



# Starting and Strengthening Rainbow Diversity Groups



# Contents

- 4** About InsideOUT and RainbowYOUTH
- 6** What is a Rainbow Diversity Group?
- 8** How to Start Your Group
- 12** What to do in Your Group
- 14** Ideas for Meetings
- 16** The Little Extras to Make Your Group a Success
- 18** Group Facilitation
- 24** Addressing Challenges
- 28** The Day of Silence
- 30** For school staff
- 36** Group Profiles
- 40** Resources and Support
- 42** Glossary/Terminology
- 46** Acknowledgements

# About InsideOUT



**InsideOUT is a national organisation which works to make Aotearoa New Zealand a safer place for young people of diverse sexualities, sexes and genders to live and be in.**

**We are passionate about being run for youth, by youth and apply this value to everything we do.**

We aim to foster the building and provision of resources, education, information, hui and relevant tools which work to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of young people of diverse sexualities, sexes and genders. We work with youth, whānau, schools, community groups, youth services, government agencies and other relevant organisations to achieve these aims.

*Some of our key projects include*

## **Support for Rainbow Diversity Groups/Queer Straight Alliances**

We support young people and schools all over NZ in starting, strengthening, and sustaining rainbow diversity groups in their school to:

1. create a space where students can socialise in a safe environment
2. provide support for students who might be facing issues such as bullying
3. spread awareness about homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, gender identity and sexual orientation issues within the school

## **Day of Silence**

A national day of action in which students across New Zealand vow to take a form of silence to call attention to the silencing effect of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, name-calling and harassment in schools. See [www.dayofsilence.org.nz](http://www.dayofsilence.org.nz)

## **Shift Hui**

A national youth hui for young people of diverse sexualities, sexes, genders and their friends! Learn more at <http://shift.insideout.org.nz>

## **Expression**

A multi-media arts competition for youth aged 13-19 with themes of sexuality, sex and gender diversity. Submit your artwork, writing or film at <http://expression.insideout.org.nz>

**Check out our website at [www.insideout.org.nz](http://www.insideout.org.nz) or contact us for further information or support at [hello@insideout.org.nz](mailto:hello@insideout.org.nz)**

# RainbowYOUTH's Kaupapa



**RainbowYOUTH (est.1989) is a national charitable organisation dedicated to helping young queer and gender diverse people up to the ages of 28, as well as their wider communities.**

Our services include: information, resources, a queer and gender diverse library, 10 support groups around Aotearoa, research, advocacy, education, professional development, support and referral, training and volunteer opportunities.

At RainbowYOUTH, we're about fostering a safe, inclusive, accepting and diverse family environment. We are drug, smoke, and alcohol free. Our motto is Know Who You Are, Be Who You Are.

The Tiwhanawhana Trust in Wellington have gifted us a version of our motto in te reo Māori: Whaia to ake ngakaunui, i te pono, i te marama. Simply translated, it means: Follow your desires with truth and clarity.

**Visit us on [www.ry.org.nz](http://www.ry.org.nz) or email us on [info@ry.org.nz](mailto:info@ry.org.nz)**

*Check out some of their great resources*

## **I'm Local**

<http://www.imlocal.co.nz/>

The I'm Local Project aims to help queer & gender diverse youth across Aotearoa to feel valued, recognised, and supported in their local communities. Started in 2014 by RainbowYOUTH, the I'm Local project focuses on contacting high schools, medical centres, hospitals, libraries, marae, and community centres in more rural or isolated areas of Aotearoa and supplying them with free resources about gender and sexuality. The website also has an awesome region-by-region map of all the queer and gender diverse support groups for young people in Aotearoa. Pick your region and find your whānau!

