



**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
BUREAU**



**UNITING  
PEOPLE FOR  
60 YEARS**

# Supporting LGBTQIA+ young people & their families

**UNITED FOR A BETTER CHILDHOOD**



**COMMUNITY  
FUND**

# LINKS

# Programme

Welcome, introductions & housekeeping  
Rationale for today's conference & aims  
Ground rules  
LGBTQIA+ Awareness

Lunch

Parallel sessions x 3  
Rainbow Project  
HERE NI  
Cara Friend

Plenary, next steps & close



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# Rationale & aims for today's conference

- Increasing amount of hate crime and negative speech against LGBTQIA+ people
- Rapidly changing society with lots of diversity
- Grant holders often feel unsure how to respond to LGBTQIA+ young people/parents

## Aims:

- Enable a respectful, open and honest discussion on the needs and issues facing LGBTQIA+ young people and their families
- Explore how non-targeted youth organisations can support LGBTQIA+ young people/families in addressing these issues
- Identify the support needs of paid staff and volunteers in providing this support

# Questions you want to explore

- The intersection of gender and neurodiversity
- Autism and gender identity
- What support is available in the Belfast area and within schools?
- Do you have any idea of the scale of exploitation/trafficking among LGBTQI+ young people?
- How to ensure diversity equality and good practice in the workplace
- Can anyone recommend any LGBT befriending or social development services for young people in Belfast?
- Question of terminology

# Ground rules

- Assume nothing!
- All questions are valid
- Be open to learning something new
- Respect and value different opinions and perspectives
- Appreciate that presenters are giving their time and resources to share their organisation's expertise with you
- ???



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# LGBTQIA+ Awareness





# LGBTQIA+ Awareness Training

**Lee Cullen**  
Cara-Friend  
(He/They)

**Amie Martin**  
The Rainbow Project  
(They/Them)

**Grainne Gibson**  
HereNI  
(She/Her)

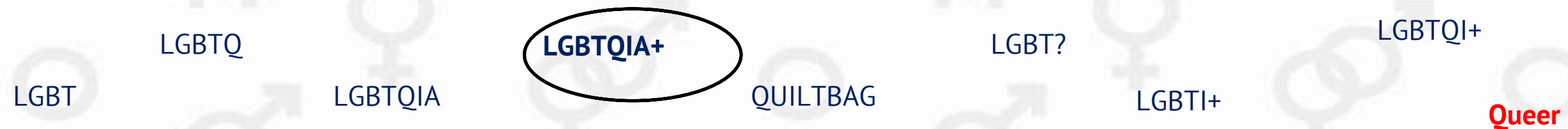
# What do we mean by LGBTQIA+?



LGBTQI+ people are often talked about as part of one group, however there are important differences.

The acronym broken down is **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and Intersex**. The + at the end of the acronym refers to other identities not listed.

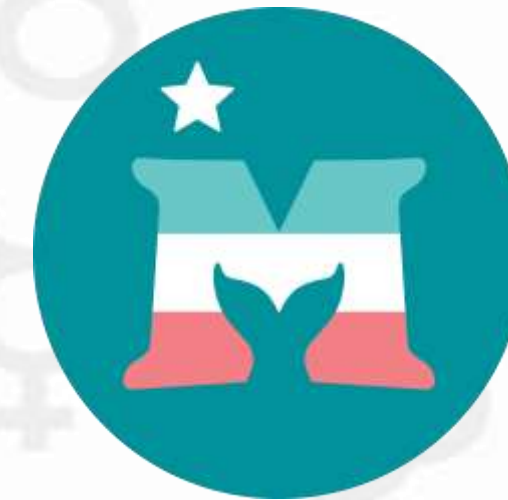
Far from being a list of identities, the acronym refers to ‘**a community of people that are either not heterosexual and/or identify as transgender**’, and in some contexts, is inclusive of family and friends.



