



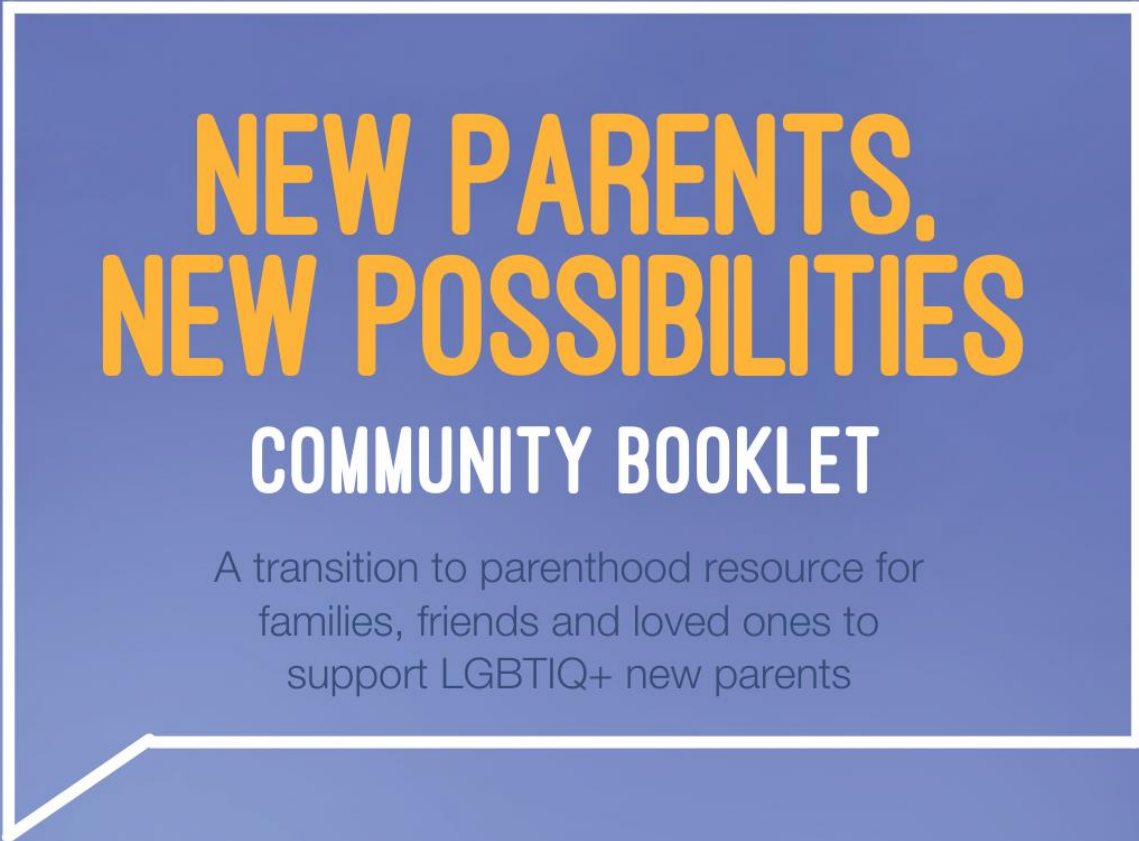
**Respect
Victoria**

**Preventing
Family
Violence**



**Respect
Victoria**

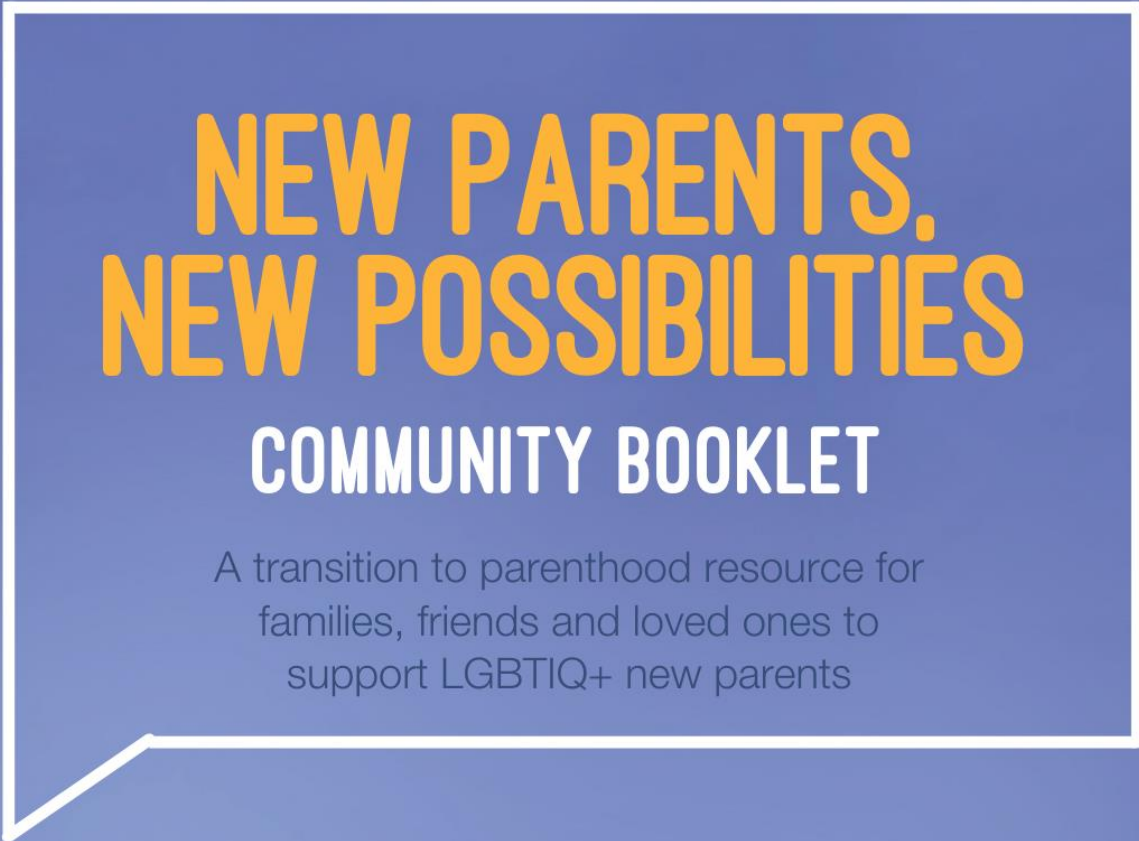
**Preventing
Family
Violence**

The image shows the front cover of a booklet. The background is a solid blue color. On the left side, there is a white graphic element that looks like a speech bubble or a corner cutout. The title 'NEW PARENTS. NEW POSSIBILITIES.' is written in large, bold, orange capital letters at the top. Below it, the subtitle 'COMMUNITY BOOKLET' is written in bold, white capital letters. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of text in a smaller, dark blue font, which reads: 'A transition to parenthood resource for families, friends and loved ones to support LGBTIQ+ new parents'. The overall design is clean and modern.

NEW PARENTS. NEW POSSIBILITIES

COMMUNITY BOOKLET


A transition to parenthood resource for
families, friends and loved ones to
support LGBTIQ+ new parents

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

drummond street services respectfully acknowledges the Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners of the land where we deliver our services. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. Sovereignty was never ceded, and they remain strong in their connection to land, culture and in resisting colonisation.

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As a co-production project, drummond street services would also like to thank the many community members and professionals who contributed their time, experience and insights to build learning around the transition to parenthood for LGBTIQ+ people. Thank you to the Project Advisory Group members Dr Ruth McNair, Assoc. Prof. Silke Meyer, Dr Luke Gahan, Dr Kate Foord, Dr Georgina Sutherland, Dr Suzette Mitchell and Felicity Marlowe, and to the many LGBTIQ+ parents and perinatal service sector professionals who contributed through the various stages of co-production.

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The transition to parenthood is an exciting and demanding time for LGBTIQ+ parents, as it is for all new parents. As families grow, parents face varied changes in learning to care for babies and children, and for many new parents this can be a stressful experience. As family members, friends, colleagues, or supportive community members, we can all play our part in supporting new parents.

This resource is one initiative of the LGBTIQ+ Transition to Parenthood Family Violence Prevention Project, led by drummond street's Centre for Family Research and Evaluation and funded by Respect Victoria. The information and tips within this booklet are designed particularly with families, friends and co-workers of new LGBTIQ+ parents in mind, however the recommendations apply to all community members.