## **You, Me, Us**

<http://youmeus.co.nz/>

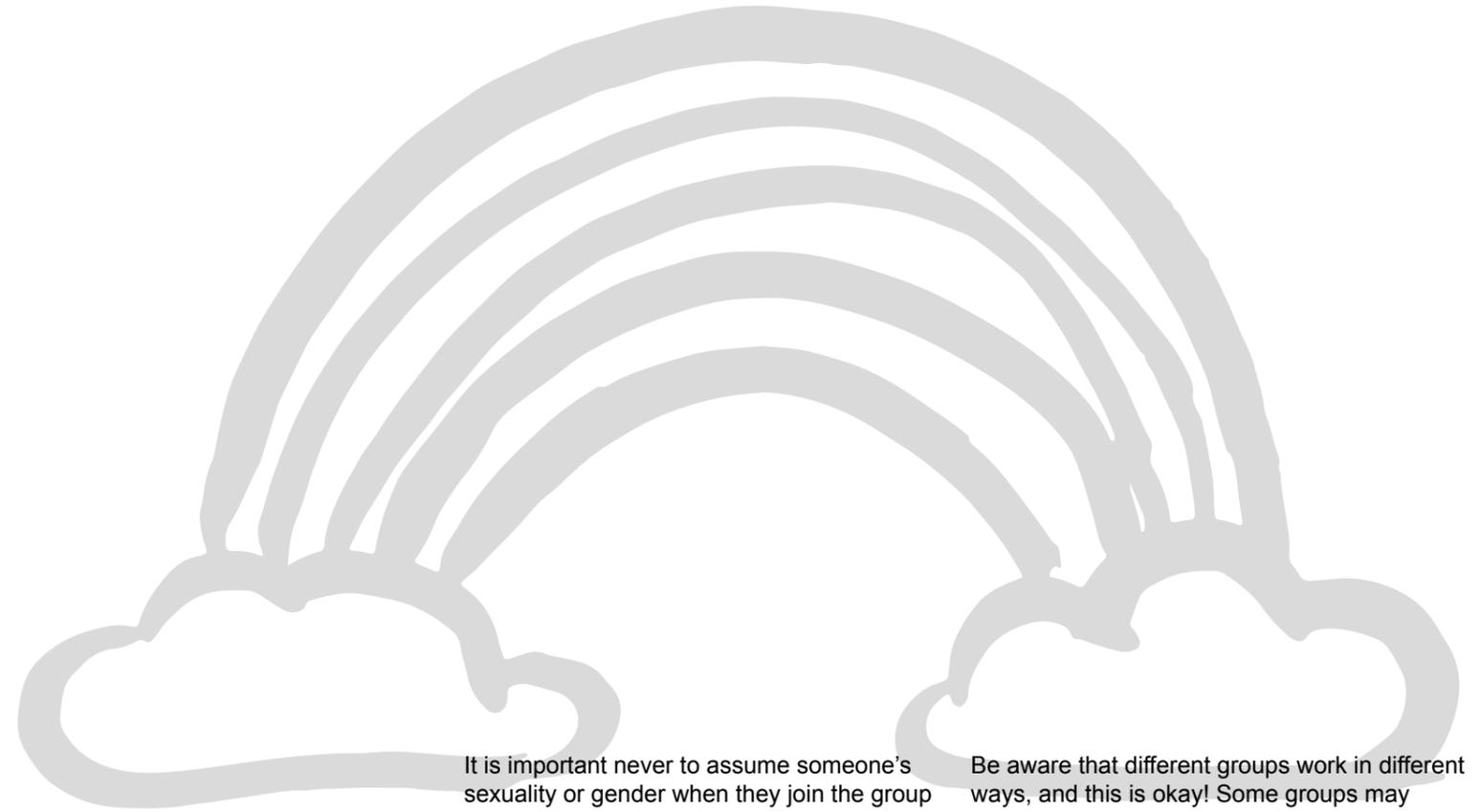
You, Me, Us is a resource promoting healthy relationships for young queer, trans\* and takatāpui people.

## **(the other) Inside Out**

<http://insideout.ry.org.nz/>

Inside Out is a set of freely available video-based teaching resources that promotes sensitive and critically-informed information about how schools can address problems of homophobic and transphobic bullying.

# What is a Rainbow Diversity Group?



A Rainbow Diversity Group or Queer Straight Alliance (QSA) is a school-based group that is open to all students.

Students may join a group for various reasons, such as to seek support, to meet like-minded people, to learn how to support their friends/family, or because they are passionate about human rights and equality.

It is important never to assume someone's sexuality or gender when they join the group and not to force them to disclose this unless they want to. Rainbow Diversity Groups provide an opportunity for young people who may not be able to access support groups outside of school, to find support and have their identities affirmed.