# Our Colourful LGBTQIA+ Sector

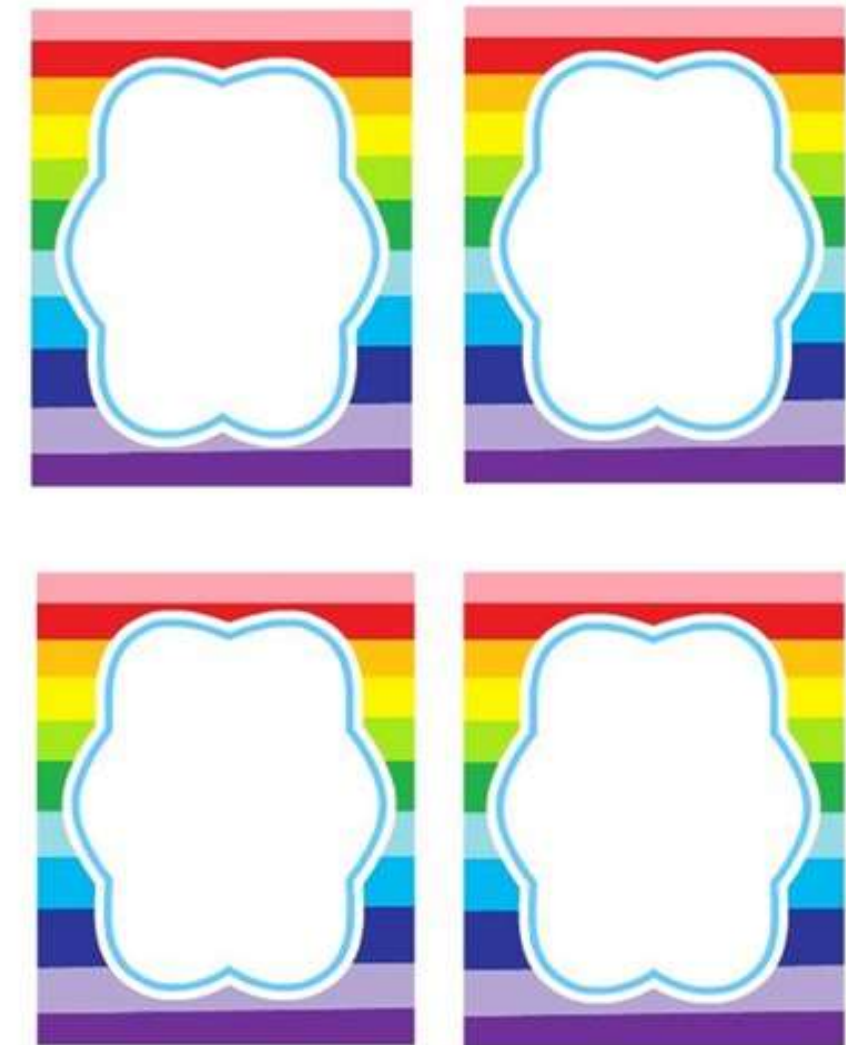


TransgenderNI



# A note on labels!

- Labels are how people find others with similarity to them – experiences, cultures, etc.
  - We are seeing an advent of terms and labels in society today, and that is okay! You are not expected to know them all.
  - It is worthwhile remembering – It is always confusing and has been for as far back as labels were first created.
  - In this session, we will not be focusing on the labels exclusively, we will instead be focusing on the foundations for them.
- 



# Sexuality vs. Sexual Orientation

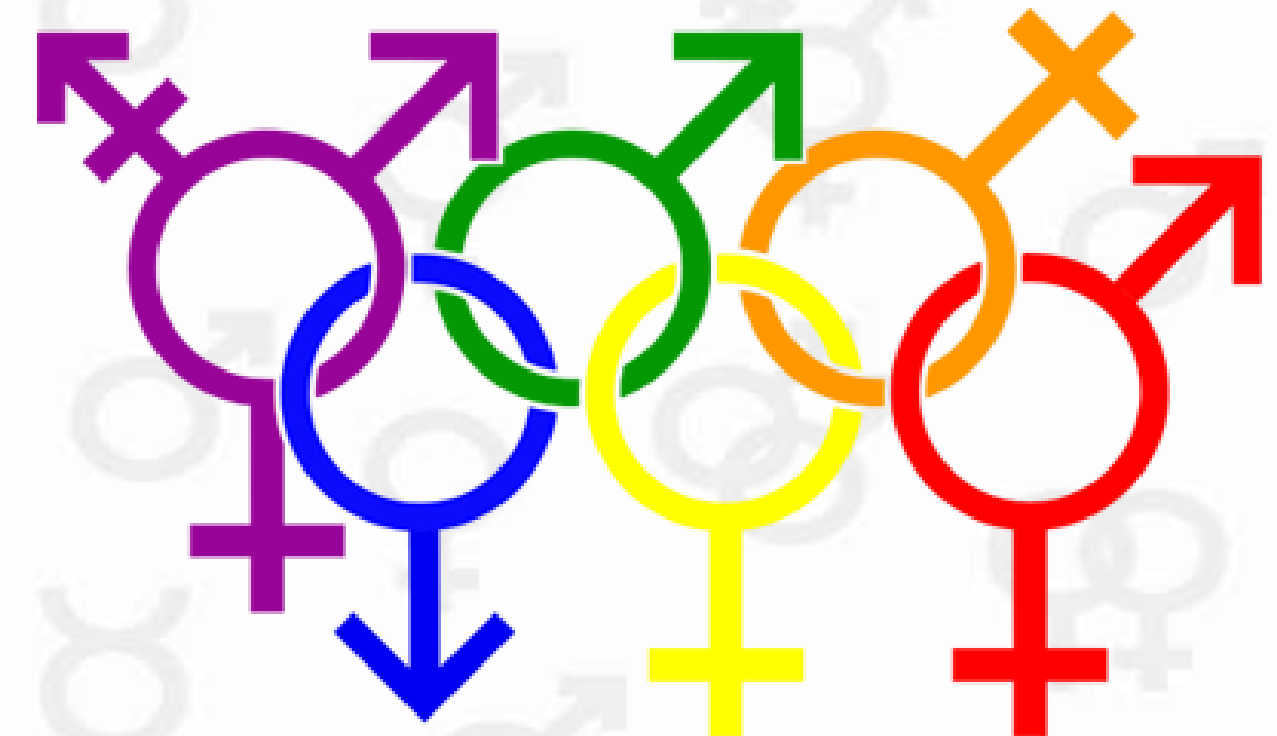


**Sexuality** is your sex drive, pattern of sexual behavior and image of the self.

**Sexual Orientation** is your romantic, mental and sexual attraction to a gender(s), it is defined by your gender and the gender(s) of those you are attracted to.

The two are vastly different but are often incorrectly used interchangeably.

**Everyone has a sexual orientation – not just LGBTQ+ people**



Man attracted to woman = Heterosexual  
Woman attracted to woman = Homosexual  
Either gender attracted to two genders = Bisexual

# 'Attraction' – What do we mean?



**Attraction** can be broadly broken down into; sexual; mental; and romantic. attraction to other people than the typical. It could be considered a **sexual orientation**, or a category of **sexuality**.