The resource will highlight some of the many ways in which we can provide support to our LGBTIQ+ loved ones, including by challenging social norms around identity, relationships and families which create added stress for many LGBTIQ+ parents during their transition to parenthood.

The booklet is based on the findings from the New Parents, New Possibilities action-research project, and includes key insights from the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ parents. As one of three booklets informed by this research, the resource is complemented by the New Parents, New Possibilities Parent Booklet and New Parents, New Possibilities Perinatal Sector Booklet.

This booklet begins by highlighting some of the strengths of LGBTIQ+ parented families and concludes with a resource list of services for families who might need additional support during their transition to parenthood.



LGBTIQ+ FAMILIES' STRENGTHS & RESILIENCE

It is important to begin by building an understanding of the diversity within LGBTIQ+ parented families, and to highlight their collective strengths and resilience. Often self-described as queer families, rainbow families or gay dads, LGBTIQ+ parented families are families where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse (TGD), intersex, queer or asexual people have had or are planning to have a child or children. The diverse pathways to family formation for queer families include, but are not limited to, donor insemination, surrogacy, adoption, foster care and co-parenting.

Like all families, LGBTIQ+ parented families come in all shapes and sizes, including diverse relationship structures, single parented families, married and de facto parented families, co-parents, parents in polyamorous relationships, and stepfamilies. It is common for LGBTIQ+ parents to actively celebrate the diversity within their families, and as community members and loved ones, this is something that we can all uphold. Each of us can stand beside our friends, families and colleagues in recognising and celebrating who they are, their relationships, and the message that *love makes a family*.

In the face of community stigma, it is also valuable for us to share the research evidence which demonstrates that children from same-sex and rainbow parented families do as well as their peers from heterosexual-parented families.¹

There are other strengths of LGBTIQ+ parented families which we can also acknowledge and promote. For instance, in this project's consultation phase, some parents spoke about how they were able to push back against societal pressures defining 'normal' and establish their own vision of what family and parenting mean. For instance:

"We felt that we had freedom to explore what parenting meant to us and how we would do it. We weren't hooked into a set narrative which we find often couples are. So, I think that was a strength for us because we had that flexibility to explore it." [Cisgender, gay dad]

¹ Ken W Knight et al, 'The kids are OK: it is discrimination not same-sex parents that harms children' (2017). 207 (9) *The Medical Journal of Australia*.

For some parents, the challenging of heterosexual expectations meant that they were better equipped to divide roles and responsibilities in their relationships. For others, the opportunities for discussions around parenthood and closely connected relationships were a silver lining in the long, expensive and emotionally exhausting process of forming their family.

The potential for support from within LGBTIQ+ communities, such as other LGBTIQ+ parented families, were reported by many families to be an important source of social support and connection during the transition to parenthood.

“So as time's gone by, and you meet queer people with children, you have that openness about life, and your personal identity. You can share both your understanding of queer life prior to becoming parents, and then this unique experience of being a parent. So that has enriched our, I suppose our mental health wellbeing in being ourselves, because we know other queer parents.” [Non-binary, queer parent]

Some parents spoke about how grassroots initiatives, such as LGBTIQ+ playgroups, led by LGBTIQ+ community members, have been a fantastic resource.

An important factor in understanding LGBTIQ+ parents' individual and collective strength is their resilience in the face of discrimination and lack of understanding about their families. Several LGBTIQ+ parents spoke to the personal skills and resources they have developed in advocating for themselves prior to and after becoming parents:

“I think we're highly reflective and we've experienced a lot of adversity, discrimination and all that stuff that queer families and transgender people experience ... I think those experiences build us and build a particular focus on the world”. [Non-binary, queer parent]

Although far from an exhaustive list, these ideas represent the key themes which emerged out of consultations with 26 LGBTIQ+ parents, co-parents and donors. In striving for inclusive families and communities, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate these strengths and continue to create opportunities to learn from the voices and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people.



THE BIG PICTURE

Our research has found some key factors which impact on the transition to parenthood for new and prospective LGBTIQ+ parents, carers and donors. It also identified a number of practical ways that friends, family, colleagues and community members can support LGBTIQ+ parents. The tips and recommendations relate to personal interactions with and direct support for your LGBTIQ+ loved ones, and to the part you can play in challenging ideas around identity, relationships and families in your broader networks. The suggestions are premised with the knowledge that there are many ways that we can help to shape an inclusive, equitable and safe society for all.