The most important advice to remember for anyone wishing to form a Rainbow Diversity Group, is to make sure that the group embraces a sensitive and inclusive praxis and that the members are given a degree of ownership by allowing members to create their own meaningful name, description, and set of ground-rules for the group.

Be aware that different groups work in different ways, and this is okay! Some groups may initially only focus on one of these areas and extend their scope over time. Or, there may be instances where the focus of a group may shift from one focus to another. Ideally though, a group should strive to incorporate all three.

In addition to regular group meetings, you might find it helpful or exciting to run other events and activities that promote queer-straight alliances such as, Pride Week, Pink Shirt Day, Day of Silence, discussions, fundraisers, games, movies, crafts and more.

*Rainbow diversity groups often have three main purposes:*

**Social**

Meeting like-minded, non-judgemental people from different backgrounds

**Support**

Providing support with coming out, bullying, and other issues students might be facing

**Action**

Taking action within your school to combat bullying, educating people and spreading awareness about issues facing LGBTQIA+ people.

# How to Start Your Group

If you want to start a group and you are seeking members, ask your school counsellor to share the group's details with other students who might be interested, or spread the word yourself. Once there are two or three of you, you have enough to start your group!

The following ideas have been put together on how to start groups. Feel free to adapt or change anything so that it works best for you!

# 1

## Find a staff member to support the group

This can be a school counsellor, a supportive teacher or any adult member of the school. It's important to have someone act as the group liaison. They can help you approach senior staff about setting up the group and support the group to be sustainable even after you've left school!

(If you can't find an adult to back the group and are experiencing resistance from your school, get in contact with InsideOUT and we can help you with this. Legally your school is forbidden to stop you from setting up a group!)

# 2

## Follow your school guidelines

Just like any other group, there will probably be a process your school has for settling up a group of any kind. You may need to meet with the principal, complete forms, and/or write a constitution. It might be helpful to ask your supportive staff member during this process.

# 4

## Advertise the first meeting and invite people to attend.

You may want to put up posters, put it in the notices, talk in assembly, and invite the peer mentors or student leaders to your first meeting to learn about the group. You will need to decide how publicly you want to advertise the group. For example, some groups may advertise their meeting time and place, while others might suggest you have to speak to the guidance counsellor or text a number to find out where and when it is. There are pros and cons to both of these options. The most important thing to consider is, though, is how to best make the group safe and accessible for all students interested in joining. In many schools, groups that are open work well, but ideally your meeting place should be private enough that anonymity of group participants is protected.

# 5

## Decide as a group how the group will be run.

Will there be a couple of leaders for the group, will you take it in turns to facilitate, or will there be a few people who form a committee to plan the meetings? It's important to share the workload and provide opportunities for everyone to have a say in what you do.

# 6

## Discuss the purpose of your group and how you want to achieve those goals.

Social (do you want to meet up with others, chat, eat, hang out, play games, watch movies?)  
Support (Do you want to be a group that other students questioning or having a hard time can come to for a bit of safe and supportive space?)  
Action (Do you want to hold a pride week, promote awareness around bullying in assemblies, take part in the Day of Silence?)

Your group can be none, one or a mix of all of these things and it might change over time. The most important thing is that the group is serving the needs and endeavours of the members involved.

# 7

## Mission/Vision Statements - Your Kaupapa

Write a mission statement so others know what and who your groups stands for. To write your mission statement, you might want to ask yourself questions like, "What sort of future do you envision the group having?" Why you feel strongly about having it? What is its purpose? What kind of environment do you want to create in your school?"

## 8 Ground Rules

It's important to create some ground rules or a group agreement for how people will behave in the space and create feelings of acceptance and positivity in that space. This should be a safe space that is inclusive, safe, confidential, respectful. There will be no assumptions about people's sexuality or gender.

As well as practical ground rules like 'confidentiality', when your group talks about being 'inclusive' think about how you are going to make that a reality. Being inclusive is what diversity groups are all about. Being inclusive is something that requires being aware of all identities and experiences (race, gender, class, sexuality, age, and ability). Identity is intersectional - that is we are a mix of experiences and histories that interact and influence our beliefs and actions. As people advocating for LGBTQIA+ equality, it might be easy to forget about these other identities because our work is so focused on sexuality, sex and gender diversity. When we remember that identity is intersectional, we are less likely to exclude or silence the experiences of others!