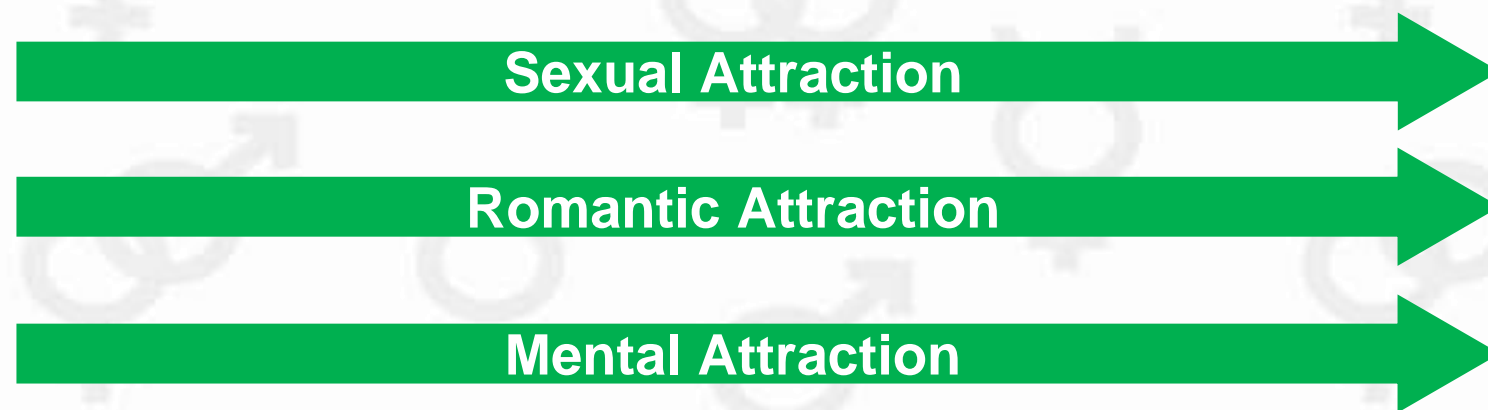
We all sit on the scale of attraction somewhere. It could be like this;



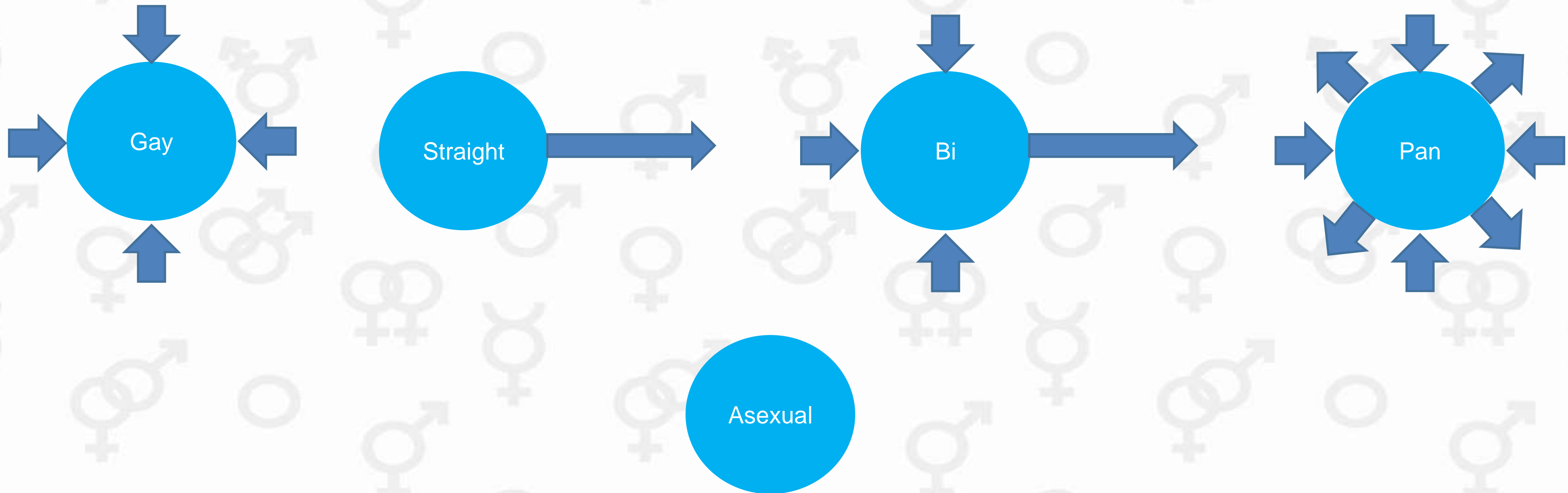
**Asexual**

**Allosexual**

Or it could be split down further like this;



# Looking at Sexual Orientation!



# Gender $\neq$ Sex



**Gender Identity** is one's individual and personal sense of who they are in terms of gender. Usually, this is male or female and typically aligns with the gender you were assigned at birth; however, this is not always the case.

**Gender Expression** is defined as the external manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics.

**Biological sex** refers to the biological differences between male and female anatomies - such as genitalia, hormones, etc. (WHO, 2011)

**Assigning gender/sex at birth** is the medical process of examining the external sexual organs of a child and assigning a gender which correlates to that primary sexual characteristic.