Bringing a baby, child or children into a family is one of the most significant life transitions. The universal struggles of learning to care for a child (especially feeding and sleeping), coping with sleep deprivation, the loss of a sense of self and feelings of chaos are challenges for new LGBTIQ+ parents, as they are for any other new parent. In addition, LGBTIQ+ parents often face challenges in forming their families and pressures around fitting into a heterosexual and cisgender nuclear family mould.

“There is such a common ground between every family ... But then there's this added layer of complexity that, pre-conception, pregnancy, engagement with the health system, and then moving into parenthood that we have, that is completely separate and different to what straight couples experience.” [Cisgender, queer parent]

There are some simple ways you can validate and support LGBTIQ+ parents and contribute to supportive, inclusive communities.

Tips and recommendations

Choose your words wisely!

- Reflect the language people use about themselves, their relationships and families.
- Use inclusive language, for example ‘partner’.
- If you don’t know someone’s pronouns, ask them.
- Familiarise yourself with and use gender neutral terms, for example the pronoun ‘they’ and ‘parent’ rather than ‘mum’ or ‘dad’.
- If you make a mistake, just apologise and move on. Don’t over apologise, as that can make things awkward.

Make space to listen to and acknowledge the universal and unique challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ parents.

FAMILY FORMATION

For LGBTIQ+ parents, each of the common pathways to parenthood, which include in vitro fertilization (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI), donor sperm, adoption and/or surrogacy, have their own unique social and legal implications, which can create additional challenges during the transition to parenthood. Lengthy, emotionally demanding and expensive pathways to family formation can create stress for many LGBTIQ+ parents.

Importantly however, family formation for many LGBTIQ+ parented families often involves intentional decision making, and lengthy conversations around the social and legal implications of different methods of family formation. This often has the effect of strengthening or adding resilience to relationships. The decision-making in these processes can provide opportunities for reflection, enhanced partnerships and considered parenthood, including early discussions about parenting responsibilities and the division of labour.

“If you have to work really hard and it takes a really long time to be a parent ... You've just had more conversations. ... I think that time allowed us to really become close and to become connected about how we wanted to parent. And I certainly think now, looking back, that it's been really important that we did go through that process.” [Non-binary, queer parent]

If you are unfamiliar with the common pathways to parenthood for LGBTIQ+ parents, it is easy to be curious and to ask lots of questions. LGBTIQ+ parents have told us however that non-LGBTIQ+ people often don't realise the sensitivities and indeed the intimacy around discussing family formation, and that having to constantly answer questions about themselves or their families is a heavy burden.

In supporting LGBTIQ+ parents you are encouraged to think deeply about the questions you ask, the comments you make and the assumptions that may be embedded in commonly held ideas.



Tips and recommendations

- Reflect on commonly held ideas about parenting and families embedded through community attitudes and behaviour. Consider how these ideas impact on LGBTIQ+ parents and find ways to challenge these beliefs in yourself and your wider community. For instance:
 - Unlearn assumptions about families being formed with two parents – a mother and a father – and celebrate the diversity of all families across our society, including LGBTIQ+ parented families.
 - Reject ideas around children needing ‘female’ and ‘male’ role models in their families.
 - Challenge ideas that preference ‘biological’ relationships. Instead, celebrate the legitimacy of all parents in LGBTIQ+ parented families.
 - Avoid assumptions about the role of donors – some play a parenting role, some are like another family member or friend, some are not involved at all in a child’s life.
 - Challenge expectations that all birthing parents identify as ‘mothers’.
- Before asking LGBTIQ+ parents lots of questions about family formation, it might be worth considering the following:
 - Can you find answers to your questions from LGBTIQ+ specific services and resources rather than relying on parents to educate you?
 - Could the question/s you want to ask be seen as insensitive or intrusive? A good way to know is to consider whether you would ask the same question of heterosexual or cisgender parents.
 - What are the parents sharing with you? It is good to be led by the amount of information offered by parents as to whether they want to share details with you, and don’t be offended if they do not want to talk about it.
- Recognise that early parenting is incredibly demanding and that new LGBTIQ+ parents, like all new parents, need and deserve support.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Regardless of how parents identify, the birth or arrival of their baby or child/ren results in the need to negotiate new roles in relationships. Whilst many LGBTIQ+ parents actively challenge gender roles in parenting and gendered expectations of the division of labour, others have highlighted that it can be easy to 'fall into' gendered norms at this point of transition. Many LGBTIQ+ parents feel pressure to align to traditional and heteronormative gender roles during the transition to parenthood, when gendered norms for all new parents often come to the fore. It has been highlighted that a traditional division of labour around one parent working and one staying at home can lead to unequal power dynamics within relationships.