## 9 Advertising & Increasing Attendance

Depending on your desired group size, your group may be really small, so advertising the group to a wider school audience may be necessary to increase attendance. Some ways of informing people about your group are: through the school counsellor, school notices, word of mouth, or at a school assembly. When advertising and inviting people, it might be best to use the word 'questioning' instead of using words such as "lesbian", "gay", or "queer" to ensure inclusivity. If you have put up posters around the school and they keep getting taken down and defaced, do your best to stay positive and remain committed to your group's goals! Often, just knowing that there are posters with words and information about gay, lesbian, takatāpui, trans, queer, bisexual, intersex, asexual, and questioning identities around the school, could make someone feel more supported and acknowledged.

Remember that it doesn't always have to be about sex, gender and sexuality. You can have meetings about study skills, or body diversity, or different abilities or a guest speaker on healthy eating, or someone to come and talk about te Tiriti o Waitangi, sexual health for queer trans and takatāpui people, the list is endless!

## 10 Hold Meetings!

### How often do we meet?

Diversity groups often meet once a week at lunchtime. But you can meet as little or as much as you'd like.

### How do we run meetings?

It's a great idea to have somebody, or a couple of people, each week who will 'facilitate' the meeting. Facilitators can rotate each week or stay the same. The main part of their role is to be a good leader of the group; welcoming people and making them feel comfortable, getting people engaged in whatever is going on, finding out what people want to do, and making this happen.

### Does our adult/staff member come to group meetings?

It's up to you! You can decide on this together as a group and with your teacher.

# What To Do In Your Group

## **Provide kai!**

Everyone loves food so see if there's a way you can provide food at each of your meetings– the school might have a budget for this, or it could be a shared lunch where everyone brings something, or you could do some fundraising as a group in order to raise money to buy food for your meetings.

## **Mihimihi**

Do a round to introduce everyone at the start of each meeting – you might ask for people's name, pronouns, how they are today, why they are there, or something random each week like favourite colour or celebrity crush.

Try to have a plan for each meeting beforehand and share group facilitation responsibilities with other members, so it doesn't always fall on the same person. Some meeting plans ideas might include playing games, discussions on relevant topics or discussing something that's come up in the media related to sexual and gender diversity, having a guest speaker, doing some crafts, reading an article/story together and discussing it, making a film, doing a quiz, learning about parts of the rainbow community you don't know about, and more.

Come up with some goals or dreams for the group. Get inspired! What do people coming along want out of it, what changes do they want to see in the school? Work together to make these happen – eg. running the Day of Silence and bringing awareness to the wider school community, working on a policy to make your school inclusive for trans students, getting sexuality and gender diversity included in the school health curriculum.

Believe in your ideas.  
Remember that new ideas pass three stages:

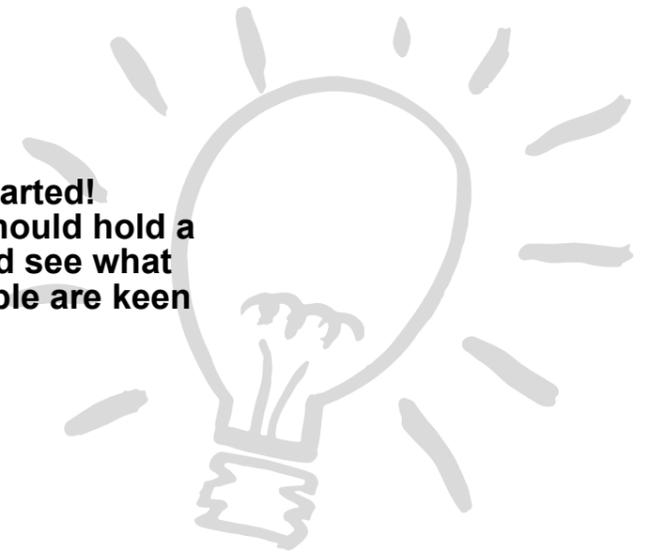
It can't be done

It probably can be done,  
but it's not worth doing

**I knew it was a good  
idea all along**

# Ideas for Meetings

Here are some more ideas to get you started! At the start of every year or term you should hold a brainstorm session with your group and see what ideas everyone has or what things people are keen to do at what time!



## Movie week

There is a large selection of LGBTQIA+ films available online, or at your local library!

