we come out and who we come out to.



## ‘Bisexual and pansexual people can’t make up their minds and are greedy’

Being attracted to more than one gender identity **is not uncommon** and doesn’t mean that you haven’t ‘made a decision’ about who to be attracted to. It also has no impact on your commitment to a relationship. There is no rule that as humans we must be attracted to one gender and one other gender only.

Some people like apple juice, some people like orange juice, and **some people like both!** These people aren’t greedy, or unsure of what juice they like. They know they like both, **and that’s fine**. Why should this be any different when talking about our sexual orientation?

## ‘You’re too young to know’

You are likely to know yourself better than most. **We cannot put an age on when we start experiencing feelings for other people**, just like straight people. We may just have a different and sometimes more challenging process of realising who we are attracted to. Some of us have these feelings at an early age, maybe 11 or 12, and for others, it is much later on. Either way, you will have some awareness of your feelings and, if you feel **ready** and **safe** to, you should be given opportunities to share those with others, **regardless of how old you are**.




## ‘You can’t have a family if you come out’

Many LGB+ people **have families** and have grown their family in different ways. Sometimes we might be told that coming out will restrict our choices in life. However, many LGB+ people have **wonderful** and **fulfilling lives** and **many have happy families**.


It may be that accessing support to start a family feels a little more daunting, and we have to come out all over again to people who might have assumptions about us. But remember that **you are valid** and that **you have the right to have a family**, as much as any straight person does.

# Effie

## Fundraiser at Allsorts

 From a very young age I was bullied quite badly. I didn't know why I was different from everyone else, but by the age of around 9 or 10 it had been decided for me that I was gay by my peers, and in one case, a parent, who had equipped their kid with a plethora of homophobic language to hurl at me on a daily basis.

For the duration of school I wasn't out as a trans gal, and didn't fully grasp that I was one until later. So growing up (from the outside as an assumed straight cis guy), I experienced a lot of turmoil around my sexual orientation. Am I gay? Am I bi? Should I tell people? It had been ingrained in me that gay equals bad, and being the way I was brought negative attention.

So when I moved school I reinvented myself to hide it. I hid it well until I was about 16. I kissed a boy from my school on a Friday night and by Monday morning everyone in my year knew. I denied it for about a year before admitting it was true. I think as a result of experiencing such harsh responses to even the suggestion that I was bi or gay, I never really 'came out' in words. 



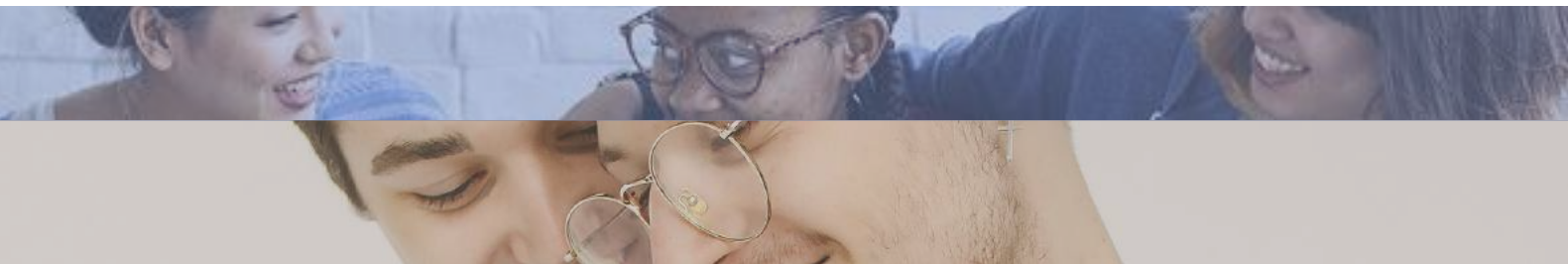
As I got a bit older, I was sometimes with women, sometimes with men, and sometimes with non-binary people. I was with whoever I wanted to be with and left the assumptions about my sexuality up to other people because eventually I just **stopped caring about what people think of my sexual orientation**. I've thought of myself as straight, bi, pan, gay, lesbian, asexual and it has shifted and morphed over the years. If asked, I use **queer** now because the experience of sexuality for me has never been fixed, and I don't think it ever will be **(and that's okay!)**.



# Myth Busting

## 'Gay men are feminine and gay women are masculine'

Gender expression and sexual orientation are **completely different things**. How we express gender does not have an impact on who we are attracted to. It is a common **stereotype** that LGB+ people will dress and act in a certain way and whilst it is **absolutely okay** for you to fall into a stereotype, it is **not okay for people to assume** your sexual orientation based on the way you look.



Are some gay men 'feminine'? Yes. Are some lesbian women more 'masculine'? Also yes. But so are straight men, women, and non-binary people. And so are bisexual people, and everyone in between. We decide how we look because **we know how we feel comfortable**. We are LGB+, because **we know who we are attracted to**.



# Top Tips

## The Do's and Don'ts

### Do ✓

- **Be kind to yourself**
- **Take your time** – there is no rush to come out
- Think about **how**, **when** and **who** you feel **safe** and **comfortable** coming out to
- **Get support** if you need it
- **Talk to other LGB+ young people** about their experiences
- Find **LGB+ role models** whether that be celebrities or people in your community
- Think about **who you trust**. Can you come out to them first?
- **Be patient** with yourself and with others
- **Make a plan with trusted people** about who you can talk to if coming out doesn't go how you anticipated
- **Prepare for questions** from other people
- Use the language and terms that **feel most appropriate to you**

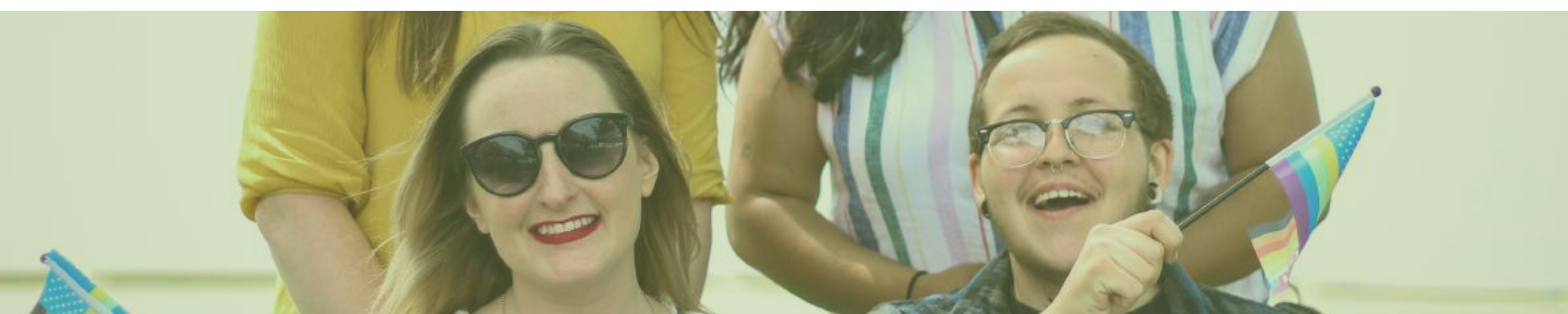


# Top Tips

## The Do's and Don'ts

### Don't ✖

- Panic! It is okay to be figuring this stuff out **in your own time**
- Come out if you don't feel **ready, safe** to or are feeling **pressured**
- Feel like you have to conform to **stereotypes** because others think you should
- **Assume** that everyone is aware of different language around sexual orientation
- Feel like you **need to** educate everyone on LGB+ issues
- Come out to everyone at once if you don't want to. **It can be a slower process** and **you control the speed**
- Feel **pressured to use a particular label** for your sexual orientation





## Nathaniel, 23



I came out in the summer of 2017 and immediately had a **very mixed reception** among my friends especially as the area where I grew up was exceptionally conservative in both political and social values. As such, despite **preparing myself emotionally**, it was still an extremely difficult thing to do with some friends standing by me and others considering it 'unnatural' or in other cases fearing that I had been trying to seduce them during the entirety of our friendship.

In terms of **when I came out to myself**, to be honest it was just before I told a group of my school friends at the start of Summer 2017, as that was the no going back point. And this was also **nerve racking** as I had for the entirety of my high school life believed myself to be asexual and was honestly more than a little scared of the power and intensity that sexual desire seemed to have upon other humans.

This fear was strengthened by the fact that one of the advantages that allowed me to deal with mental issues from an early age was **self-awareness** and my ability to balance or suppress my emotions at will, and so an instinct which from all reports went beyond one's ability to gain mastery over, was truly a daunting prospect.





Having said this, since coming out I have been lucky enough to join **Allsorts** and engage with a **whole new community**, and the brilliant team supporting and running the organisation, so **definitely an experience that ended on the whole rather well..**



Coming out is an **individual process** although it is something that the majority of LGBT+ people have in common and tends to be unique to the LGBT+ community. **All coming out stories are different.** Some are wholly **positive** and some are **challenging**. Some are **painful** and some are **joyful**.

Whatever your journey, whether you are at the beginning or somewhere along the way, **we hope that you have found a story that you can connect with here.**

# Who can you go to for help and advice?

If you live in **Sussex** or the **South East**, are **5-25**, **LGBTU+** and in need of support, **contact us** at **youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk**

For organisations outside of the South East area, visit **stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-area**



01273 721211



allsortsyouth



allsortsyouth



allsortsyouthproject



allsortsyouth.org.uk

# Sexual Orientation Glossary

There are many ways and terms that people use to describe their sexual orientation. Language is **constantly changing** and **adapting**. This is not an extensive list of all terms people use to describe sexual orientation, but just a few that we think will come in handy. For our full glossary of LGBT+ terms, please visit: <https://bit.ly/387vXPx>

## Ally

Someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBT+ people.

## Androsexual

Someone physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to 'masculine' presenting people.

## Aromantic

Experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behavior.

## Asexual

A sexual orientation generally characterised by not feeling sexual attraction or desire for partnered sexuality but some asexual people do have sex.

## Biphobia

The fear, discrimination, prejudice or bullying of a person because they are bisexual or perceived to be bisexual by others.

## Bi (Bisexual)

An individual who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men and women.

## Coming Out

The process of telling others about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## Demisexual

Little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.

## Fluid

Fluid(ity) describes an identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available

## Gay

The adjective used to describe people whose physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex.

## Gynesexual / Sapphic

Someone physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to 'feminine' presenting people.

## Outing

The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation without that person's consent.

## Homophobia

The fear, discrimination, prejudice or bullying of a person because they are gay or lesbian or perceived to be gay or lesbian by others.

## Lesbian

A woman whose physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay or as gay women.

## Openly Gay/Lesbian/Bi

Describes people who self-identify as lesbian, gay or bi in their personal, public and/or professional lives.

## Pansexual

People who's sexual orientation expresses acceptance of all gender possibilities including transgender and intersex people, not just two.

## Queer

Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves (should only be used if someone self-identifies that way).

## Questioning

The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## Sexual Orientation

The term for an individual's physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction. Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Pansexual are all examples of sexual orientations.

## Straight / Heterosexual

Used to refer to individuals who identify as a heterosexual, meaning having a sexual, emotional and/or physical attraction to individuals of the "opposite" gender/sex.



Brought to you by **Allsorts Youth Project** and generously funded by **Brighton & Hove City Council's** Youth Led Grants Programme.

Allsorts **listens** to, **supports** and **connects** children and young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

If you live in **Sussex** or the **South East** and are in need of support, contact us at **youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk**



 **allsortsyouth**

 **allsortsyouthproject**

 **01273 721211**

 **allsortsyouth**

# allsorts youth project

## Unboxing Our Identities



A resource for young people who are LGBT+ and BAMER/PoC\* and/or Allies



**LGBT+ FUTURES**  
Grants Programme

\*BAMER refers to people who are black, Asian, minority ethnic (including African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, Latinx, indigenous, and mixed race) and refugees/people of colour.

allsorts  
of love

*“Are you black? Or are you white?  
Why do you look like that?  
Why can’t you just look normal?”*

*“Are you a girl? Or are you a boy?  
Why do you look like that?  
Why can’t you just be normal?”*

*“Do you like girls? Or do you like boys?  
Why do you look like that?  
Why can’t you just be normal?”*



## Why do we need this resource?

Historically, people who are BAMER/PoC and lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT+) have often been erased from queer narratives, marginalised, and faced racism in LGBT and queer spaces, despite having often fought at the front of queer liberation movement.