There are ways that we can all contribute to the creation of communities that are free from rigid ideas around gender and the division of labour.

Tips and recommendations

- Use the names that LGBTIQ+ parents use to describe themselves and be open to names that extend beyond the 'mother/mum/mummy' and 'father/dad/daddy' norm. Avoid asking who is going to 'play' the 'mother/father' role?
- Challenge community cultures that expect that there is a 'primary' and 'secondary' parent, and/or that one parent will do paid work and one will stay at home.
- Challenge community expectations that the parent who earns the most will continue in the paid working role.
- Promote the idea that the division of labour in a family can change over time.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Social connection is vitally important during the transition to parenthood. Whilst practical and emotional support from friends, community and extended family is important for all parents, there are some unique considerations for LGBTIQ+ communities.

For LGBTIQ+ parents and carers, recognition and celebration of their identities, parenting relationships and pathways to family formation is key to supportive relationships. Additionally, a commitment to learning from LGBTIQ+ people is an attribute of a supportive relationship for many LGBTIQ+ parents.

Unfortunately, for some LGBTIQ+ parents, a lack of support from family of origin (the family one has grown up in) creates further risk of social isolation at a time of already heightened risk. For those who don't have the support of family of origin, the shared experiences, connection, and support that is provided by other LGBTIQ+ parents is the main source of social connection.

"I mean, I think we've managed as well as we have, and maybe this is another strength of being LGBTI, by having a really strong network of people around us that we called on a lot!" [Cisgender, queer parent]

As extended family, friends, neighbours and colleagues, we can all be part of a village of support for new LGBTIQ+ parents. You might like to consider how you can provide practical help (such as meals, groceries delivered, child minding and doing the dishes) as well as support to new parents to help them maintain a sense of self beyond their new role as a parent. Perhaps the easiest thing is to check in with your loved one about how they are travelling and ask them about the support they might need.



Tips and recommendations

- Commit to life-long learning about LGBTIQ+ relationships, families and diverse family formation.
- Find ways to affirm LGBTIQ+ parented families through your words and actions. For example, describe the family formation or relationships in the same way they describe it themselves.
- If you are buying gifts for babies/children, you could include children's books which include diverse, positive representation of LGBTIQ+ parented families or toys/clothes which are not gendered or which challenge gendered roles, i.e., many girls love playing with trucks, and many boys love playing with dolls.
- Like all parents, ask LGBTIQ+ parents how you can support them – if they don't make suggestions, offer to drop meals over, or to take the baby/child/children so they can sleep. Keep asking this question as needs change over time.
- Participate in LGBTIQ+ campaigns and days of recognition, such as IDAHOBIT day (17 May), Transgender Day of Visibility (31 March), or your local Pride festival.



COLLECTIVE CARE

The transition to parenthood is also a time when other wellbeing concerns arise for parents, including LGBTIQ+ parents. During this transition period we often see elevated risk of parental mental health issues, relationship challenges and family violence. These are universal issues, that also impact LGBTIQ+ new parents.

Offering support, love, social connection and acceptance can help mitigate some of these risks during this stressful time and encourage help-seeking if people are noticing these issues for themselves. Consider how you can connect with your loved ones and provide them with opportunities to communicate openly about how they are coping.

"I think one of the biggest challenges for us was we'd always been each other's first support, and now that there was something that was coming down on both of us that we couldn't prop each other as well; so we made it a thing that as soon as one of us wasn't coping, we would bring someone else in as well." [Cisgender, queer parent]

As with all new parents, it is also important that LGBTIQ+ parents look after themselves and find ways to support their parenting partners. Giving new parents time for self-care by taking some of the pressure off them can be extremely helpful.

Finally and importantly, take the opportunity to bond with the baby, babies or children in your loved one's life. The shared love for and joy in little people can contribute to making this time a positive experience for everyone.