## Discussion group

Picking a topic i.e. fatphobia (discrimination against body size) or transphobia. Discussing topics in a group provides a way to learn about many different perspectives of an issue and can help foster the development of new, positive ways of approaching those topics in the future. You could get a guest speaker to come the week before or after your discussion to give you more information on the topic.

## Coming out session

Those who want to can talk about how that's going for them and others can listen and support. No one should ever be pressured to disclose their identity if they are not comfortable or feel it is unsafe to do so. Remember that everyone will be at different places in their journey and some people may be straight/cis or still questioning.

## Games session

You could play board games, could go and play a game of soccer, create a game for yourselves.

## Dance week

You could all make a dance show together. And perhaps use that in a talent quest, or have it up your sleeve for other meetings.

## Group outings

You could visit another QSA group, your local LGBTQIA+ community group, or go to an event during the weekend as a group.

## Hold a stall

If your school has a day for clubs/cultural groups to have stalls sign you group up to have a stall so you can raise more awareness about your group!

## Guest speakers

Find someone from your local LGBTQIA+ community group, or someone from your local Family Planning visit your group meeting to talk about safer sex that is inclusive for queer, trans, tākatapui, questioning people. You could find a guest speaker to come in and talk about drawing comics, racism - the topics are endless!

## Assembly presentation

Tell the school about what your group does! Some groups might do this through a speech, skit, or short film.

## Reading club

Each member of the group could be reading the same book/article/short story and discussing it.

## Potluck

You can have a potluck lunch where you each bring a plate of food to share.

## Show and tell

You can create a meeting in which people share their community histories. You can each do your own research and bring it together to present on a different aspect of queer, trans and tākatapui history ie. important activist heroes, historic days, law reforms, what things used to be like or what are the issues we still face.

## Day of Remembrance

A day to remember those who've died from HIV, transphobia, or another cause that might mean something to your group.

## Rainbow Ribbon Day

Buy a bunch of ribbon and sell a small amount for a koha (donation). This gives staff and students in the school a way to show they support the stopping of bullying around sexuality and gender.

## Display

Create a display in your library (i.e. for Queer History Month) or display case in a hallway to help raise more awareness and increase invisibility about LGBTQIA+ issues in your school.

## Raise Awareness

Participate in days/weeks/months of action such as International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on May 17th, Pink Shirt Day, Youth Week, International Transgender Day of Remembrance, Day of Silence, Bisexual Awareness Week, Asexual Awareness Week and more.

## Valentine's Day Cards

Make valentine's days cards in your group!

## Make a Film

Make a film in your group to promote it or raise awareness about homo/bi/transphobic bullying or other issues facing the community. Enter it in the InsideOUT film competition - learn more at <http://expression.insideout.org.nz>

## Picnic

Have one of your meetings outside on the field or a nice outdoor area and get everyone to bring tasty treats for a picnic!

## Debate

Hold a debate on an LGBTQIA+ issue. Your group vs the school debating team or the staff! This could be a good event for Pride Week or fundraising.

## Fundraising

Come up with ideas for fundraising as a group so you can have some money for food at meetings, travel costs to attend a LGBTQIA+ youth hui around the country, donate to InsideOUT, RainbowYOUTH, or your local community group. Fundraising could take the form of a bake sale, milkshakes/hot chocolates at school, rainbow ribbons, a variety show, or face-painting.