Subsequent to lifetimes of systematic oppression, those of us with LGBT+ and BAMER/PoC identities can often feel conflicted between different aspects of ourselves. It's easy to internalise the devaluation that has been placed upon us by society, and see ourselves as less than we truly are.



***No pride for some of us  
without liberation for all of us***



**Marsha P Johnson**

In this resource we want to show that being BAMER/PoC doesn't mean you have to be any less LGBT and/or queer, and vice versa. Each label, or 'box', is only one part of who we are - in this resource we want to 'unbox our identities', and showcase the richness and beauty in each of our unique selves.

If you're a young person who identifies as LGBT+ and BAMER/PoC, then please join us on the journey. This one's for you. Please know, you are valid. You are loved. In power and solidarity, Allsorts QTIPOC\* inclusion.

\*QTIPOC refers to people who are Queer, Trans, Intersex, People of Colour



I came to England at the age of 8 and we were the only family of Colour in the whole town. At school I had girl crushes and boy crushes - it was just normal for me.

As I grew up I never really felt comfortable with the kind of labels that were around at the time. I especially really did not like “bisexual” which always felt to me like it belonged in the “half-caste” box i.e in the bin or on a bonfire. But I respect people who have different feelings about words.

I used to just say I was “sexual” if people asked me. Now my own kids are teenagers and I love their fluid attitudes to gender and sexuality. It feels like we have way more ways to be comfortable in ourselves.

Non binary, Queer, Gender Queer - these are all words I feel really happy using to describe myself. But my very favourite is QTIPOC. How cute is that?



## Who are we?

BAMER/PoC communities are not all the same. The term BAMER itself simplifies our complexity and diminishes our numbers. The fact is that we are defined and influenced by a number of identifying factors. We are different ethnicities, speak many languages, come from a variety of cultures, practice different religions and many of us are LGBT+. We piece together the separate pieces of our lives to make our own unique story.

## Why are we bringing race into it?

Stonewall, the UK's leading charity for lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality, has released new research that shows...

**51%** of BAME LGBT+ people have experienced racism in LGBT+ spaces\*

Individuals with intersecting identities are most vulnerable.

People who are trans, women, and PoC are most likely to be victimised in society.\*

[\\*Stonewall, LGBT In Britain: Home & Communities Report, 2018](#)



In white LGBTQ spaces I didn't feel like I could be fully myself as a mixed black bisexual femme, that I would need to leave my blackness at the door, and then in black mainstream spaces I would often hide my sexuality. It made me feel lonely, wondering 'can I be me?' and deep down I wondered if I was normal or even lovable.



## What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality is a term coined by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989.

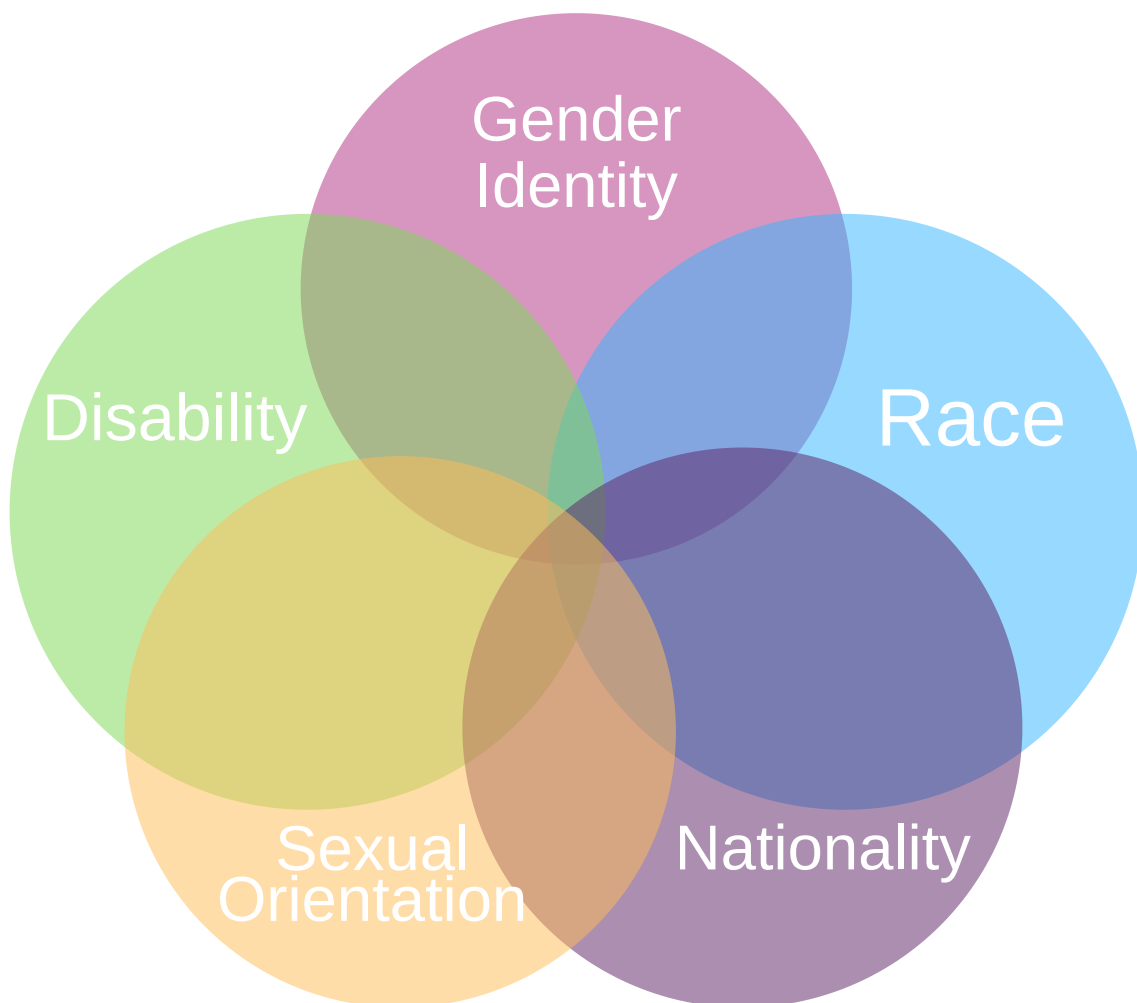
Intersectionality can relate to all aspects of a person's identity including race, social class, sexuality, whether you are cis or trans, ability and disability, age and other identities



***Intersectionality is the understanding that multiple disadvantages and inequalities can compound to create barriers.***



### Kimberlé Crenshaw



## All oppression is connected

It is important to understand that people's identities are not separate and always intersect.

A woman who is black, disabled and lesbian will face not only sexism, but discrimination in the form of racism, ableism and homophobia.

A trans man who is Asian and Muslim will need to navigate a world of transphobia, racism, and Islamophobia.

Intersectional thinking is appreciating individual oppressions do exist, but understand that they do change the experience of the individual when overlapped.



***There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.***



**Audre Lorde**



It's important to me to be a visible example of the existence of those intersections for other people who share them. I felt so alone, especially when my membership of one identity seemed to be at odds with my belonging to another, and especially when I had very little meaningful engagement with or connection to other Afro-Caribbean people, let alone queer people. Being a black circle adrift in a sea of white squares, and constantly having those identities questioned prevented me from being able to engage in and process them.



## What is White Supremacy?

White supremacy is the racist belief that white people are superior to people from other races and should therefore dominate over them.

Many of us have heard of hate groups such as Neo-Nazis and the KKK (Ku Klux Klan). We may have learned about racist systems of segregation such as apartheid in South Africa, Jim Crow laws in the United States and the White Australia policy in Australia.

However, in the UK we tend to glorify the rise of the British Empire and often overlook the shameful aspects of our history. Particularly that inflicted on people of colour around the world. Britain's colonial past includes extensive use of slaves, stealing land from native people, the extermination of culture and genocide.

The Britain we know today is built on our colonial past and racism runs through the fabric of our society. British rule has also left its legacy in the form of homophobic laws that are still in place in many countries. Having a huge impact on those cultures and making it complicated for BAMER LGBT+ people to come out and live authentically.

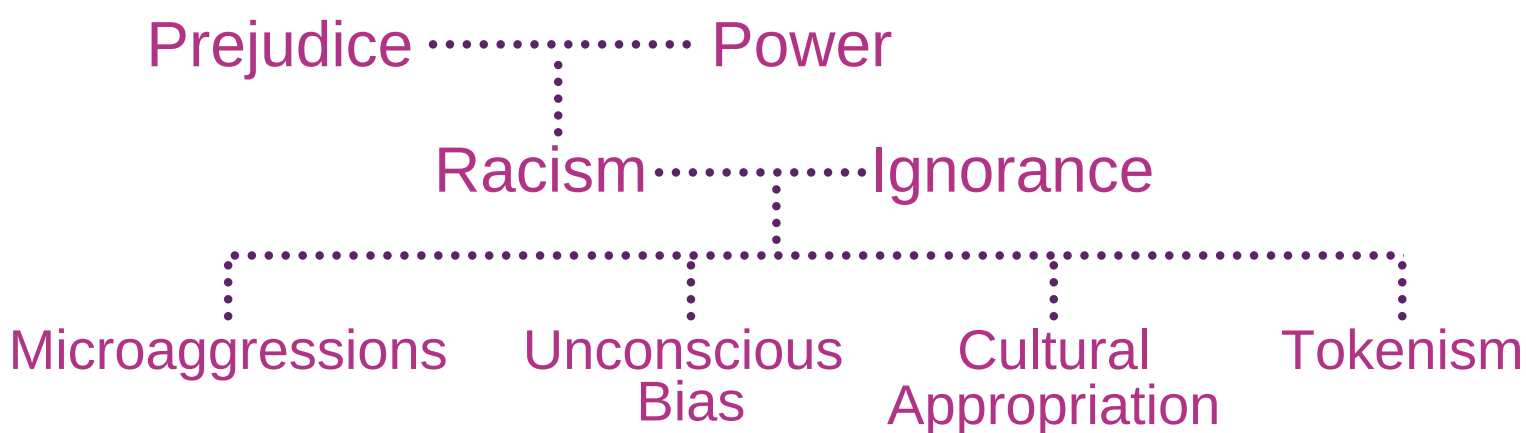
We may think that this was a long time ago, but the UK's first legislation to address racial discrimination wasn't until the 1960s.

**The Race Relations Act 1965** banned racial discrimination in public places and made the promotion of hatred on the grounds of 'colour, race, or ethnic or national origins' an offence.

Over time there has been culture change in the UK in regards to racism. Decades ago, racism was more likely to be shown publicly. Racial slurs and physical violence against people of colour were tolerated in society.

Although actions like these are happening less and are now more frowned upon in society, racism is still alive and well. You could say it's evolved. A person who would never dream of using a racial slur still might engage in microaggressions or tokenism and not see their link to racism.

Consider that racism is created by prejudice and power. Microaggressions, unconscious bias, cultural appropriation and tokenism are created by racism and ignorance. The motivation is still the same even if the expression is different.\*



\*Tree and description inspired by [Ted Talk - No. You Cannot Touch My Hair! | Mena Fombo](#)



I've begun to decolonize my understandings of gender and sexuality, learning more about our histories – that we have always existed! I've also re-connected with my spirituality and I feel that my queerness is a part of my spiritual expression. In indigenous and pre-colonial cultures all around the world trans, gender non-conforming and queer folx have been considered sacred for millenia. We are loved and cherished and we are sacred.

We can be our full selves,  
and it is glorious.





## Microaggressions

Are 'everyday' slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostility based on someone's marginalised group membership.\*

Microaggressions significantly affect the people they are targeting by reinforcing inequality in power and leaving people feeling alienated, shamed and invalid.