Tips and recommendations

- Remind LGBTIQ+ parents that all families face challenges during the transition to parenthood and many need formal supports.
- Consider the role you can play in allowing parents to speak openly about their day-to-day challenges as well as more significant issues that may be worrying them or getting in the way of them being their best self and parent.
- Make the opportunity to bond with the little people in the lives of your LGBTIQ+ loved ones. Experience the joy of this relationship.
- Promote self-care for new parents and if possible provide practical support to enable them to implement their strategies.
- Know that mental health concerns, relationship issues and family violence can occur in LGBTIQ+ parented families, as they do for cisgender, heterosexual parents.
- If you are worried about your loved one, try to find a sensitive way of raising your concerns and linking your loved one into available supports (see the tips on the next page and resources on page 17).


WHEN TO ENCOURAGE HELP-SEEKING

As a supportive friend or family member, encouraging help-seeking is not always easy.

Again, choosing your words wisely can make the world of difference. Consider:

- How can the words you use convey your love, care and concern for your loved one and/or their family?
- How can you ensure that you are not telling your loved one what to do? (This is unlikely to go down well!)
- Before giving your opinion on a wellbeing concern, ask your loved one if they would like your thoughts or opinion.
- Exploring options together – there are many services available to support new families and a number of LGBTIQ+ services that can help you find the right one.

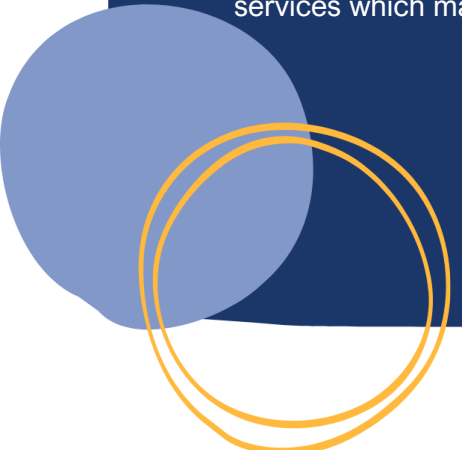




If you're concerned about any of the following for your loved one or their partner/s, it might be worth exploring with them some options for help:

- They have stopped being able to do what they want or need for their wellbeing.
- They are cutting off or withdrawing from people.
- They are not talking to anyone about parenting difficulties.
- Their partner makes them feel bad about their identity.
- They seem like they are walking on eggshells at home.
- There is new, escalating, or concerning conflict with their partner/s.
- They seem to be overwhelmed by experiences of discrimination.
- They are having ongoing trouble sleeping – and it's not because of the baby/child's sleep.
- There is escalating use of drugs or alcohol.
- They are worried all the time.
- Their ways of coping with stress are concerning you.
- They are constantly worrying about being able to pay the bills.

If these apply to your loved one, please reach out to drummond street services on 9663 6733 to discuss how we could provide support, and/or who else might be able to do so. Please also see the Services & Resources listed below for other services which may be of interest.



SUGGESTIONS FOR AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

Please reflect on the following before asking sensitive questions:

Do you have a close enough relationship to be asking this question?

Are you asking out of curiosity, or because it is important that you know?

How much does biology matter in understanding a person or their family?

Questions you may be asking

Consider instead

Which one of you will be the Dad?

Which one of you will 'play' Mum?

Who's staying at home? Who is the primary carer?

Will either of you be staying at home?

Don't you think you need a male/female role model in your family?

I'm excited about supporting you and being in your baby/child's life. Who else will be important to them?

Did your donor come over for Father's Day?

What days of celebration are important to your family? Are there ways that I can support you in those celebrations?

You'll be two mums! Who will *actually* be 'Mummy'?

What parenting names are you considering for yourselves?

Who will be the biological mum/dad?

If you ever want to chat about your journey to parenthood, I'm here.

Or

How did you bring your child into your life?

Your baby really looks like your donor, hey?

What a gorgeous baby. How are you travelling?



PARENTS' REFLECTIONS ON FAMILY, FRIENDS & COMMUNITY

SOME WAYS THAT LGBTIQ+ NEW PARENTS HAVE FELT SUPPORTED:

- Families of origin who overcome obstacles to offer support:

"I am so grateful, because they come from a community where this is not okay; and I've made it okay. So, I really, I can't express how far, and how hard it was for them to do that." (Cisgender, lesbian parent)

- Grandparents who treat all their grandchildren the same.