## Pride Week

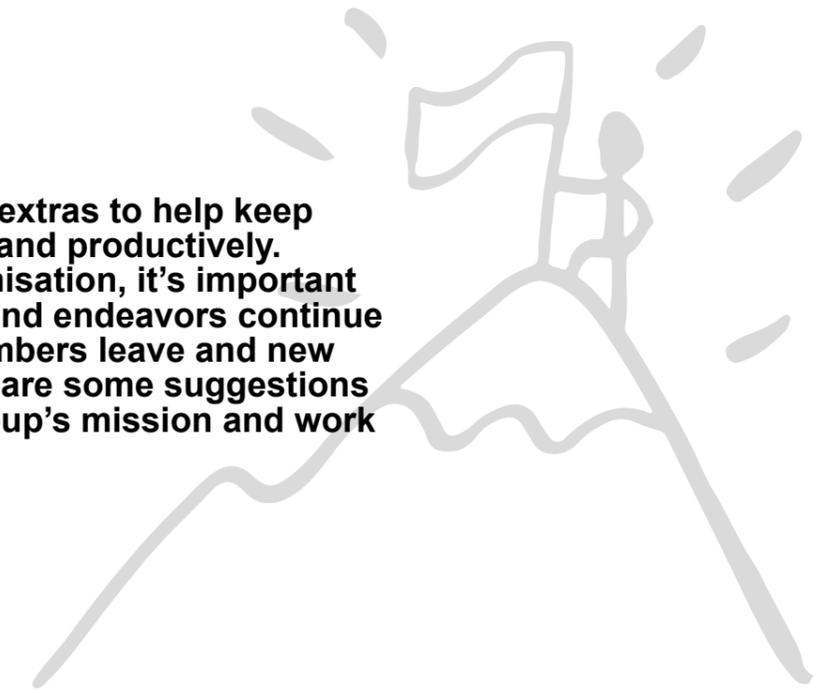
Hold a Pride Week in your school and organise different activities/events for each day!

## Gift Swap

At the end of the year put everyone's name in a hat and each person draw a name. They have to get or make a gift for the other group member (set a price limit such as \$5) to hand out at the last meeting. Try and organise some extra gifts in case anyone forgets or pulls out.

# The Little Extras To Make Your Group A Success

This section is about the little extras to help keep your group running smoothly and productively. Like any activism-based organisation, it's important to make sure that your goals and endeavors continue to be address even as old members leave and new members join the group. Here are some suggestions of how to ensure that your group's mission and work is sustained in the future



## Start at younger year levels

High school is not forever. If your group is solely comprised of older high school students, it may be difficult to pass the group facilitation responsibilities to new, younger members if they have never attended a group. To prevent this from happening, try to make sure there are people that come to the group from a range of year levels. To do this you might need to advertise in a junior assembly, or make sure the group and the current members are welcoming of people from other year groups.

## Mentor potential future facilitators

This means the people in the group that have specific skills in certain areas teach those skills to other members of group who may be interested in assuming a facilitator role in the future. For example, a younger student co-facilitating with an older student before the older student leaves, or both talking in an assembly together. You might also want to prepare some hand-over documents when you pass the group on to someone else, with any advice, previous files or ideas.

## Pace

Starting a group is exciting and often we want to do everything all at once so important to maintain a logistical perspective on group activities. If you believe that you have enough support, and have received school endorsement, then pursue your ideas. If not, take some time to reflect on the process and create more realistic timelines.

In some cases you might have to go slower. Sometimes activities will start off slow because other students might take a while to get interested. You may come across varying levels of resistance within the school, either to promote it, or even just to have it. If this is the case, remember that no change is instant and that sometimes slower change is more sustainable change. So if it takes off slowly, or you have to take small steps at a time, remember, everything you're doing is making a difference. Keep it up!

## Rotate Roles

If you have the same person leading/facilitating the group each time, then no-one else will know what to do when they can't make it, or once they leave school. It's a good idea to try and take it in turns, or have multiple facilitators so the responsibility isn't all on one person and to give other members an exciting experience to learn and practice important group facilitation skills.

## Setting achievable goals

Wanting to make every queer, trans and takatāpui person in the world feel safe and loved is a valid hope, but probably not achievable in your time at high school. But creating visibility in your school which might lessen homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying for that year, or even combating isolation for one or two students who are questioning their identity, is an amazing achievement and something you can try to accomplish while at school. Even achieving this goal may be challenging, however, since every school has a different environment of LGBTQIA+ acceptance. If your school does not want a diversity group, giving them information about the importance of groups for them to think about is a major step in the right direction.