**Gender expression is not indicative of your gender identity – It can align or be entirely unrelated.**

- World Health Organization, Gender Mainstreaming for Health Workers, 2011. <https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/knowledge/glossary/en/>

# What does 'Trans' mean?

**Cisgender** or **cis** people are individuals whose personal gender identity **does** align with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender** or **trans** people are individuals whose personal gender identity **does not** align with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Trans people may choose to 'transition', this is a time in which a Trans-Identifying person begins to live in their gender identity rather than assigned gender. In order to do so, they may undergo some of the following specific transition(s);

- Mental
- Social
- Legal
- Medical



**'Trans'** is an umbrella term for many identities falling into the above definition.

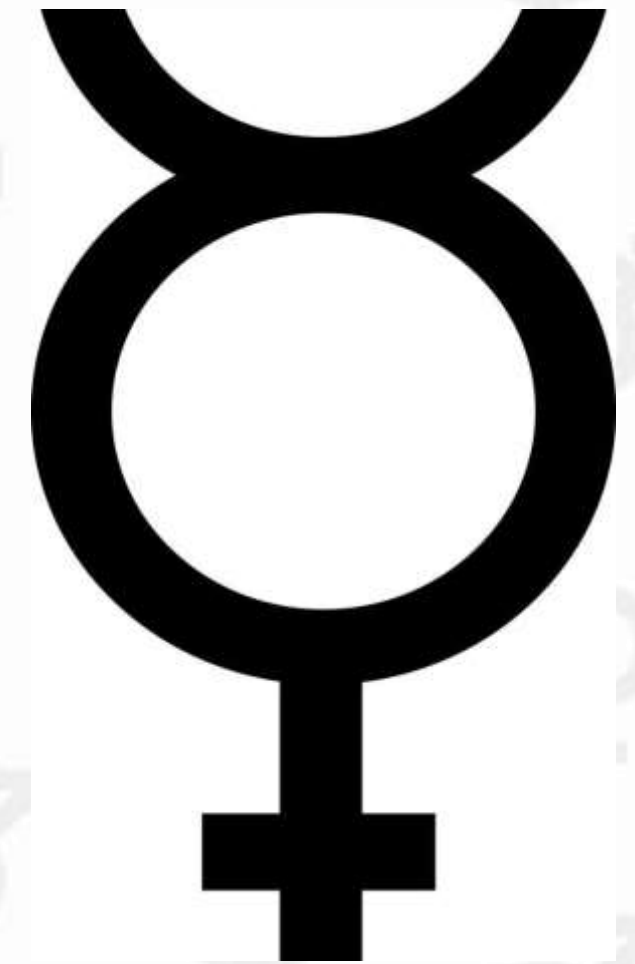
# What is 'Intersex'?



Biological sex is not confined simply to 'male' or 'female'; there is a third biological sex which is called **intersex**.

People who are intersex are born either with **variations in their sex characteristics** or with **ambiguous genitalia**.

- 1 in 2,000 births have ambiguous genitalia.
- 1.7% of the population could be categorised as 'intersex', because of their mixed primary sex characteristics (e.g., XXY chromosomes, hormones, Internal sexual organs)

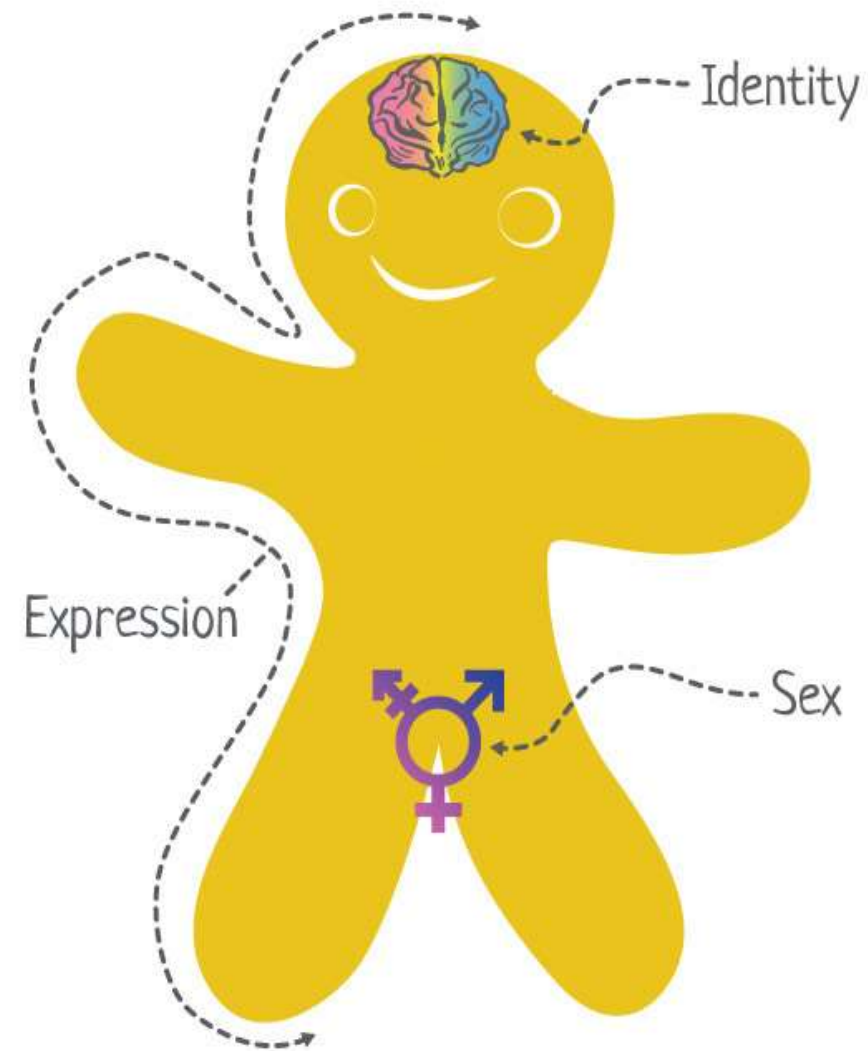


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- The Netherlands Institute for Sociological Research (2014): Living with intersex/DSD. An exploratory study of the social situation of persons with intersex/DSD. Written by Jantine van Lisdonk. Appendix B Prevalence table for intersex/dsd. [https://www.scp.nl/english/Publications/Publications\\_by\\_year/Publications\\_2014/Living\\_with\\_intersex\\_DSD](https://www.scp.nl/english/Publications/Publications_by_year/Publications_2014/Living_with_intersex_DSD)
  - Dreger, Alice Domurat. 1998. Ambiguous Sex—or Ambivalent Medicine? Ethical Issues in the Treatment of Intersexuality. Hastings Center Report, 28, 3: 24-35.
  - Blackless, Melanie, Anthony Charuvastra, Amanda Derryck, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Karl Lauzanne, and Ellen Lee. 2000. How sexually dimorphic are we? Review and synthesis. American Journal of Human Biology 12:151-166.