Examples include:

- Touching the hair or asking to touch the hair of a person of colour
- Asking a person where they are *REALLY* from
- Calling a person exotic
- Shortening or anglicising a person's name without permission, because you are unable to pronounce it
- Asking a person to translate a language on your assumption on where they are from
- Telling someone they are attractive for someone who is... (fill in ethnicity/race)
- Comparing someone's skin complexion to that of food. E.g. coffee or chocolate

\* [Credit: racialegualitytools.org](http://racialegualitytools.org)

## Unconscious bias (or implicit bias)

Showing preference or prejudice in favour of or against a person or group which usually leads unfairly to them being or rewarded or penalised.

Unconscious bias can lead to decisions that can have a serious impact on the lives of others. Particularly if the individuals making the decision are in a position of power.

Examples include:

- Individuals with Anglo sounding names being called for job interviews over those with diverse names of other origins.
- PoC students being directed away from certain courses, as it is assumed they are not capable.
- Medical patients only being screened for diseases or conditions associated with their ethnic background.
- Assuming a person will be good/not good at something because of their ethnic background (e.g. all black people are good at basketball).
- Assuming a person will only be interested in certain roles because of their ethnic background.

## Cultural Appropriation

Theft and commodification of cultural elements for one's own use — often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture.\*

Cultural appropriation can perpetuate racial stereotypes, allow privileged people to profit from oppressed people and play down historical oppression.

Examples include:

- Dressing up as individuals of marginalised culture, including painting your face. E.g. blackface, geisha or day of the dead.
- Wearing hairstyles and accessories not associated with your ethnic background or culture. e.g. dreadlocks, bindis, native american headdresses
- Serving food in your restaurant and calling it authentic when you are not from that culture.

\* [Credit: racialegualitytools.org](http://racialegualitytools.org)

# Tokenism

The practice of making only a symbolic effort by recruiting a small number of people from under-represented groups in order to give the appearance of equality within a workforce.

Tokenism gives those in power the appearance of being the champions of diversity, when they are really using BAMER/POC as props.

Examples include:

- Only hiring BAMER/PoC for BAMER/PoC projects.
- Paid staff, roles of power are filled by white individuals and voluntary roles/services with BAMER/PoC.
- BAMER/PoC are used as the face or representation of the organisation but they have no power or authority.
- Celebrating black history only in black history month.
- Hiring one BAMER/PoC to be the voice of all non white communities



For me, the visible otherness of my skin is a beacon that attracts attention to the otherness of the rest of my identities.

I have found that when people think they can ask “*but where are you from REALLY*”, they also think they have permission to ask what genitals I have, and who I fancy.”



# allsorts of Allies

## Tips on How to be an Ally to the QTIPOC Communities

### Check

Check your privilege. Acknowledge discomfort - It's a time to reflect and investigate... Checking our privilege is hard - especially for people who are already marginalised and discriminated against. It's not about saying that you've had an easy life, it's about recognising the struggles of other certain groups of people, and using your power to support them.

### Listen

Listen to QTIPOC with openness and a willingness to feel uncomfortable about the realities of our own power and privilege. If you get 'called out' for not being as inclusive as you can be, consider it being 'called in' to examine your own bias - we all have biases, but we also have the ability to reflect on them, and learn from them.

### Showcase

It's time to celebrate the importance of role models in all areas of life such as in our local community, in the media and government. It's important that, wherever possible, QTIPOC role models are given an appropriate platform and are meaningfully celebrated. Get tickets to those QTIPOC shows and events, and enjoy the insight into someone else's experience.

### Education

It's important to be proactive. It isn't up to LGBT+ BAMER/ PoC to educate you on their issues and experiences. There is an abundance of information available for those who are or are looking to become allies. Make the effort.

# allsorts of Allies

(continued)

## Don't Assume

Don't assume that by being in a marginalised group you automatically know what LGBT BAMER/PoC people have experienced. Equally don't compare circumstances, oppression or hardship.

## Support

Challenge racism. 'Lift as you climb' - When you raise your voice, raise the voices of those in the community who face additional marginalisation. Stand up for equality. Challenge your friends, family and other people around you on their racism. Do this even when a BAMER/PoC is not in the room.

## Keep Trying

It's not going to happen overnight. Mistakes will be made. People will not jump in the air that you have now announced that you are an ally. What is important is that you do not give up.

*If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society*

**Bayard Rustin**



When I was 11, I was one of the only PoC in my school. I remember being confronted by 3 young white people my own age. The ring-leader was making comments about my hair, and asked if my skin was brown because I had eaten too much chocolate or maybe I had fallen in the mud. The other two just laughed and said you can't say that.

At that moment it wasn't the person who was making the comments who I was angry at; it was the other two who didn't take the opportunity to stand up for me. Why didn't they? They could have made all the difference in the world. That was the point that I realised how difficult my life would be if they knew I was queer. So if I was going to make my life easier I was going to have to hide something and I couldn't hide my colour.





# Terminology

## **QTIPOC**

Queer, trans, and intersex people of colour.

## **BAMER**

black, Asian, minority ethnic, or refugee

## **Race**

A political construct created to concentrate power with white people and legitimise dominance over non-white people.\*

## **Power**

unequally distributed access and control over resources.\*

## **Whiteness**

a racialised social identity that is considered normative and grants those who possess it power and influence (socially, economically, politically).\*

## **Prejudice**

Unjustifiable, usually negative, attitudes towards a group of people.\*

## **Privilege**

Unearned social power granted by formal and informal institutions- typically invisible to those who have it.\*

## **Intersectionality**

a way to view the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and oppression.\*

## **Microaggressions**

'Everyday' slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostility based on someone's marginalised group membership.\*

## **Cultural appropriation**

Theft and commodification of cultural elements for one's own use — often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture.\*

\* [Credits: racialequalitytools.org/](https://www.racialequalitytools.org/) Oxford English Dictionary

# Terminology (Continued)

## Oppression

The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group.\*

## Structural Racism

Encompasses the entire system of white domination throughout all aspects of society, including its history, politics, economics.\*

## Colonialism

Invasion of a people, taking over land and possessions. Benefits coloniser, at expense of colonised. Continue to impact power relations in most of the world today.\*

## Diaspora

A diaspora is a scattered population whose origin lies in involuntary mass dispersion from its indigenous territories.\*

## Anti Racism

The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance, including internally.

## Code Switching

Informal way to describe the ways people of colour and those from other marginalised groups often adjust their language, behaviour, and even appearance in order to navigate the world.

## White Fragility

Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.

## White Passing

A person of colour or mixed heritage, but is mostly recognized as white, and receives the benefits of white privilege.

## Colourism

Prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

\* Credits: [racialequalitytools.org/](http://racialequalitytools.org/) / Oxford English Dictionary



As a little brown trans boy growing up in a small isolated, very white town in the 1980's and 90's I lived in a creative, imaginative space. Being autistic (though undiagnosed at the time,) gender, race and sexual hierarchies and labels never made sense to me, so I turned inwards to my imagination.

I was lucky to be brought up in my family environment where there weren't stereotypes, but obviously in the wider community there certainly were. Sex education in school was very limited, and there was no information about being lesbian, gay, or bisexual and certainly no talk of being transgender. I didn't discover that trans men existed until I was in my twenties!

As an adult I'm proud to be a trans autistic man of colour. The trans community is small but we've always been there right at the forefront fighting for LGBT rights and we continue to do so.



## Resources and References

### Local groups (Brighton)

- QTIPOC Narratives (inc. mental health space)
- QTIPOC Brighton (closed group)
- Radical Rhizomes
- UKBP
- Imaan Muslim Pride
- Stonewall (online) - 'QTIPOC Organisations You Should Know About'

### Guides

- Intersectionality (GIRES resource) [click here](#)
- BAME LGBT Allies Network Resource Handbook (The Proud Trust Resource) [click here](#)

### YouTube

- The Urgency of Intersectionality - Kimberlé Crenshaw [click here](#)
- Stonewall BAME voices - Stonewall [click here](#)
- Brown, trans, queer, Muslim and proud - Sabah Choudrey [click here](#)
- Transploitation: The Reality of Being a Black Trans Woman - Tschan Andrews [click here](#)
- No. You Cannot Touch My Hair! - Mena Fombo [click here](#)

### Books

- BAME LGBT+ Author & Book Recommendations [click here](#)
- Why I'm No Longer Talking (to White people) About Race - Reni Eddo-Lodge

### References

- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/cy/node/79901> [click here](#)
- <https://www.glaad.org> [click here](#)
- [raciaequalitytools.org](http://raciaequalitytools.org) [click here](#)



I kept searching for a place, and eventually I met and fell in love with a beautiful black lesbian woman and we had a small group of black queer friends.

As a group, we then decided to start up our own social space to build a community of queer, trans and intersex people of colour (QTIPOC).

It's been about seven years since we started the group and my life is rich and full of so many QTIPOC, or as I like to write it 'cutie poc'! Being with other cutie poc has let me see the beauty in my black queerness and the queerness of blackness.



*In diversity there is beauty  
and there is strength*

**Maya Angelou**



**allsorts** youth  
project

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**ALLSORTS  
OF  
FAITH**

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a collection of writings by  
**LGBT+** people of faith



**allsorts  
of love**

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## WELCOME

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Welcome to *Allsorts of Faith*, a collection of writings and prayers by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people of faith who have faced adversity because of their identities. Many people, both within the LGBT+ community and outside of it, assume that being part of a faith group and being LGBT+ are dichotomies (polar opposites). At Allsorts Youth Project, we embrace and celebrate the amazing diversity of our service users, staff and volunteers and the rich tapestry of experiences and voices that we all contribute to.

It is often not our own sense of faith or relationship with God that is challenged by the discovery or acceptance of our LGBT+ identity, but our relationship with others in our faith community. Many faithful people feel that God is the embodiment of love and light in our lives, both love for others and for ourselves, and that everyone is worthy of this love.

Faith and religion are multifaceted and wide-reaching and therefore not all practices could be represented in a small resource like this one. We hope that all LGBT+ people of faith and their allies will be able to relate and reflect on this content, regardless of belief or background.

For more information and support, please see the list of LGBT+ faith organisations at the back of this booklet or you can get in touch with Allsorts via our website [www.allsortsyouth.org.uk](http://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk).







“The one who loves all intensely begins perceiving in all living beings a part of himself. He becomes a lover of all, a part and parcel of the Universal Joy. He flows with the stream of happiness, and is enriched by each soul.”

**-Yajur Veda (Hinduism)**

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

**-New Testament,  
Matthew 22:36-40 (Christianity)**

“O people! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into different races and tribes so you can come to know one another. The noblest (most significant) among you in the sight of God is the one who is the most righteous (moral/ethical). Truly, God knows and is aware.”

**-Quran 49:13 (Islam)**

**SALT & LIGHT -  
A POEM FOR THE OVERLY-INVESTED  
'ALLY' ON A JESUS CAMP**

A story I tell often -  
The setting's Christian summer camp  
in August 2014.

The protagonist's a younger  
and a 'straighter' version of me,  
asked what type of boy she liked  
on our dorm's private 'girl talk' night.  
She describes the girl she loves back home  
without using a single pronoun  
lists features boys don't often have  
and hopes nobody understands  
or reads between the lines;  
thanks God that in this darkness  
no-one tries to meet her eyes.

I laugh when I tell this story  
but the punchline wasn't me;  
Kids shaking in their sleeping bags  
are not a source of comedy  
there was no laughter in my voice  
when I raised a trembling hand  
during question time and tried to make  
a grown man understand  
the hypocrisy in his stance.  
I was fifteen, I was gay and scared  
I never stood a chance.

Yet for years I went on trying -  
And for years I went on lying  
And I suppose these were the biggest sins  
being gay made me commit.  
'Thou shalt not lie'; I did  
by omission of my truth.  
Defended gays with reference to 'them',  
not us, not me, not I.  
'Thou shalt not murder';  
Jesus says





to hate is to murder with your mind  
so accounting for the rage I stored  
in keeping up this fight  
I must have murdered tens or hundreds or thousands  
of times.