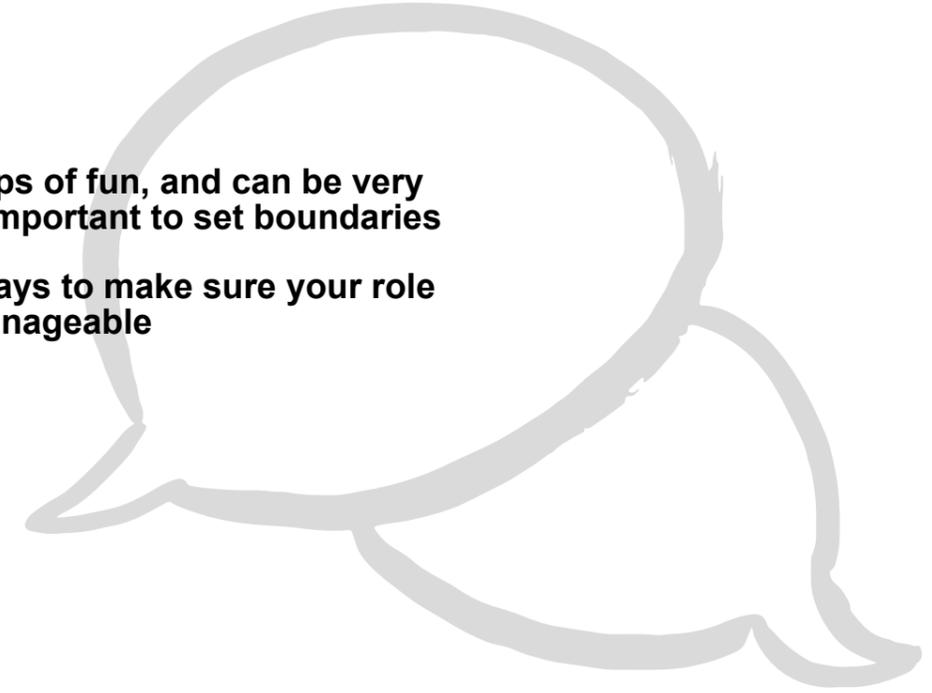
## Bridging your work to the greater community

This can include forming relationships with other diversity groups from other schools, diversity groups from around Aotearoa, local and national queer organisations, groups and communities in your area, and of course, with InsideOUT or RainbowYOUTH. This means you can find out what others are doing and even attend others' events (alternative balls, leadership days, diversity group days, youth forums that want youth to speak about sexuality and gender), get great ideas you want to replicate in your school, or help others out with their projects so that projects become bigger and better. You can find out about important days coming up to commemorate in your school (Pink Shirt Day, International Day Against Homo/Bi/Transphobia) and new resources that you can request for your group (new research about sexuality and gender in schools, new anti-bullying packs or leadership guides or games packs).

**There will be ups and downs with the group when it is flourishing and when it is quiet. This is natural, and does not mean your group isn't doing well.**

# Group Facilitation

Being a facilitator is heaps of fun, and can be very rewarding, but it's also important to set boundaries and practice self-care. Here are some helpful ways to make sure your role as facilitator remains manageable



## What is a Facilitator?

A facilitator is someone who holds the main responsibility of overseeing the group. Basically they are the ones that actually make things happen! Facilitators open the group, make sure all new and existing members feel welcome and safe, and are the official group representatives. They uphold the group's vision, mission, values and objectives, and act as role models for other group members.

## Sharing the load

Try providing opportunities for everyone to help out including facilitating a meeting. Learning from experience is an invaluable opportunity, so allowing other group members to try managing new responsibilities and tasks within the group is incredibly important to the well-being of your group. When group members are able to contribute to the group, you are helping members to develop a sense of group pride and ownership.

## Role

Try assigning roles for different people in your group, (e.g. Leader/Facilitator of events or meeting, Secretary/Note-Taker, Treasurer/Fundraising Coordinator). These roles can also rotate and be shared between members.

## During the group

Try to keep the conversation at the group PG. Steer the group away from topics such as clubbing, drinking, drug-taking and sexual experiences as this may make members feel uncomfortable or feel left out.

Members may ask you about rainbow topics or other issues and it is important to keep an open mind and listen without judging. Let them know that they can contact InsideOUT, RainbowYOUTH, or OUTLINE on 0800 088 5463 to talk.

## Types of Meetings

Have a rough plan before your meeting to go over what is going to happen, even if it's just that you're going to start with an introduction round and socialize afterwards. Planning will be most useful when you intend to have a presentation, discussion, or activity during at meeting.

Additionally, meetings themselves can also function as way to plan for events-big and small. These types of planning meetings might include asking the group questions to brainstorm, assigning tasks for the next meeting, and following up on tasks to make sure everything's running smoothly.

During meetings, it might be necessary to assign a speaking order to allow everyone a fair chance to share their opinions.