- People who commit to a journey of learning:

"They make mistakes, but they're really eager to learn, and they're not interrogative. They'll just apologise and then not make a big deal about it. They're really good. (Trans man, queer parent)"

- Friends who are happy to change their dinner time to 5:30/6pm.

- A community-led online, inclusive parents' group:

"It was started by five women who wanted to have a real space that they could just sort of be honest in." (Cisgender, lesbian parent)

- School parents who advocated to make the "Father's Day" event more inclusive for all families.

- People who use inclusive language:

"She made a big effort to be inclusionary ... in the way she used terminology and things like that, which I was really impressed with." (Cisgender, gay father)

"You want to assume that once they have recognised, 'Ahh a gay couple', they know all the appropriate language to use, and not to say, 'Oh so who's actually the real father?'" (Cisgender, gay father)

- 'Chosen' aunties and uncle figures who form close family bonds.



SERVICES & RESOURCES

LGBTIQA+ specialist services

- queerspace, drummond street services
9663 6733 | <https://www.queerspace.org.au/>
- Thorne Harbour Health
9865 6700 | <https://thorneharbour.org/>
- Switchboard/QLife
1800 184 527 | <http://www.switchboard.org.au/>
- Northside Clinic General Practice
9485 7700 | www.northsideclinic.net.au
- Equinox Gender Diverse Health Centre
9416 2889 | www.equinox.org.au
- Rainbow Door
1800 729 367 | www.rainbowdoor.org.au
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
1800 755 988 | www.intouch.org.au
- Our Watch – family violence primary prevention www.ourwatch.org.au
- Respect Victoria – family violence primary prevention resources
www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au
- The NW Network – LGBTIQA+ family violence resources | www.nwnetwork.org
- Intersex Human Rights Australia – Domestic and Family Violence & Intersex People
<https://ihra.org.au/familyviolence/>

Family violence services & resources

- w|respect, LGBTIQA+ specialist family violence service
1800LGBTIQA | <https://www.withrespect.org.au/>
- SafeSteps, 24 hour family violence crisis service
1800 015 188 | <https://www.safesteps.org.au/>
- Victims of Crime
1800 819 817 | www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au

Perinatal services

- PANDA, National Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Hotline
1300 726 306 | <https://www.panda.org.au/>
- Ready Steady Family, drummond street services
9663 6733 | <https://ds.org.au/our-services/ready-steady-family/>
- Tweddle – support with sleep, lactation and other challenges
9689 1577 | <https://www.tweddle.org.au/>

Mental health services

- CareinMind free mental health services – accessed through your GP
<https://nwmpnhn.org.au/health-systems-capacity-building/careinmind/>
- Better Access initiative – accessed through your GP
<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba-fact-prof>
- drummond street services
9663 6733 | www.ds.org.au

Alcohol and other drug services

- QHealth, Merri Health – specialist LGBTIQ+ AOD service | 1300 637 744
<https://www.merrihealth.org.au/services/young-adults/LGBTIQa-health-alcohol-and-drugs/>
- Cohealth
9448 5521 | www.cohealth.org.au
- StarHealth
9525 1300 | <https://www.starhealth.org.au/>

LGBTIQ+ community resources

- Rainbow Network
www.rainbownetwork.com.au
- Rainbow Families Victoria
www.facebook.com/RainbowFamiliesVictoria/
- Gay Dads Australia
www.gaydadsaustralia.com.au
- Intersex Human Rights Australia
www.ihra.org.au
- Victorian Pride Centre
www.pridecentre.org.au
- Hares & Hyenas Book Shop
<https://www.hares-hyenas.com.au/>



LGBTIQ+ TERMINOLOGY

Language in LGBTIQ+ communities is constantly changing. The following glossary of terms is not exhaustive of the many terms and definitions used by and about LGBTIQ+ communities.

Agender

An agender person is someone who has no gender. Agender people may also be transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, or another gender label.

Altruistic surrogacy

A surrogacy arrangement where the surrogate who carries the pregnancy does not make a profit. The commissioning parent/s might repay the surrogate the cost of medical and legal expenses.

Asexual

Someone who has little or no sexual attraction to other people.

Bisexual

A person who is romantically and sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender and other genders.