For those things I'll ask my Father forgiveness  
every single time. But I will not ask forgiveness  
for what was not my crime:

"Love the sinner, hate the sin", you say,  
but this sin is not mine -

I will not take responsibility for your ignorance  
and hate. If you're telling children that they're wrong  
for things they cannot change  
then you are not the victim - this was your mistake.

Mistake. Something that no divine God can make.  
If He's out there watching, if He has a plan for me,  
it's a plan in which I believe my lesbianism was key.  
I came into this world like this and I'll go out the same -  
I was gay before the first time any human called my name.  
No loving God creates someone already ripe for condemnation  
and I guess that what I'm asking here is who are you to question  
the purpose for which I was made? Why are you suggesting  
that my God would have betrayed me by subjecting me to hate?  
It wasn't God's hatred; I wasn't God's mistake.

But there comes a point with these people  
when nothing really works  
so I sit and listen to them judge me  
even though it hurts.  
I'm brave enough to deal with it  
and I will be okay  
but I worry for the other kids -  
the bi, the trans, the gay  
who sit in churches, schools, or homes  
and wish themselves away, maybe pray  
that when they next wake up they will not be the same.  
I've been luckier than many - my family loves me for me  
but I know that on Christian summer camp that August 2014



I felt gross, I felt lonely, I felt small.  
And I cry for all the kids who go from their pews to their beds  
hating themselves so much they don't want to wake up at all  
So to those kids, I'd like to say:  
It's a blessing to be gay.

The first girl I fell in love with  
broke my heart but not before  
she changed my life -  
if my God didn't make me gay  
I wouldn't know that love today  
no man I've ever met  
knew how to see a girl that way.  
And even putting romance aside  
I cannot count how much I've cried  
in the company of Godly people  
who couldn't be true friends to me.  
Yet I found my true friendship  
with my friends who are LGBT  
No movement or group is perfect  
but I've never known greater community.  
With people of all genders, sexualities, backgrounds, faiths,  
We gravitate together to comfort, heal, to educate,  
but mostly just to love. And if love is what God is  
then I know I found him here.  
You'll find him via being you  
and that is not something to fear.

But the hardest thing you'll have to learn  
is that there is no easy way  
to earn forgiveness from those who say  
your existence is the sin.  
Put each verse they condemn with back into context, wear  
the blood from your heart on your sleeve as a protest,  
disclose all the anecdotes, pray for the best:  
They will not understand, you may not pass their test.  
But when you leave them judging, confused, uninspired  
and crawl under the covers, weak and tired,



I want you to know this -  
That whoever you kiss  
tastes the salt and the light  
of the earth on your lips.  
Because if He's your Father  
as long as you live  
then your love's the one thing  
He won't have to forgive.

If you're the closeted kid on a Jesus camp  
or the overly invested 'ally'  
If you're God-fearing and LGBT  
and you're getting too tired to try,  
If you're not hearing this from anyone else  
today I want you to hear it from me.  
It's a blessing to be you.  
It's a blessing to be gay.  
I love you.  
You'll be okay.

**By Imogen Cook**  
**Former Allsorts young person**  
**Student of English Literature and Creative Writing**

## WE ARE ALL TESTED ON OUR FAITH

The closest I felt to Allah was the same night I felt furthest. It was during Ramadan 2015 and I was struggling with my Muslim identity. I was trying to connect with other LGBTQ Muslims and I just felt like such an imposter, a caricature, trying to be Muslim instead of just being Muslim. I was jealous of other Muslims who just knew Allah existed, and their faith was unquestionable; it was just there. I wasn't fasting, but it was the first Ramadan I had acknowledged since childhood, swept up without choice in our family rituals of sehri and iftar.

I was in bed reading *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker for the first time. I was reading the part where Celie loses her faith in God after everything that has happened, her religion was the last thing she was holding onto, but now she was done, she let go. She's walking with Shug, I think they're in a meadow or something, and Shug just comes right back at Celie for rejecting God.

"Here's the thing, say Shug... God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for. ... I believe God is everything, say Shug. Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found it."

At the same time, a thunderstorm started. Lightning forks and bolts through a black sky. I don't even remember if it was raining; the midnight air was electric and it was absolutely beautiful. I got out of bed, turned all the lights off and went to the window. I stood there, losing track of time and reality as I simply watched the sky. I could feel something. Not just in the sky or on a page. Something all around me. But it wasn't scary or worrying and all those struggles I had about being Muslim seemed to just settle a bit. They didn't disappear, but that's okay. Faith isn't about me and my struggles, it's so much more than that. I think I found something that night.

As much as we are aware of spectrums within the LGBTQ community, we forget that other parts of our identities can live on spectrums too.





Our faith exists on a spectrum, as does our sexuality, as does our gender. Our faith is individual, our Islam is personal. And we can move along this spectrum too.

Queer is fluid. Gender is fluid. Faith is fluid.

We will continue to hear those messages about what people think Islam is and who people think Muslims are. But each message is an opportunity for reflection.

For those who ask, 'How can you be LGBTQ and Muslim?'  
Reply with, 'How can you accept those who are LGBTQ and Muslim?'

It's not our own self acceptance that is holding us back, it's those assumptions that hold us back.

For those who ask, 'How can LGBTQ people fit into intolerant Islamic beliefs?'  
Reply with, 'How can intolerant people fit into inclusive Islamic beliefs?'

We are all tested on our faith.

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear..." Surah Al-Baqarah (02:286)

I remind myself of this often. That Allah has not given us anything that we can't and won't overcome. I remind myself when I am faced with injustices. When I'm supporting and listening to LGBTQ Muslims who are isolated, who are unable to wear the clothes they want to wear, be called the name they call themselves, be recognised, respected and loved as the person that they truly are wherever they are, I remind us of these words of Allah. The challenges, rejection and pain we feel, I nor Allah can take away. But Allah has given us the strength, self-conservation and self-protection to get through it. And inshallah we learn patience, resilience and self-love that is so unique and precious to LGBTQ Muslim people.

**-Sabah Choudrey, Inclusive Mosque Initiative, London**  
**[www.sabahchoudrey.com](http://www.sabahchoudrey.com)**

Dear Lord

You have created your people in all colours, all shapes, all sizes. You love them all. Alas there are some who struggle with their identity. Lord please give them strength so that they may rejoice in themselves, and feel happy and content.

Let them know that they are loved.

There are also those who wish to ridicule and persecute those who are not like them. Remind them of your words, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgement you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you." Please help those to understand that not everyone is the same, but deep down there is love in everyone's hearts. Grant them the wisdom to understand, the patience to accept, and the ability to love, as you love us all. Thank you Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**-M, Friend of Allsorts**



Supporting a family member, partner or friend who is LGBT+ and struggling with faith related issues can be heartbreaking and challenging. You might try to imagine the problems that they are facing and feel helpless in how to support them.

In my experience as a LGBT+ Atheist who supported a LGBT+ loved one of faith, a critical understanding that I reached was that they didn't choose to be LGBT+ and they didn't choose to have faith, that's just who they are. Being resistant to their experiences and beliefs will not change who they are and the more time I took to understand their perspective, the better I was able to support them.

Another thing I have learned is to just be there to listen, support them in their decisions, their boundaries and their beliefs. Don't try to push them down a certain path, let them find their own path that they are comfortable with and seek external support from a professional if needed. You might not have all of the answers, but no one does and that's okay!

**-Jasmine, Allsorts Community Volunteer**





**EXCERPT FROM PRIDE CHAVURAH EREV  
SHABBAT SERVICE  
WEST LONDON SYNAGOGUE  
27TH JUNE 2014 – 30TH SIVAN 5774**

When I applied to Leo Baeck College in 1984, I was determined that 'Jewish life' would include my Jewish life as a lesbian and a woman, and wanted to help transform Jewish teaching and practice to encompass the lives of all Jews on equal terms. There have been huge changes since 1989. LBC now practices a non-discriminatory selection process – hence the increasing numbers of LGBT rabbis. Liberal Judaism – with significant input from LGBT rabbis – published liturgy for same-sex kiddushin, in December 2005, to coincide with the Civil Partnership Act, and, later, supported the Equal Marriage campaign. More recently, Liberal Judaism hosted the Heritage Lottery funded Rainbow Jews project, co-ordinated by Surat Rathgeber Knan, and extended outreach to transgender Jews. Meanwhile, Reform Judaism has now got behind LGBT equality, and the Masorti movement is also making moves.


So, what about the United Synagogue? I took Tikvah, 'Hope', as my middle name because I am ever-hopeful!

**-Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, Brighton and Hove  
Progressive Synagogue  
[www.rabbiellisarah.com](http://www.rabbiellisarah.com)**



**RESEARCH THE SCRIPTURES**

Being a member of an organised religious community whilst being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community can be difficult. I was very concerned because if my religious scriptures came across as discriminatory in any way, it would be very difficult for me as I would have to reject the culture I was raised into. This is why I



decided to research these scriptures and find out exactly what they say.

“If one man is to lay with another man as with a woman, it is an abomination and they shall surely be put to death.” This quote from Leviticus is paraphrased and, on the face of it, sounds awful and homophobic. However, for me, the Torah has always been meant to be interpreted anyway, I see it as more of a book of fairy tales meant to teach you the morals behind them more than anything else. So, if you have this opinion of religious scriptures it makes it a lot easier because when they say two men laying together is a death sentence, you can reason that in the time it was written sexually transmitted diseases were common and largely untreatable, so one could reason that this section is just warning us about the threat of STDs.

Another interpretation of this same quote could be that, again, important in the time that the Torah was written, two cisgender men could not have a baby together, the death sentence mentioned would be upon their household as it would not be continued. Additionally the abomination mentioned could refer to any sexual intercourse that is not for the production of children, as it says this in alternative sections of the Torah.

You may think that this thought process is just me clutching at straws, and you are of course entitled to your opinion, but this has helped me a lot because, as I mentioned earlier, I didn't want to leave or feel shunned out of my religious community.

Another and possibly more prevalent issue that LGBTQIA+ people of faith experience is discrimination from within their community. This has also been an issue for me but I have found a way round it by involvement in a religious youth group that is openly accepting of the LGBTQIA+ community. It means a great deal to me and has really helped me to keep my faith. It is very important to find an accepting community whom you can be honest and yourself with, so if your community isn't like that, maybe find a different one.

**-Lucas, Allsorts Young Person, 19**

## PRAYER FOR LGBTQ+ PRIDE

Tzur Yisrael, Rock of Israel, as we celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride, we give thanks for strength, courage, determination and endurance – and for all that has enabled us to survive the long and sometimes arduous journey from persecution and bigotry to liberation and inclusion. M'kor Ha-B'rachah, Fountain of Blessing, as we celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride as LGBTQ+ Jews, we feel deep gratitude for the blessings of mutual support and solidarity, friendship and companionship that have enabled us to find one another and to find a home in the Jewish community, so that each one of us may be affirmed in our Jewishness, our sexuality and our gender and feel complete as human beings made in Your image. Eyn Ha-Chayyim, Source of Life, as we gather together as LGBTQ+ Jews in pride and solidarity and rejoice in the diversity encompassed by all our lives, we thank You, above all, for teaching us to embrace ourselves and one another. And let us say: Amen.

**-Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah**

**Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue**

**[www.rabbiellisarah.com](http://www.rabbiellisarah.com)**



My prayer for the LGBTQ+ community is for serenity in mind and body, for understanding of oneself and others. This community can be one where the understanding of self may be more challenging. If we were made in God's own image, why does society challenge the way we feel within our God-made bodies? These are things that we, as a race of humans, face daily. Questions of sex, gender, self and community are not easy ones, and ones that the LGBTQ+ community in particular run into more often than most, and horrifyingly, are challenged on more often than most. Finding yourself, made in God's image, can be a journey. Feeling the need to explain or justify to others can feel insurmountable. My prayer is that, regardless of the reaction of others, we can strive for understanding and serenity. Sometimes when dealing with the reaction of others, we may need to settle for either understanding or serenity, however I pray that you rest in the comfort and knowledge of God, who made you. May either your serenity or understanding lead to compassion for others.