# Still confused?



## The Genderbread Person v3.3



- The Genderbread Person. 2020. *An Adorable, Accessible Way To Explain A Complicated Concept* » *The Genderbread Person*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.genderbread.org>>



# Bringing it all together!

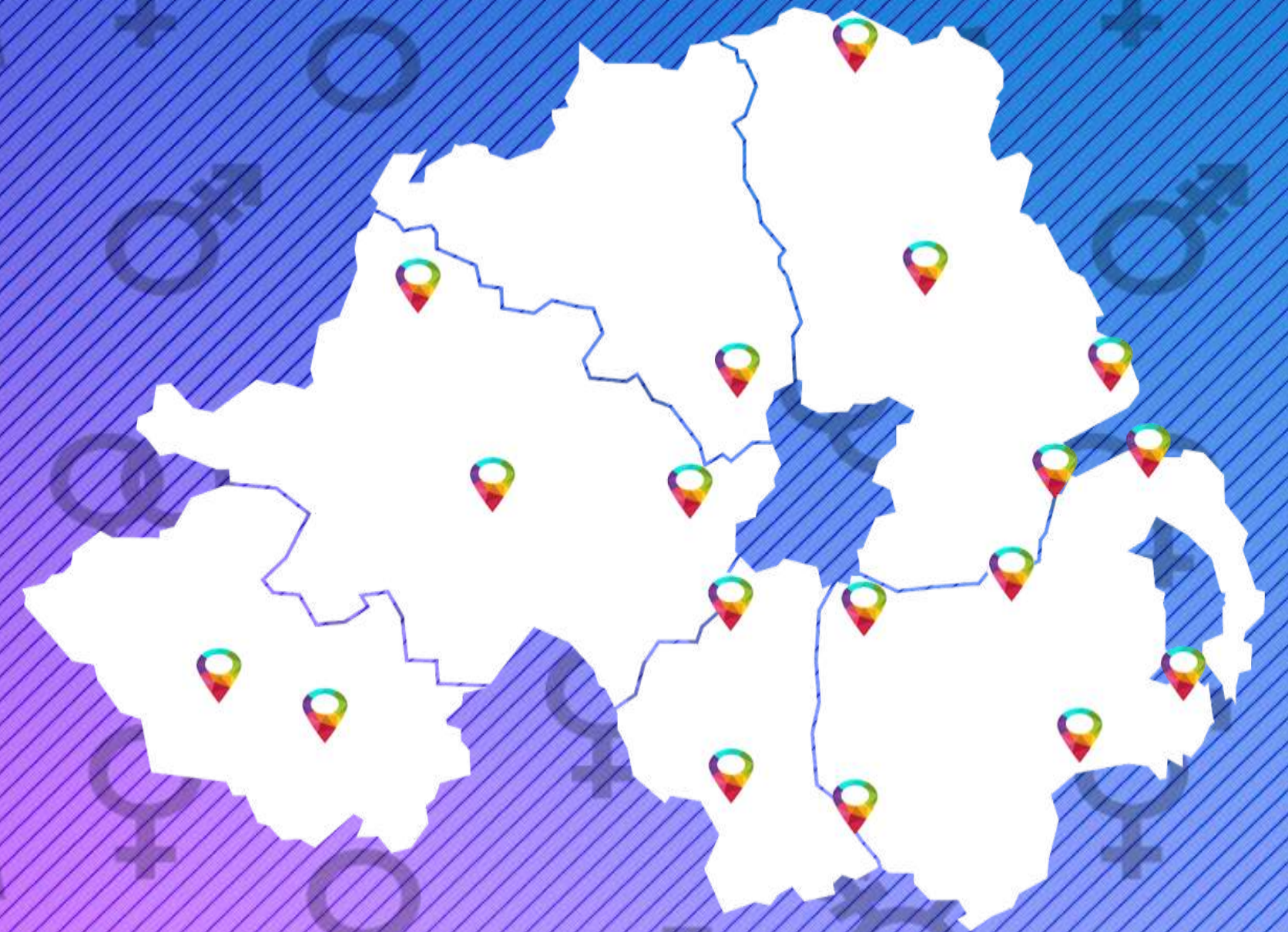


- All of us experience gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or sexuality – Even absence of these can be defined as an experience.
- The LGBTQIA+ community are a demographic of people in society that experience gender and sexual orientation in a manner that is different to a majority of people.
- There is nothing inherently different about LGBTQIA+ people – their orientations and identities are simply different.
- There is an additional cultural component of being LGBTQIA+ that some people may choose to take part in, like many other sparse communities we have developed our own slang, art, history and ways of life.

# The LGBTQIA+ Community in NI



- The LGBTQIA+ population of NI is approximately 10%.
- This means that there are approximately 180,000 LGBTQIA+ people in Northern Ireland; 18,700 aged between 11-18.
- It is estimated that around 7% of LGBTQIA+ CYP are engaging directly with support services offered within the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Presently there are three community hubs for LGBTQIA+ communities, two in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry.
- LGBTQIA+ organisations frequently offer regional groups and digital engagement groups, collaborating across the sector to increase our reach.