Cisgender (cis)

A person who identifies as the gender that matches the sex that they were assigned at birth.

Cisnormativity

The assumption that all individuals are cisgender.

Co-parent

A term that is used broadly to describe a person who shares the duties of bring up a child; examples of use include by parents who are separated and co-parent their children, donors who are involved as co-parents, co-parents in polyamorous relationships.

Dead name

The name that a transgender, gender diverse or non-binary person was given at birth but no longer uses.

Donor

A person who donates sperm or eggs for use in another person's pregnancy. A donor's relationship or lack of relationship with any child conceived with their donation is determined by the parent/s and donor on a

case-by-case basis and in accordance with state/territory law.

Family of choice

A group of people in an individual's life who provide non-biological networks of social and familial support. Also referred to as 'Chosen family'.

Family of origin

The family an individual grew up with, which is often the person's biological family or adoptive family.

Gay

A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people of the same gender. Traditionally this term was used specifically for men, however it is now widely also used by and in relation to women who are sexually and romantically attracted to other women. Both cis and transgender people may identify as gay.

Gender dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is the distress experienced due to a mismatch between a person's gender and their sex and gender assigned at birth. Though people who experience gender dysphoria often identify as transgender, not everyone who is transgender experiences dysphoria or distress.

Gender euphoria

An inner satisfaction/contentment/ happiness when a person recognises themselves as the gender they are or when others recognise, validate and accept the gender they are.

Genderfluid

Genderfluid describes the experience of shifting between different genders, or expressions of gender. Some genderfluid people may also be bi-gender or multi-gender, but others may not have two or more established genders which they move between, and instead may experience many different genders that change in a more fluid fashion.

Gender transitioning

The process of changing the way you look so that you become the gender you feel on the inside; This is a broad term which can include changing clothes and hair, as well as medical processes such as hormone treatment or surgery.

Heteronormativity

The assumption that all individuals are heterosexual.

Heterosexual

A person who experiences primary or exclusive attraction to individuals whose assigned or preferred gender identity is the opposite of their own (within a binary system of male and female).

Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia

Hatred or irrational 'fear' of people who are homosexual, bisexual or trans or gender diverse.

International surrogacy

A surrogacy arrangement involving a cisgender woman, who lives in an overseas country. These arrangements can be altruistic or commercial, although are usually commercial.

Intersex

Intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics that don't fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies.

Lesbian

A woman who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women. Both trans and cisgender women may identify as lesbians.

LGBTIQ+

This is an acronym to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people collectively. It is used with the acknowledgement some people may identify as more than one cohort.

Non-binary (NB)

Non-binary refers to any gender that falls outside of the categories of male and female. It is usually a descriptive term added to gender labels such as transgender/trans and genderqueer, but some people simply use non-binary to describe their gender/s. Some non-binary people may partially identify with a binary gender and self-

describe as a 'non-binary woman' or 'non-binary man'.

Pansexual

Describes the sexual, romantic or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Polyamory (polyam)

The practice of engaging in more than one relationship at any given time, with all parties knowing about these. These relationships are a form of ethical/consensual non-monogamy, and can be a combination of physical and/or romantic connection. They can be engaged in by mainstream and LGBTIQ+ communities.

QTIPoC

Describes a queer, trans, Indigenous or intersex Person of Colour.

Queer

The term 'queer' is a politicised term and often used as a reaction against pressures to be heterosexual, or pressure that non-heterosexuals, intersex and non-cis people should express themselves only in ways acceptable to the heterosexual mainstream. Like many terms used within the LGBTIQA communities, the use of the word 'queer' is not universal. Some people find this term offensive due to its original use as a derisive word, and due to this prior association prefer not to use or reclaim it. Others have embraced the term and use it frequently to describe themselves and their communities.

Rainbow families: Rainbow families are families where one or more person is lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex, queer and/or non-binary.

TGD (trans and gender diverse)

An umbrella term used to describe anyone whose gender identity is different from that which was assigned at birth or is expected of them by society. This includes those who identify as: trans; transgender; transsexual; genderqueer; non-binary; cross-dressers; Sistergirls, Brotherboys, and other culturally-specific identities; as well as a variety of other gender labels. TGD people may or may not access services to medically transition – this is different for everyone, and there is no requirement for medical transition in order to be transgender and/or gender diverse.