**-N, Friend of Allsorts**



## FAITH IS A JOURNEY

Faith and religious belief have always been a complex subject for me. I have both Jewish and Christian heritage and although both my parents are atheist we celebrated the festivals of both religions. When I was younger I felt religion was forced on me by school, being made to sing hymns and say grace made me rather resentful of the idea of god, who I saw as some old man who demanded I worship him. I was pretty sure he didn't exist anyway so worshipping him seemed a huge waste of time.

As I got older I began to feel more connected to my Jewish side, I realised that Judaism is not just a religion but a culture all of its own. I also received some anti-Semitic bullying at school which made me feel more like an outsider, part of a different culture. I began to identify as culturally Jewish, although still very much an atheist.

A couple of years ago I got into Paganism. Worshiping the elements and the natural world seemed a religious path that I could truly believe in. Over the last couple of years I have been on a journey of self-discovery, meeting my spirit guide and learning the arts of reading Tarot and Runes. Many people do not seem to understand how I can reconcile my paganism with my Jewish heritage, to be honest I'm still figuring it out myself. But my faith is a journey I am looking forward to continuing.

**-Ziggy, Allsorts young person, 19**



Almighty God, you have known us before we were knit together, you call us by our name and gather each of us as your beloved children. We bless you for our difference, we pray for your courage to make a difference in your world. Help us to bind wounds, lift the fallen, promise solidarity to those you have drawn us to as family. Your love is how we love, why we love, and who we love. Give us courage and hope to open the hearts of all to let your love reign forever. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, author of love and prince of peace. Amen

**-Father Anthony Murley, Church of the Annunciation (Anglican), Brighton**



"...nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

**-New Testament,  
Romans 8:38-39 (Christianity)**

"Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.  
Verily, with every difficulty there is relief."

**-Qur'an 94:5-6 (Islam)**

"The lord of the World is the Mender of the broken. He Himself cherishes all beings. The cares of all are on His Mind; no one is turned away from Him."

**-Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 282 (Sikhism)**

I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures. Simple in actions and in thoughts, you return to the source of being. Patient with both friends and enemies, you accord with the way things are. Compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world.

**-Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 67 [translation  
by Stephen Mitchell] (Taoism)**

**If you live in Sussex or the South East,  
are aged 5-25, LGBT+ or unsure and in need  
of support, contact us via**

**[youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk](mailto:youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk)  
[www.allsortsyouth.org.uk](http://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk)**

**For organisations outside of the South East  
area, visit**

**[stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-  
area](http://stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-area)**



**Faith and Belief Forum (multi-faith)- [faithbeliefforum.org](http://faithbeliefforum.org)**

**Inclusive Mosque Initiative (Islam)- [inclusivemosque.org](http://inclusivemosque.org)**

**Keshet UK (Judaism)- [www.keshetuk.org](http://www.keshetuk.org)**

**OneBodyOneFaith (Christianity)- [onebodyonefaith.org.uk](http://onebodyonefaith.org.uk)**

**Sarbat (Sikhism)- [sarbat.net](http://sarbat.net)**

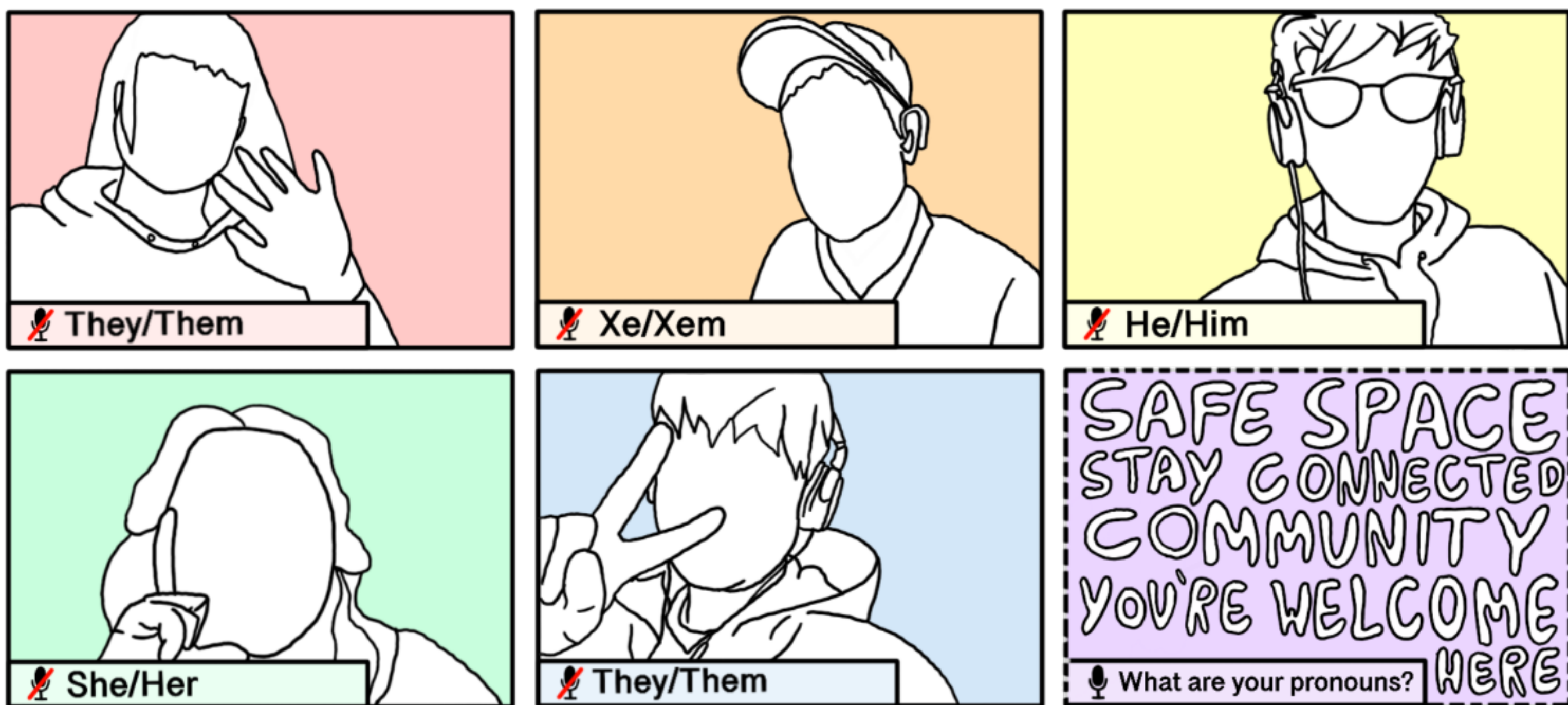
**For more LGBT+ Faith organisations visit**

**[www.stonewall.org.uk/  
resources-lgbt-people-faith](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources-lgbt-people-faith)**



# Managing Gender Dysphoria

Version 2, January 2021

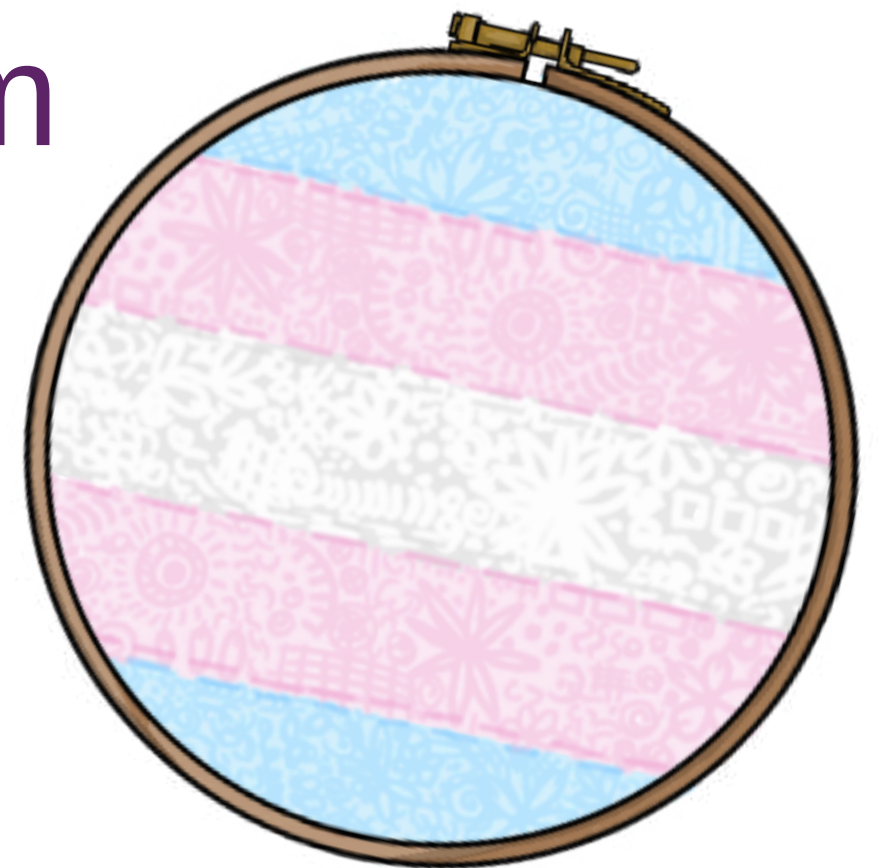


A resource for trans and gender-exploring young people by young people, staff & volunteers at Allsorts Youth Project

**Illustration by Libby**

# What is 'Gender Dysphoria'?

**Gender dysphoria** is the term used to describe the discomfort that trans people feel in relation to the sex they were **assigned at birth** (born as).



The NHS describes gender dysphoria as;

**'Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.'**

Most trans people will experience gender dysphoria (often just called dysphoria) in some way or another and to greater or lesser extents.

The feeling can be quite hard to pin down and describe. However, dysphoria can generally be separated into **two different types...**



# Social Dysphoria

Where an individual feels uncomfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth in relation to how other people treat or see them.

Perhaps people use the wrong name when addressing you, use pronouns that don't feel comfortable for you or the sex marker on your passport (the little M or F) doesn't feel right for you.

You might feel obliged or pressured to conform to certain gender norms or stereotypes based on the sex you were assigned at birth. This isn't the same as experiencing issues that relate to sexism or misogyny, which many people experience regardless as to whether they are trans or not.

**Social dysphoria** is a term that encapsulates all the difficulties and discomforts a trans person might face that **aren't** about their feelings towards their body.



# Physical Dysphoria

Where an individual feels a pronounced discomfort with or disconnect between their sense of their own gender and the sex they were assigned at birth. **Physical dysphoria** can manifest in many different ways, such as a discomfort around your body shape or height, the presence or lack of body or facial hair, the pitch of your voice or the shape of your face.

Maybe you can't even pin this feeling down to any particular thing. You might just feel out of place or wrong and uncomfortable in yourself. Some days you may not feel dysphoric at all and other days you might feel it a lot.

As a trans person, feelings of dysphoria can be extremely distressing and uncomfortable and can have a negative impact on mental health. It's important to develop a tool box of ways to cope and **stay safe if dysphoria is getting you down.**

And of course it's not uncommon for people who aren't trans to feel uncomfortable with their bodies, but gender dysphoria is specific to the experience of being transgender.

If you think you are experiencing gender dysphoria or issues relating to self-esteem or mental health, it's really important that you **speak to someone that you trust**, like a therapist, guardian or youth worker, who will be able to help you or put you in touch with support.

Ok, so you get it. **Dysphoria is rubbish** but it need not be the master of you. In this resource we aim to give you some practical, impractical and occasionally downright silly and fanciful tips to help you manage dysphoria from trans and non-binary young people at Allsorts Youth Project.

## So, where to start?

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that there are five simple steps you can take to boost your mood and help you feel happier and more positive. The NHS refers to these steps as '**The Five Ways to Wellbeing**'. It is those five steps on which we will be basing our own ideas on how to manage dysphoria.





# 1) Connect

Connect with people around you. Talk to people who respect your name/pronouns, talk to other trans people in real life and online. Watch trans YouTubers. Look for youth groups in your area. Find online spaces which feel safe. Practice connecting to people. Advocate for trans rights/awareness, but remember self-care. Maybe a break from social media might be a good idea for a while if you're starting to feel burnt out- we can't pour from an empty cup!



