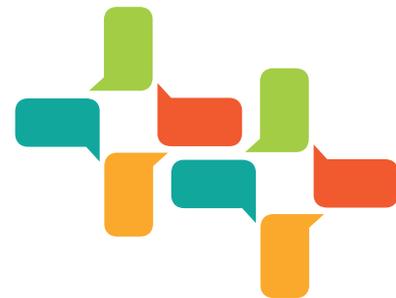


Fact Sheet

Gay



Some men are attracted to other men. They are called gay or they are also called homosexual. It is OK to be gay.

A gay man has sexy thoughts and feelings about other men. Some men like other men but are not sure if they are gay. That is OK.

Some men are attracted to both men and women. They are called bisexual. It is OK to be bisexual. For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Bisexual'.



In this picture two men are walking in a park. They are holding hands. They are in a gay relationship.

Coming out

Some men tell other people that they are gay

Some men tell their family and friends that they are gay. This is called 'coming out'. It is up to a person to decide if they want to tell other people. They should only tell another person if they are comfortable to. Coming out is an important step for some men to feel good about being gay.

Some men find it hard to come out

Some gay men find it hard to come out to their family and friends. They might keep their feelings about being gay a secret. They might worry that other people will not understand or will not be supportive. Some men might worry that people will treat them differently if they know they are gay.

It is up to a man to decide who he wants to tell. Some gay men decide to only tell people they trust. Most people will be very accepting and happy that they have been told.

If a person needs support with being gay or coming out they should talk to someone they trust. There are services that can provide support.

For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Where to go for help or advice'.

Relationships

Gay men may have different types of relationships in their lives.

There are different ways to meet others

Some gay men like to go places to meet other men. Some gay men meet in gay bars or clubs. There are different types of groups for gay men to meet other gay men.

These groups include:

- Social groups for gay men
- Support groups for gay men
- Sports groups
- School groups
- Festivals such as Mardi Gras or Pride Week

These groups can help men to make new friends. It is also a way to feel supported within a community.

For more information about support services, go to the fact sheet called 'Where to go for help and advice'.



In this picture people are sitting in a circle talking. They are at a social group and giving each other support.

Some men want a close relationship with another man

Sometimes a man meets another man he really likes. He might ask another man to go out on a date. After getting to know each other they might start a close relationship together. This is different to a friendship as both men have sexy feelings about each other.

Some men live together in a close relationship with their boyfriend or husband. People can only have someone as their boyfriend or husband if both people want it.

For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Relationships'.

Some gay men want to get married

Some gay men in a close relationship want to get married. In some countries gay men can not get married. In Australia they can.

Getting married is a big decision. Both people should think about whether they want to get married. Both people must say 'yes'.

Some gay men want to have a family

Some gay men want to have children. That is OK. There are different ways that gay men can have children. Having children can be wonderful but it can also be hard work.

Some people choose not to have children. That is OK. People also have happy lives without having children.



In this picture two gay men are holding their new baby.

Sexual health

Having sex

For a man there are many different ways to have sex:

- When people make each other feel good by touching each other. This is called sexy touch.
- When a man puts his hard penis into another man's anus. This is called anal sex.
- When a man kisses and sucks another man's penis. This is called oral sex.

It is OK to have sex in these ways if both people want to. A person should only have sex the way that they want to.

For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Having sex'.



In this picture there are two men kissing. They are in a private place.

Safe sex

When men have sex it is important that they protect themselves from catching a sexually transmissible infection (STI).

HIV is a serious STI that can make a person very sick. HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is important for gay men to use condoms when having anal sex to prevent getting HIV and other STIs. It is important to use water based lubricant to help stop the condom from breaking during anal sex. Using lubricant also makes anal sex more comfortable.

A person can get condoms and lubricant from a chemist, supermarket, Family Planning clinic or sexual health clinic.

For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Safe sex and sexually transmissible infections'.

Sexual health check-ups

It is important for gay men who have sex to go to their doctor, a Family Planning clinic or sexual health clinic for regular sexual health check-ups. A person who is worried about whether they have an STI should also get an STI test. It is important for a man to find a doctor that he is comfortable with.

For more information go to the fact sheet called 'Private body parts – keeping them healthy'.



In this picture a man is talking to his doctor. He is getting a sexual health check.

Discrimination

Some gay men have bad things happen to them

Some men have bad things happen to them because they are gay. They might get called names, left out of things, or hit. This is called discrimination or homophobia. Homophobia can make a person feel really bad about themselves. It is wrong to hurt a person for being gay.

Some people think that it is wrong to be gay. This is not true.

What to do about homophobia

If homophobia happens to a gay man and they feel bad about it they can:

- Tell someone they trust
- Contact a counselling service
- Report it to the Police or the Anti-Violence Project

For more information go to the 'Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender support services in NSW' section of the fact sheet 'Where to go for help'.

The rainbow community

Some gay men do not know other gay men to talk to. They might feel alone and that they are the only gay person. This is not true. There are lots of other gay men. This is called the 'gay community'. The community also includes lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Some people call this community the 'rainbow community'.



In this picture people from the rainbow community are walking down the street with rainbow flags. They are also holding signs saying 'Pride', 'Love is love' and 'Equal rights now'.

The symbol of the rainbow community is the rainbow flag. This flag represents the rainbow community coming together and feeling good about who they are.

For more information go to the fact sheets called 'Lesbian', 'Bisexual' and 'Transgender'.