# Issues faced by LGBTQIA+ CYP



- Social Isolation, Exclusion and Discrimination
  - Poor Mental Health Outcomes
  - Barriers to Learning & Achieving
  - Barriers to Living in Safety & Stability
  - Barriers to Accessing Support
  - 'Coming Out'
-

# Social Isolation, Exclusion & Discrimination



Young people identifying as LGBTQI+ experience social discrimination and isolation throughout their lives.

- **Lack of Social Support and Peer Connection** most CYP gain through group identity and feeling like they 'belong'.
- **Feelings of Rejection** from the world around them are some of the most common experiences reported by young people identifying as LGBTQI+, leading directly to feelings of isolation.
- **Marginalisation and discrimination** are the leading contributors to the issues we will be discussing, particularly in the areas of ill-mental health.



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Antjoule, N. (2016). *The hate crime report*. Galop.org.uk.

# Poor Mental Health Outcomes



## Still Shouting (2017)

- 21% of LGBT youth reported struggling with an eating disorder.
- 30% of LGBTQ+ youth are currently being medicated for depression.
- 61% of LGB Youth reported contemplating suicide.
- 90% Trans Youth reported contemplating suicide.
- 25% LGB Youth had attempted suicide
- 49% Trans Youth reported attempting suicide



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Neill & Meehan (2017). *Still Shouting – The needs and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland that identify as LGBTQI+*. [online] Cara-Friend & YouthAction Northern Ireland.

# Barriers to Learning & Achieving



Young people identifying as LGBTQI+ encounter a great deal of their barriers from Education.

- 84% of young people received no information or support relating to their LGBTQ+ identity while in school
- 36% of young people received lower results as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 25% of young people are not attending school for reasons relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- **11% of young people are changing schools as a result for reasons relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity**
- **12% of young people are dropping out of school for reasons relating to their sexual orientation or gender identity**



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Neill & Meehan (2017). *Still Shouting – The needs and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland that identify as LGBTQI+*. [online] Cara-Friend & YouthAction Northern Ireland.
  - Antjoule, N. (2016). *The hate crime report*. Galop.org.uk.

# Barriers to Living in Safety & Stability



Young people identifying as LGBTQI+ encounter discrimination daily, whether through education, employment, peers or online.

- 68% of LGBTQI+ youth had experienced bullying in school for reasons relating to their identity
- 73% of young people reported experiencing verbal abuse for reasons relating to their identity.
- 72% of young people reported negative attitudes being expressed by staff as well as students.
- 52% of young people we surveyed had never been a member of a youth group/club. **Of those who had, 23% said they received adequate support re: LGBTQI+ issues.**



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Neill & Meehan (2017). *Still Shouting – The needs and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland that identify as LGBTQI+*. [online] Cara-Friend & YouthAction Northern Ireland.
  - Antjoule, N. (2016). *The hate crime report*. Galop.org.uk.

# 'Coming Out' - Realisation

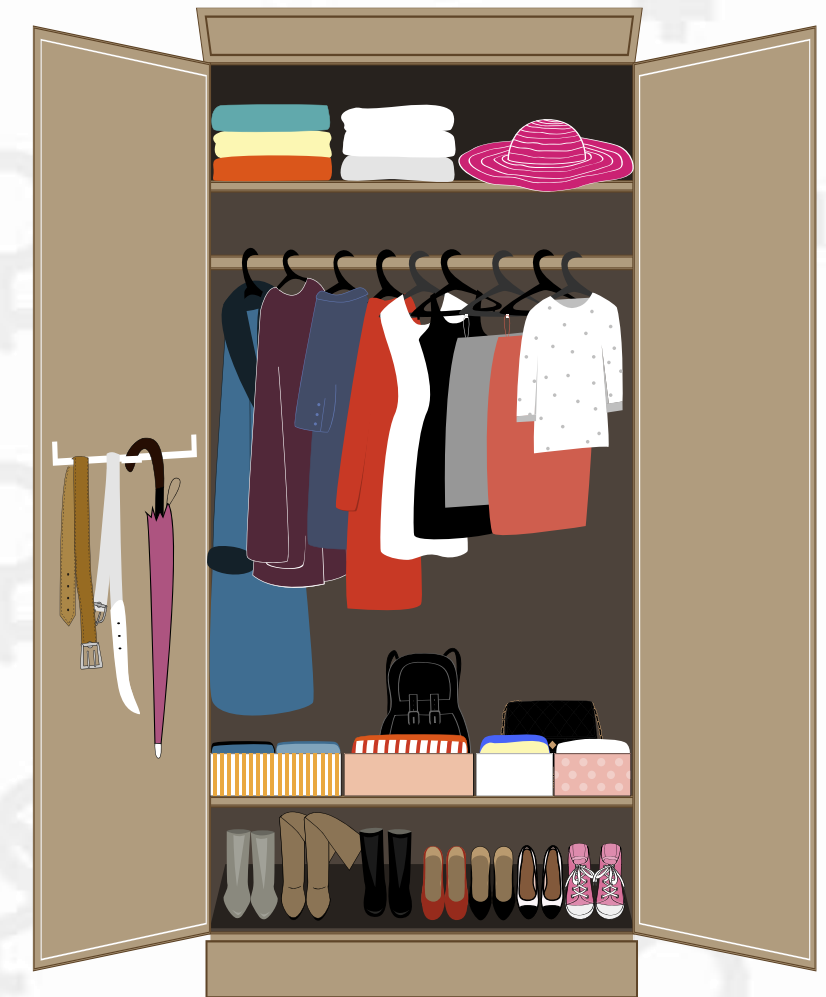


This phenomenon is when an individual discloses their self-identified sexual orientation or gender identity, often by their own choice but not always. This has been named colloquially as **coming out**.

This is never a once-off event or confined to one period in a person's life. For another person to disclose this information without consent is called **outing**.