# 2) Be Active

You don't have to go for a run. You can start small... get out of bed (even if you get up late!). Look after your body with a shower and crack open that fancy soap you've been saving. Shave if you want to. If your body is making you feel gross, then maybe a bubble bath so you can hide under the bubbles. You may have complicated feelings towards your body, but it's yours and it deserves some care.

Maybe go for a run or ride a bike or skateboard. If being in a public gym or changing room makes you feel icky then walk around the block. You can wear baggy clothes, comfy clothes or even your favourite outfit if that helps you get outside into the sunshine.

You don't have to be physical to be active. You can read, watch TV or draw, join a club. Rediscover a hobby. Remember things that you used to do which you haven't done for a while!

## 3) Take Notice

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment when you are walking to the bus stop, eating lunch or talking to a friend. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Feel the wind on your face or stare at the waves at the beach. Reflecting on the little things might help you appreciate what matters to you.

If you are going through medical transition you might notice changes in your body. It's ok to celebrate the ones which make you feel good but remember that patience is key. It's called transition because it is a change and change takes time.



# 4) Keep Learning

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a new responsibility at work. Fix your bike or learn to play an instrument. Start a band or write a poem. Learn to cook your favourite food. Set yourself a challenge that you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun. Learn about trans history and find comfort in the words of those people who have gone before you. There is more wisdom and beauty in works of art, writing and music by trans people than there is in any TV documentary.

# 5) Give

Do something nice for a friend. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Give someone a compliment. Look outwards as well as inwards. Seeing yourself and your happiness as linked to your wider community can be really rewarding and creates connections with people around you.

Sometimes it might feel easier to look after friends rather than yourself. This can be nice but remember self-care.



# Some more ideas for you or someone you know struggling with dysphoria...

## Listen to Music



Listening to your favourite songs can transport you to a calmer place. Perhaps you want to relax with some chilled out beats or maybe you want to turn it up real loud and rock out. Dance and throw your arms around, your body belongs to you and you can let music make you feel good!

## Distraction

Find something to take your mind off your dysphoria. Slip into a fantasy world of dragons and adventures by reading or playing a video game. Some people like to do crosswords or number puzzles or paint and draw. Perhaps get a mindful colouring book.

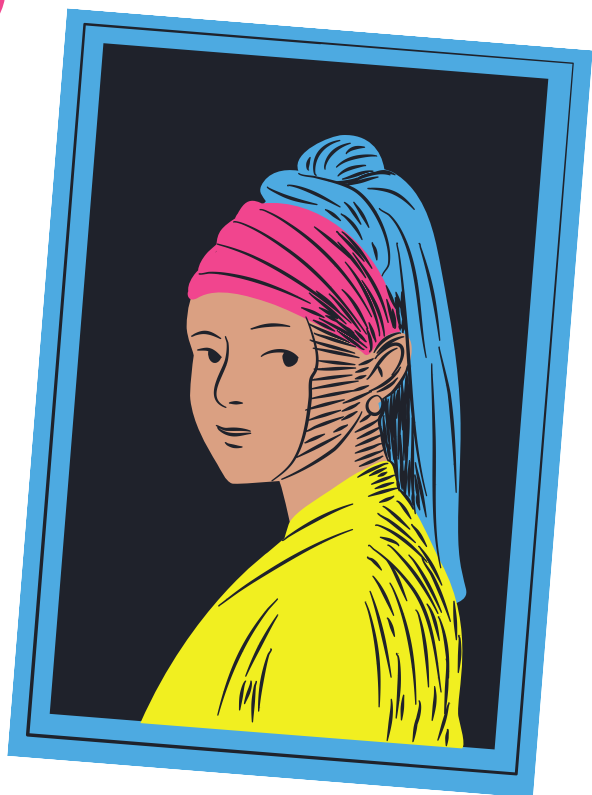


## Talk to People



That's right- tell your trusted people that you feel bad. Ask your friends to look after you. They might not understand exactly how you feel but even just getting your feelings out there in the open might help to take away some of its power.

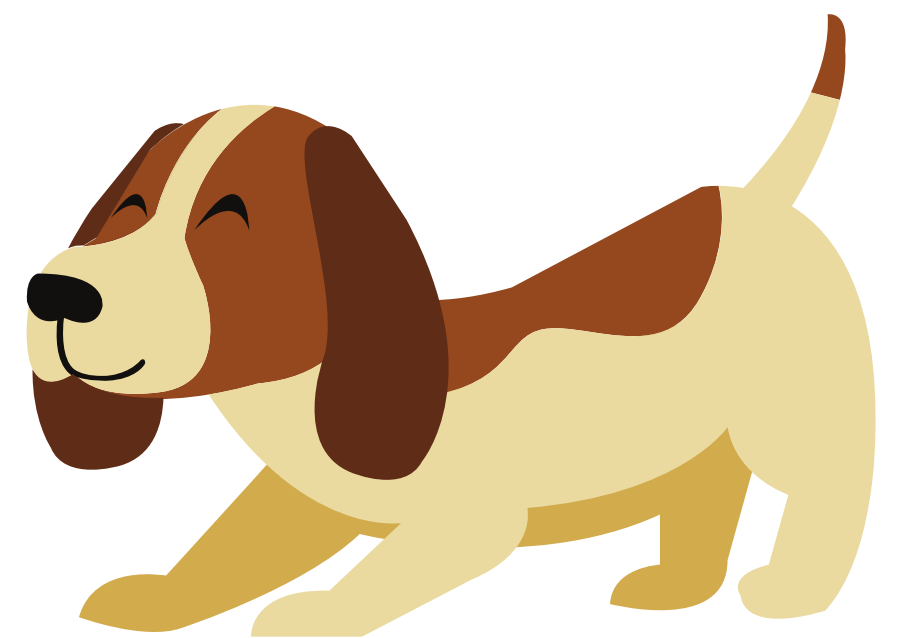
## Treat Yourself



Go get a coffee or find a new top in a charity shop. You need not spend much, or maybe don't spend any money at all! Go window shopping or find a free gallery or museum. Give yourself a treat because you deserve one.

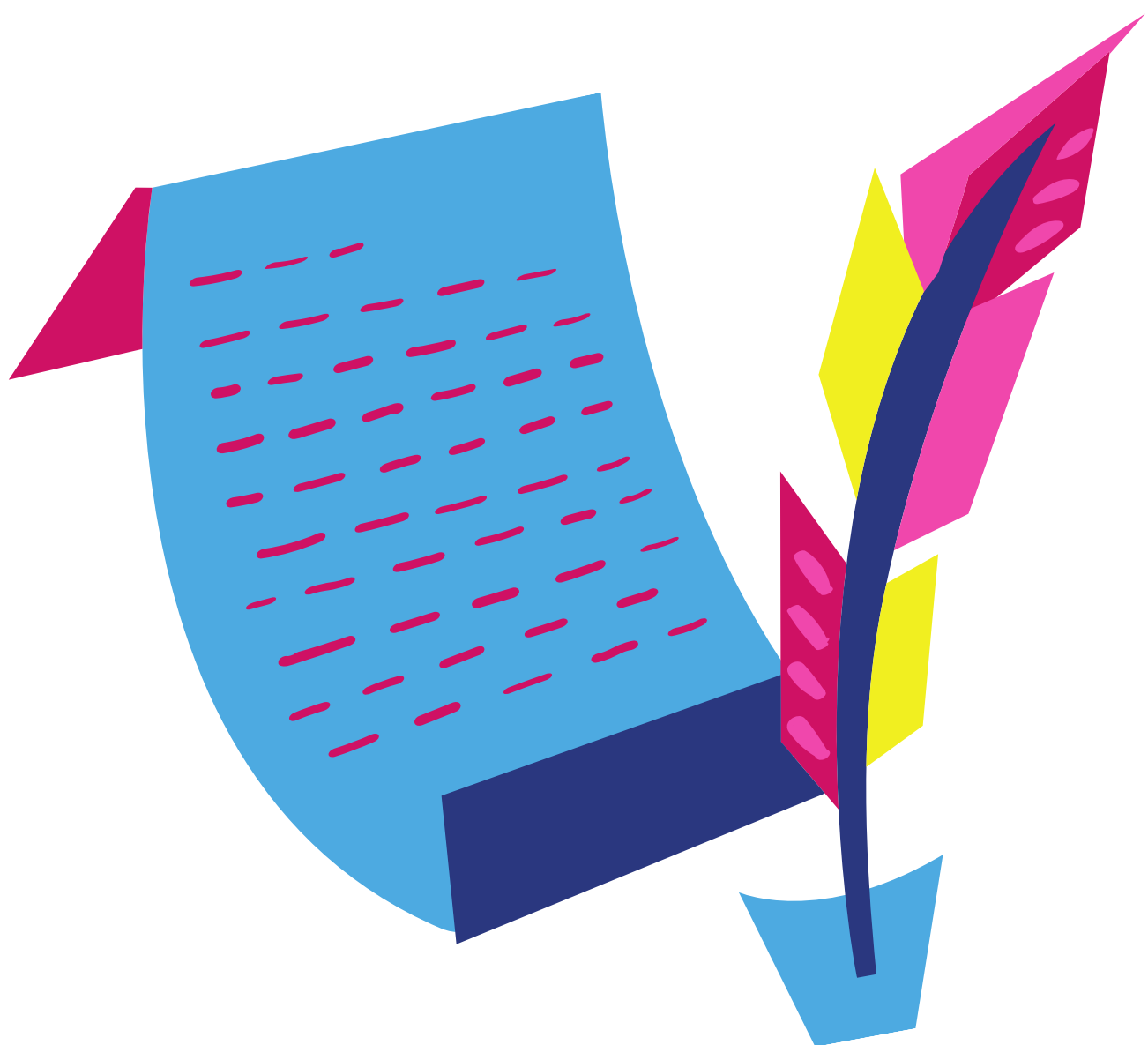
## Play with Animals

Perhaps you have a pet or know someone who does. You could walk a dog or maybe even just go to watch dogs play in the park. Animals will never judge you on your appearance and probably don't have much of a grasp of gender anyway. If you can't find any animals to play with then you can YouTube some funny cat videos instead!



## Writing

You don't need to be the next Agatha Christie or Bell Hooks to write a short story. You don't have to show anyone to write your feelings down and let them out of your head and heart. Maybe if you feel sad you can write a sad poem and put it somewhere safe or rip it up and throw it away!







## Let Yourself Feel Dysphoric

There's nothing wrong with just letting yourself be in the moment. Stay in bed all day if that's what you need to do. Take a break from the world. Close the curtains and switch your phone off.


## Be Kind to Yourself

Try to be nice to yourself when you are feeling delicate. Dysphoria often ebbs and flows, and riding the wave will get you back to dry land eventually.



The most important thing is that you **keep yourself as safe as possible** when you feel dysphoric and that means reaching out if you find yourself in a crisis. There is some contact information in the back of this resource that you could put in your phone in case you ever need it and planning for the bad days when you're feeling well is a good idea too. You will learn how to best help yourself with practice and a special tool box of tricks. Above all, remember that the way you feel is not your fault and you are absolutely not a lesser human in any way for being trans.

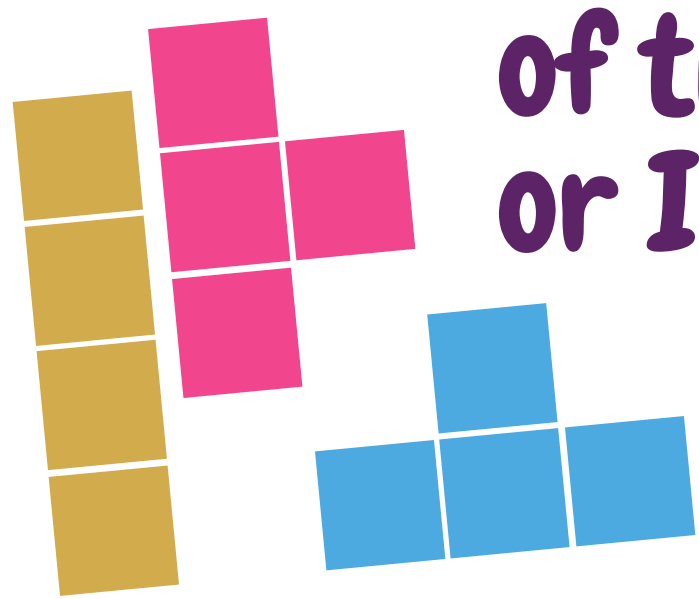
## Top Tips from Colin


 Hello! My name is Colin, I take they/them pronouns, and I'd describe myself as trans /non-binary / fluid / multi-transitional / whatever. I'm an art student and I'm really into Emmerdale, One Direction, and the concept of time.