The average age of realising sexual orientation in Northern Ireland is 12 years old and in-line with puberty. It takes young people at least a further 2 years to tell someone they identify with an orientation different to heterosexual.

**Coming out** as trans or transgender happens at all ages with the average age being 10.



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Carolan, F. & Redmond, S. (2003) *ShOUT: The needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender*. Belfast: Youthnet.
  - O'Hara, M. (2013) *Through our minds; Exploring the emotional health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Rainbow Project.

# ‘Coming Out’ – Disclosure



The process of coming out can be defined as a positive, neutral or negative experience depending upon;

- The time of realisation to disclosure
- Internal and external perceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Whether or not discussing sexuality or gender is a social taboo
- The nature of reactions to the individual when disclosing their sexual orientation or identity

The anxieties that this possibly traumatic experience can cause both in anticipation of and after the event can negatively impact on an LGBTQ+ person’s feelings of security.

**“I’m afraid.”**



- 
- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.
  - Ashe, F. (2018). *Reimagining Inclusive Security in Peace Processes: LGB&T Perspectives (PSRP Report)*. Edinburgh: Global Justice Academy, University of Edinburgh.
  - Birkett, M., Newcomb, M.E., & Mustanski, B. (2014). Does it Get Better? A Longitudinal Analysis of Psychological Distress and Victimization in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56 (3), 280-285

# Barriers to Support-Seeking Behaviour

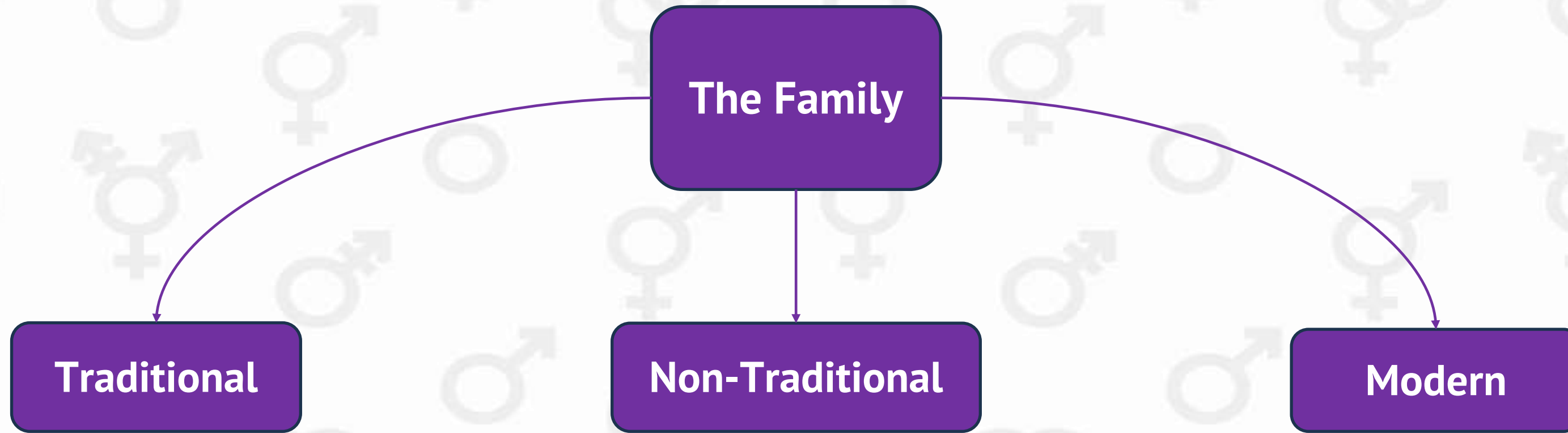


**Homophobia, Biphobia  
and Transphobia**

**Hetrosexism and  
Cissexism**

**Hetronormativity and  
Cisnormativity**

# 'Queering the Family'



➤ A 'nuclear' family unit, comprised of a married couple (man and woman) and two children (boy and girl).

➤ Family units that do not fit into 'nuclear', can include a stepparent, cohabiting parents, single parents, blended families.

➤ Family units that embrace a non-traditional structure, such as non-heterosexual couples, single parents, adoptive parents, fertility assisted or childfree families.



# A community greater than its letters?



On hearing people describing gay people as 'disgusting' and 'weird'. "Every time you hear that it's like an attack, and it makes you more fearful about saying who you are"

"I remember hiding it to avoid getting picked on"

"Other people made it a problem: 'Who's that woman?' (referring to mother's girlfriend) 'I didn't have a name for her and people want a name'"

"Someone said 'Your mum's gay' my friend said 'Is she, is she?' I was shy and didn't have the confidence to say back: 'Yes she is'"

In school: "I heard people whispering about me, asking 'who's her other mother)' was"

"Because nobody else in the school talked about different families or same-sex parents, the job of explaining gay people always falls to them"

"People need to have an open mind. Just be open to diversity"

"Me calling..... 'My mother's partner' is a really bizarre thing in my head. It's just my mum and my mum"

"I never lied about it if I asked...but I wouldn't have said...I was careful who I talked to about it"

# Scenario Work!



1. A young gay man (15) has confided in you that as a result of feeling socially isolated he has taken to Grindr, an app for gay and bisexual men, in an effort to meet new people. He has told you that he has met someone on the app who is older. In order to try and make the meet-up happen the young person has lied to the person they want to meet to say they are 18. What, if anything, would you do?
2. A young person (14) in your group tells you that they wrap their chest tightly in medical bandages to achieve the appearance of a flat chest. They're beginning to get concerned about back pain. What, if anything would you do?
3. A young woman (16) has just come out to her parents as bisexual, though she has confided in you that she thinks she may be lesbian. Her parents have not responded well, and the young woman is very frightened of being thrown out. What, if anything, would you do?
4. During a residential, a group of students are playing football. The usual banter takes place between those playing, but you've noticed that a few of them are saying things like 'Pass the ball, you faggot' and 'What a poofter kick!' What, if anything, would you do?