The most consistent physical dysphoria throughout my life has been in my chest, but my gender can also be rather fluid so sometimes I get caught off guard by something making me suddenly dysphoric out of nowhere!

When dysphoria is affecting me, I either try to distract myself or process it head on. When it comes to distractions, I often try to watch videos of things that I really love (like 1D edits) or I try to learn a new skill, I'm currently trying to train myself to be a Classic Tetris World Champion!




As for processing it head on, I make art. I listen to the Mountain Goats and write a letter to my future self, or I work with my collaborator to make casts of my chest. I look directly at my body, I document it, and I let myself feel whatever I need to feel. 



Most importantly, I try to remind myself that whatever I am feeling isn't permanent. It won't feel so bad tomorrow, it won't feel so bad next year. If none of that works, I put on my favourite music and dance as badly and as freely as I can, flailing my limbs, letting everything jiggle, and getting all the pent up energy out.

I've no idea what other people can do really, I guess it's like supporting anyone going through anything, ask them what they need, give them space if they need, give them distractions if they need, let them vent if they need. I always feel best when I feel like I'm doing something productive about it, like I'll make some art about it and that will make me feel like I've done something about it.

I know dysphoria sucks real bad right now, but it won't always feel like this. In the long run, you will get what you need, whether that be medical intervention, or better coping mechanisms, or clothes that make you feel more confident, or friends that validate you, or literally anything else. Plus, this isn't all linear, you're allowed to feel dysphoric today and euphoric tomorrow and dysphoric the day after. Do whatever you need to do to get through to the next good day. 

# Top Tips from Oakley

 Hey my name is Oakley, I'm 24 years old, and I take he/they pronouns.

I'm very proud to say that I'm a panromantic trans man.

My hobbies include playing the drums, listening to all kinds of music, reading, going for walks around the park whilst listening to a good podcast! Oh and how could I forget about my love of animals!



The main types of dysphoria I have experienced have been around my chest, hair and voice.

When my dysphoria is bad I like to try a few different things: sometimes it helps me to totally change my surroundings: so going for a walk around my local park is a massive help for me. Other times I like to just do something nice for myself so I run myself a nice bubble bath... the bubbles help because then I don't have to look at my chest so much!

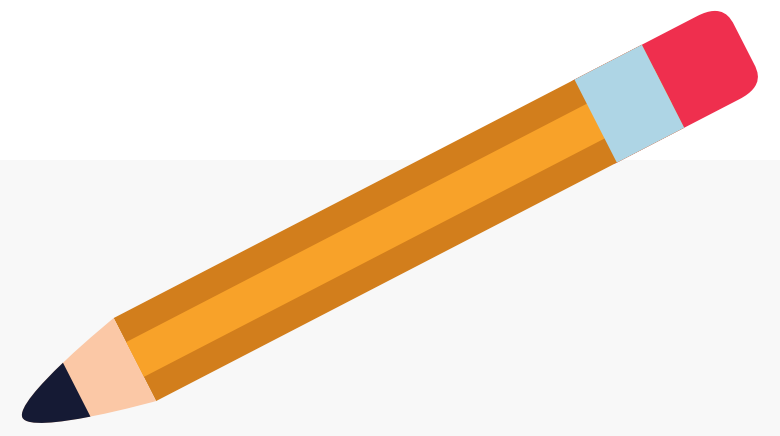


What I find useful from other people when my dysphoria is bad is them reassuring me that despite how bad I may feel it doesn't take away from the fact that I'm male.

My message to others who may be struggling with dysphoria is to keep going and don't give up! Don't let that nasty dysphoria win! Because you're stronger than you know!



Space for your thoughts



A series of horizontal green lines providing space for writing or drawing.

# Top Tips from Lucy



Hi! I'm Lucy! (she/her) I'm 21, a trans woman, and here to talk about my dysphoria!

## Bits I like! (Thanks HRT!)

- Boobs: My chest looks how I feel it should now!
- Smoother face: Soft! Woo!
- General weight gain: Figure is coming in!
- Slight curves make me happy!
- Hair: Never had it this long before! I love it!
- Androgynous: Pink doesn't suit me, much prefer to be comfy than ultra feminine.

## Bits I dislike!

- Beard: Scratchy and ew, stops face being smooth enough
- Voice: Too deep, feels gross
- Height: Too tall! Not supermodel, just depressed
- Hand and Feet: Hair on them looks like they belong to a werewolf
- Genitals: I have an outie where I should have an innie

## What I do when I'm feeling down...



### Distractions!

Do something that doesn't involve the dysphoric part! Play video games, watch a movie, go for a walk, listen to music, whatever helps.

## Dress up!

Try on various femme clothes or outfits. Some will make me feel worse, but I'll soon find stuff that validates my gender, and I can spend time doing normal stuff, just in nice clothes.





## Vent!

I'm lucky to have a lot of trans friends who are often up for listening to me rant about dysphoria. They get it, and it helps to know I'm not alone.



## Journal!

For me this is in the form of writing poetry and the like. Writing in a journal never worked for me, but putting my emotions into art makes a difference.

## Tips for supporting trans peeps with dysphoria!

- Listen without judgement
- Ask before giving advice
- Let them speak without interruption
- Ask if there's any way you can help,
- they know what works better than you!



To Trans/Non-binary/unsure people reading this, your body is your gender, because it is yours. Those features you feel dysphoric about, they are features of your gender. Feeling uncomfortable is completely valid. This is not meant to disregard your feelings, and I hope you can use that discomfort to work toward your goals.

Even when you feel weird and gross, you are your gender. Remember that your experiences with transness are unique. What works for me, may not for you, and that's ok! If something doesn't work, take some time to process, think about why it didn't work, and use that to find the next thing to try. Being trans is tough. There's no sugar coating that.

Find the community. We're stronger together. 



Write or draw something that makes you feel happy when you are down



Write or draw something that makes you feel happy when you are anxious

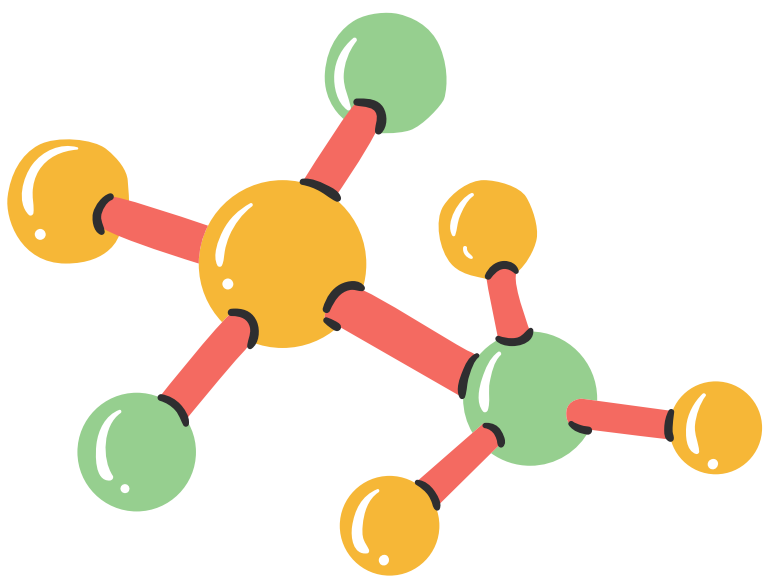


## Top Tips from Alex

Hey, I'm Alex :)

I'm a trans guy who identifies as queer (I mean, I know I like girls, but guys are good too? And non-binary people are cool...who knows).

I love playing guitar and have adopted an otter- the best animals. I tend to deal with dysphoria by working out at the gym, punching things or having a shave. I also like shouting or listening to offensive music very loudly.



Sometimes I will focus on other things like making molymod sculptures of molecules and I'm in love with Rachel Riley so I also watch a lot of countdown.

## Top Tips from Kai

I am Kai (he/him).

I am a drummer, snowboarder, beach enthusiast, vegan and a trans man. I love camping, live music and cats. I also have depression, anxiety, ADHD and am recovering from anorexia.

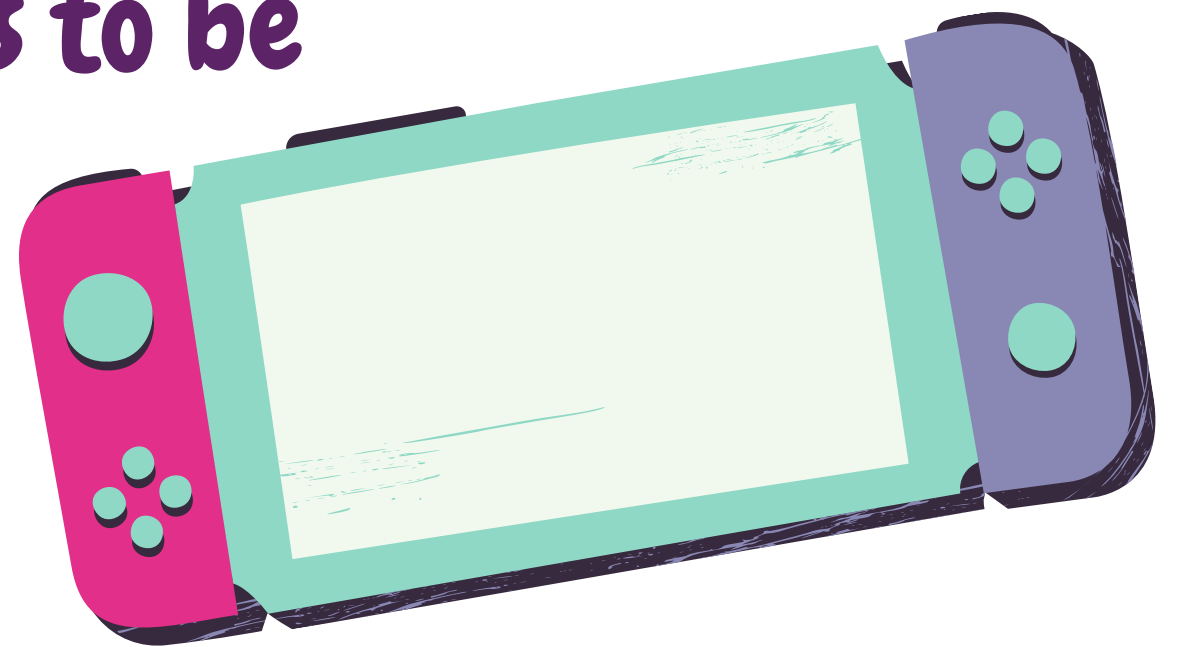
To manage my dysphoria and mental health I find it very helpful to be active. Snowboarding and doing sports helps me to concentrate on other things such as goals like landing a new trick or even my dream of going pro. Learning new things helps me remember I can do things. I also find putting my feelings into writing, songs or playing music helps me to get my feelings out in a way that isn't self-destructive.