# What is LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Practice anyway?

## What young people have said

- Be more visibly inclusive
- Understand sexual orientation and gender identity a bit more – Not just our labels
- Discuss LGBTQI+ identity directly, don't be afraid
- Challenge language, educate ignorance and privileging of different types of relationships

## What your practice must be

- Person-centred
- Culturally competent
- Reflective, and continuous in how you learn from here.

## Some Values to take forward

- Aware and introspective work
- Being a 'helping hand'
- Confidence
- Forgiveness



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- Meehan, D. (2019). *Cara Friend – Supporting LGBTQ+ People in Northern Ireland*. [online] Cara-Friend. Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/>.

**Questions?**



# Thank You!



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**<https://www.rainbow-project.org>**



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**@HereNI+**



**Grainne.Gibson@herein.org**



**<https://herein.org>**



**028 9024 9452**

# Lunch



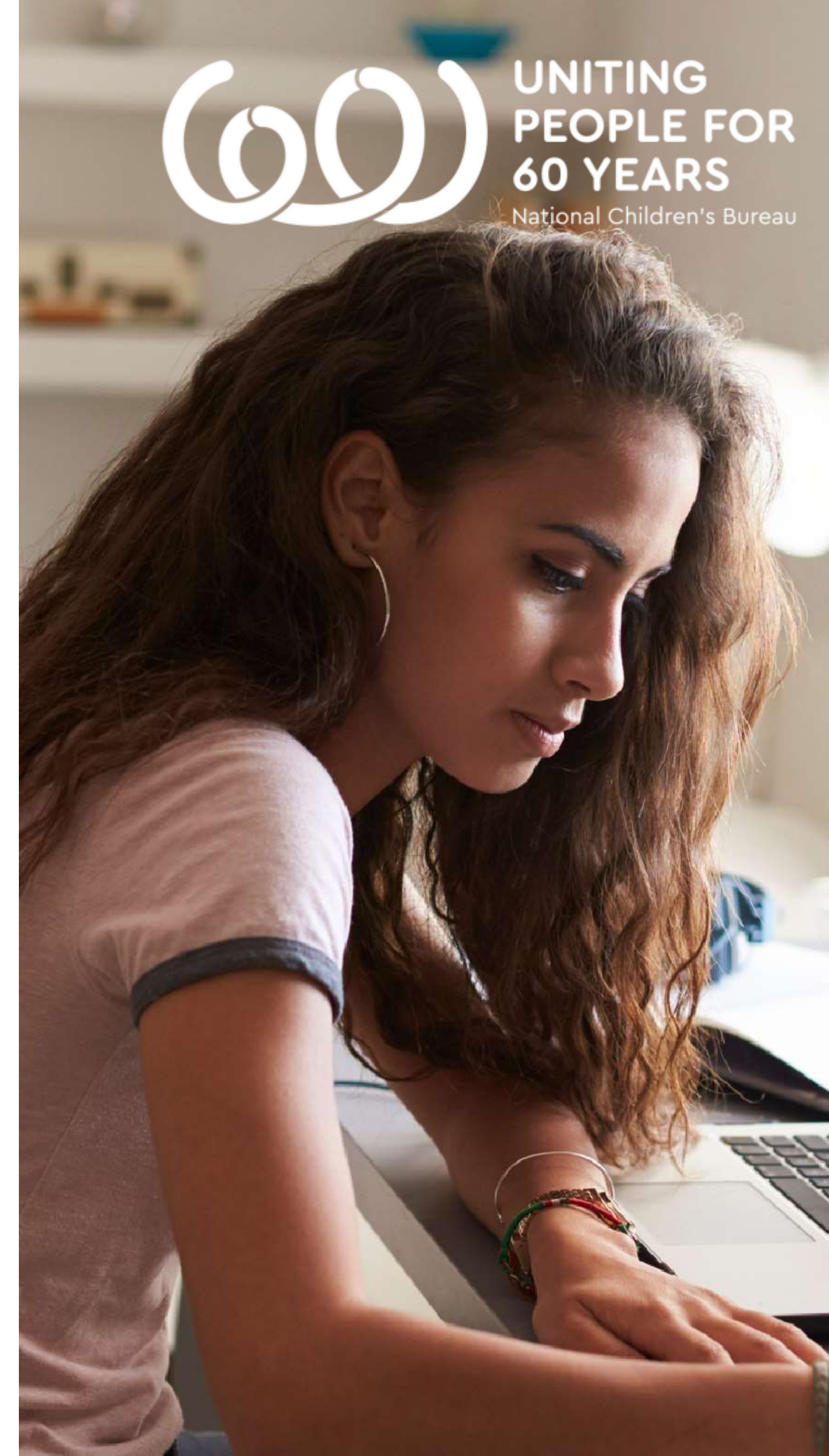
# Parallel Sessions





	ROOM 1 HEReNI (Conference Room B)	ROOM 2 Cara Friend (Meeting Room 4)	ROOM 3 The Rainbow Project (Meeting Room 3)
1 – 1.45pm	Group A	Group B	Group C
1.45 – 2.30pm	Group C	Group A	Group B
2.35 – 3.20pm	Group B	Group C	Group A

# Plenary

- Q & A
- Take aways & next steps
- Resources & evaluation



# What are your take-aways & next steps?

- 
- What one thing will you take away from today?
  - What do you intend to do next because of today's event?
- 

# Resources & Evaluation

We would love to know what you think!

Please complete the evaluation form now.

**Many thanks for your participation at today's event**