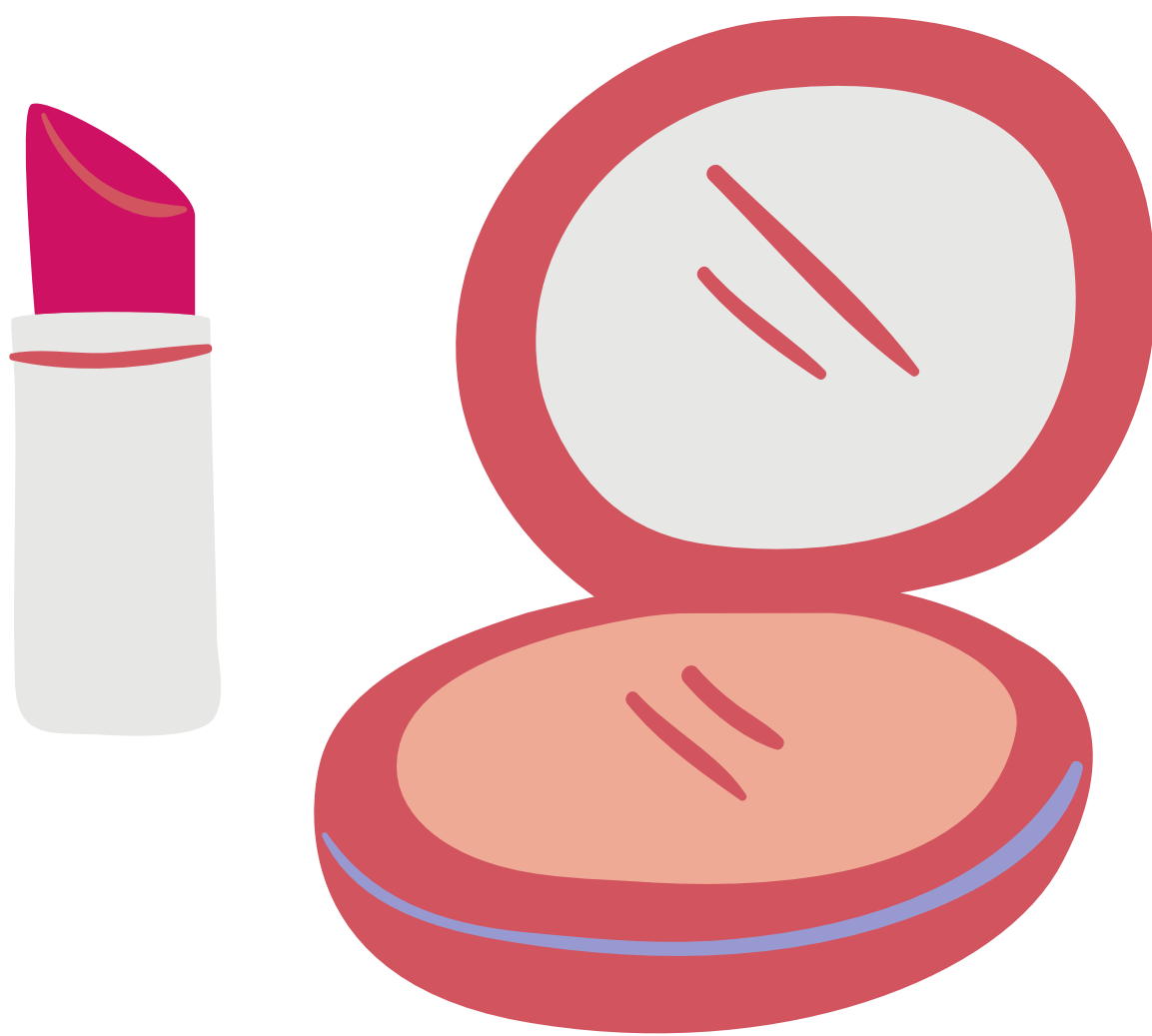
# Top Tips from Robyn

 Hey, my name is Robyn. I'm a 24 year old transgender woman living in the wonderful city of Brighton and Hove.

I feel a lot of dysphoria around my bottom half and hope one day to get surgery to correct this. I find it very hard to heal with and often will just shut down for a while but one thing I like to do is to focus on things I enjoy. I find playing and reviewing video games to be very refreshing as I can engage with something without being clouded by depression, anxiety and dysphoria.



I find things so foggy and hard to enjoy when my dysphoria is bad so focusing on these where it's easy to be honest with both myself and anyone reading my content feels like a nice change of pace.



I also like to focus on my appearance, changing up my hair colour every year and using plenty of make-up and clothing to create a style I feel at home in. This helps because although I often find myself feeling out of place in my body I can make my fashion my own. I

might not be comfortable in my skin but I am in my clothing and for now that will have to do.



How could the '5 Ways' Help you if you are feeling dysphoric? write down your answers



1) Connect...

2) Be active...

3) Take Notice...

4) Keep Learning...

5) Give...

# Top Tips from Effie

 Hi, I'm Effie! I am a 26 year old trans woman who also identifies as gender queer / non-binary.

Over the years, my dysphoria has shifted and morphed. Sometimes my height bothers me, other times it's my deep voice. A lot of the time it's just an icky, uncomfortable feeling that makes me feel big like a sore thumb. I don't always know how to describe it, but these are some of the things that have helped me...

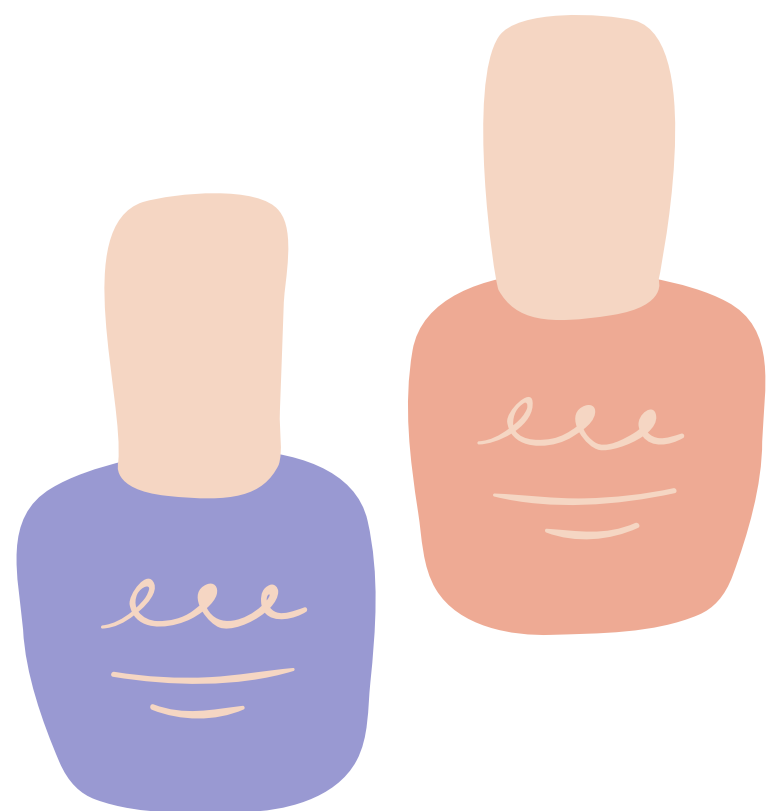
Talking to other trans folk. Whether it's to vent, ask for advice, or just to potter around town chatting, being with other trans people feels safe. I'm inspired by all the trans people I meet, and it always acts as a little reminder that 'hey, you must be pretty cool too if you're anything like these gorgeous people'.

Basketball. I love running around and throwing a ball about. Rushing through the air towards the hoop feels like flying. I feel light and free when I'm playing basketball, and it's a space where being a 6ft 5 woman feels awesome. Seeing cis women in the WNBA who have my body shape for the first time was also a big moment for me... 'I'm just like them!'



My final tip would be find the things that give you gender euphoria and hold on to them. Those moments you get all gushy and emotional because something just feels right. For me that's playing guitar with painted nails, washing my hair, pampering myself, or getting all dressed up to go nowhere - take a selfie, it'll last longer!

Never forget how special you are. In the words of Travis Alabanza, 'we are the gift'.



Dysphoria sucks, but being trans is awesome and it does get easier over time.

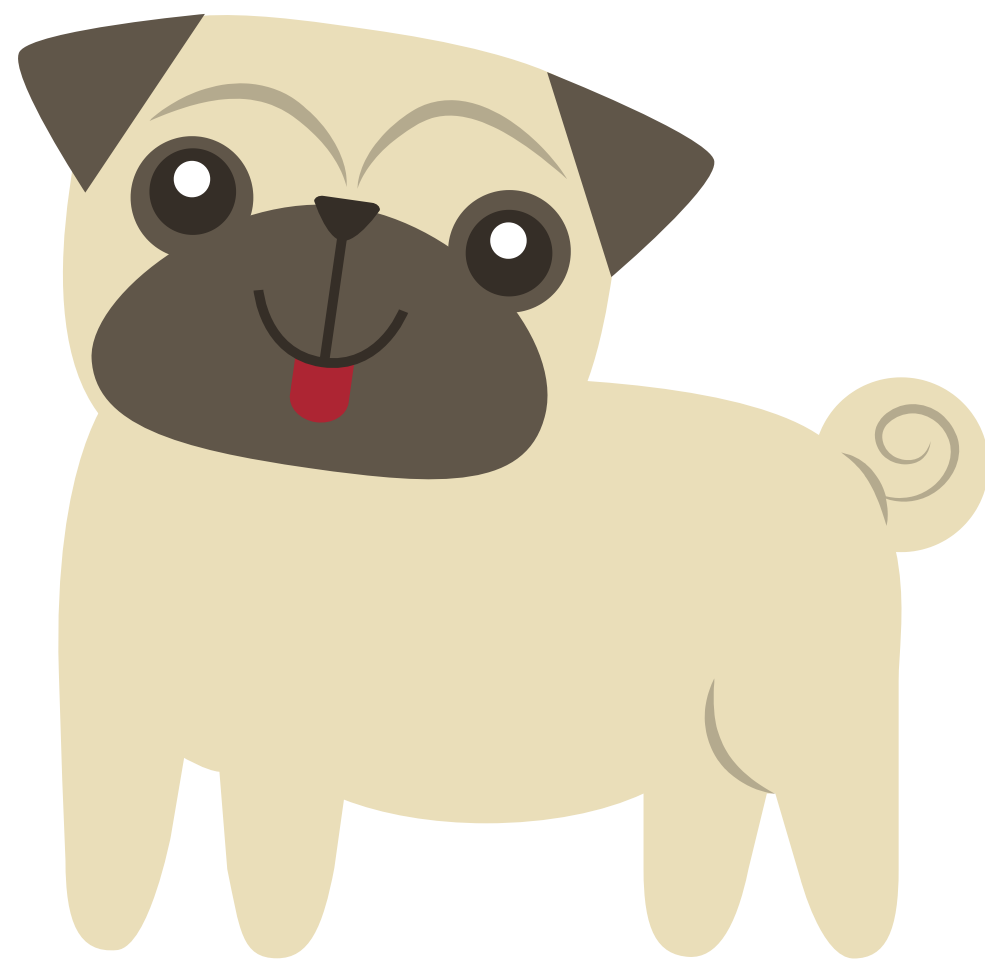


## Top Tips from Atlas



I'm Atlas, I'm 18 years old, animal enthusiast, poet, youth leader, christian, transmasculine individual and asexual. I have autism, depression, social anxiety and OCD. I have a diploma in animal management and am a published poet.

I don't like mixing food or loud noises. Being active is something I try to do. It clears my mind and keeping busy keeps me away from falling into my depression and dysphoria. I love walking my dog Bandit and collecting resources for art projects, although sometimes doing anything is hard, especially if I think too much.



One of the most important parts of my life is connecting with others. I live with my church minister and his family, having been disowned by/escaped from my biological family, and my church friends and youth leaders are the closest and most supportive people in my life who make efforts to understand my mental health if not my gender identity, so I try to educate them and show them I am human just like them.

I also help other LGBT youth in church and help out at our youth group. It makes me get up on most days. I also go to a trans youth group which helps me feel accepted and more confident in myself. I love channeling everything inside of me into creativity, my imagination lets me shape myself into the man/ person I someday want to fully become.



# Support Services

If you live in Sussex, are aged 5-25, LGBT+ or unsure, and in need of support, contact us via

[youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk](mailto:youth@allsortsyouth.org.uk)

or visit our website for more information;

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

For organisations in other areas, visit;

[stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-area](http://stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/whats-my-area)



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