To assign a speaking order, ask people put up their hand when they want to speak and take note of the order. Also give speakers the respect they deserve by allowing them to finish their statements and promote active listening among group members. Another good idea might be to come up with a cute hand signal you can use when people agree with what the speaker has said (sparkle fingers is a common one!).

These are a few ideas that have been used by other groups, your group can also make up your own roles/gestures/protocols that will work the best for the group.

## Starting and ending meetings

Start by introducing yourself and the other facilitators. Now is a good time to let other members know about any upcoming events and let them know about the bathroom and fire exits. Prepare some icebreakers to get people feeling comfortable and ready to talk.

If the group is quite busy, drift around, talk with different people at the group and encourage people to mix and include new members in their conversations. It is okay if new members just sit in a group listening as long as they do not feel left out. If new members are staying off to the side, it can be a good idea to simply talk to them one on one with light conversation, asking things like where they heard about the group. When they seem more comfortable, you can get them talking to other members. Avoid intense or probing questions as this may put people off.

## Ending the group

Remember to formally close the group and make sure that people can safely get to their next destination. Let new members know it was great to have them there and you hope to see them again next time.

Give yourself time to discuss any issues that arose and give feedback on how group went with the other facilitators.

## Group dynamics

Every group will operate with a different group dynamic. Some people find it naturally easier to get on with others, and other people may find it more difficult to engage in a group situation.

Working to make sure every member who attends is included in the group in some way is key to running a successful peer group. This includes broadening topics of conversation so that everyone is interested and can have input, and running activities that all can participate in (in regards to cost, accessibility and knowledge), as this will help make sure the group is inclusive and relevant.

A common behaviour to keep an eye on can be the formation of 'cliques'. These tend to happen naturally as people who have been in the group for longer start to get closer, and focus more on hanging out with each other than participating in the group and meeting new people. Creating discussions or activities that actively break up these cliques can help to make new members feel more welcome, rather than experiencing that feeling of 'everyone else knows each other already'.

### Supporting those different to yourself

As an amazing facilitator for your group, you'll have a multitude of unique identities that will influence your role of being a facilitator. You may choose to label these identities or not. These identities might be related to your sexuality, gender, beliefs, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, a disability etc.

Like you, your members will be hold many intersecting identities Their experience may vary from your own. Recognising this, and that you may have trouble relating to or understanding something someone says or does, is important to maintain a safe space for your group, and in the individual members of your group feeling supported.

Try to remember a time that you have felt left out or hurt because your sexuality or gender have been ignored, assumed or insulted (even accidentally) by those around you. This is a common experience for other people with marginalized identities and experiences. Remaining open to hearing from people that feel they have been left out somehow, and putting in the effort to make the changes necessary are characteristics and practices of great facilitators.

Language is one way we can practice and role model a celebration of diversity. Using language which is inclusive makes people feel validated. Using the right language, avoiding stereotypes, assumptions, and names that perpetuate negative ideas about marginalized identities such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia and classism. We will make mistakes, so it's important to recognize the power of our words, admit our mistakes and stay dedicated to using language that makes everyone feel included.

### Setting personal boundaries

Sometimes group members can be a little too enthusiastic to get to know you. It is completely okay to keep your your personal details (such as phone number or email address) private and refrain from adding group members as friends on Facebook if you do not feel comfortable doing so. Instead, you could suggest they talk to the school guidance counsellor or ask them to join the group's Facebook page.

Another way of establishing boundaries, is knowing the activities or topics of conversation which could trigger an intense emotional response - such as anger or depression - for you and group members.

Avoid these topics of conversation, or excuse yourself from the group when these topics do arise. This an important tool in maintaining your calm demeanor as the facilitator of the group. If you're not sure on how to deal with particular topics when they come up, you can contact InsideOUT, RainbowYOUTH, or talk to the staff member supporting your group.

### Assertive facilitation

Often, people like to 'test the boundaries' of what they can do within a group by resisting your directions as a facilitator of the group. This is another type of conflict, and you may need to be more assertive in your facilitation of the group than you normally would, or feel comfortable with.

Speaking in an unagitated way, setting clear expectations of behaviour, and justifying these with the group's values can help to assert the expectations you have of group members, without having to resort to "Do as I say because I'm the facilitator".

### Conflict

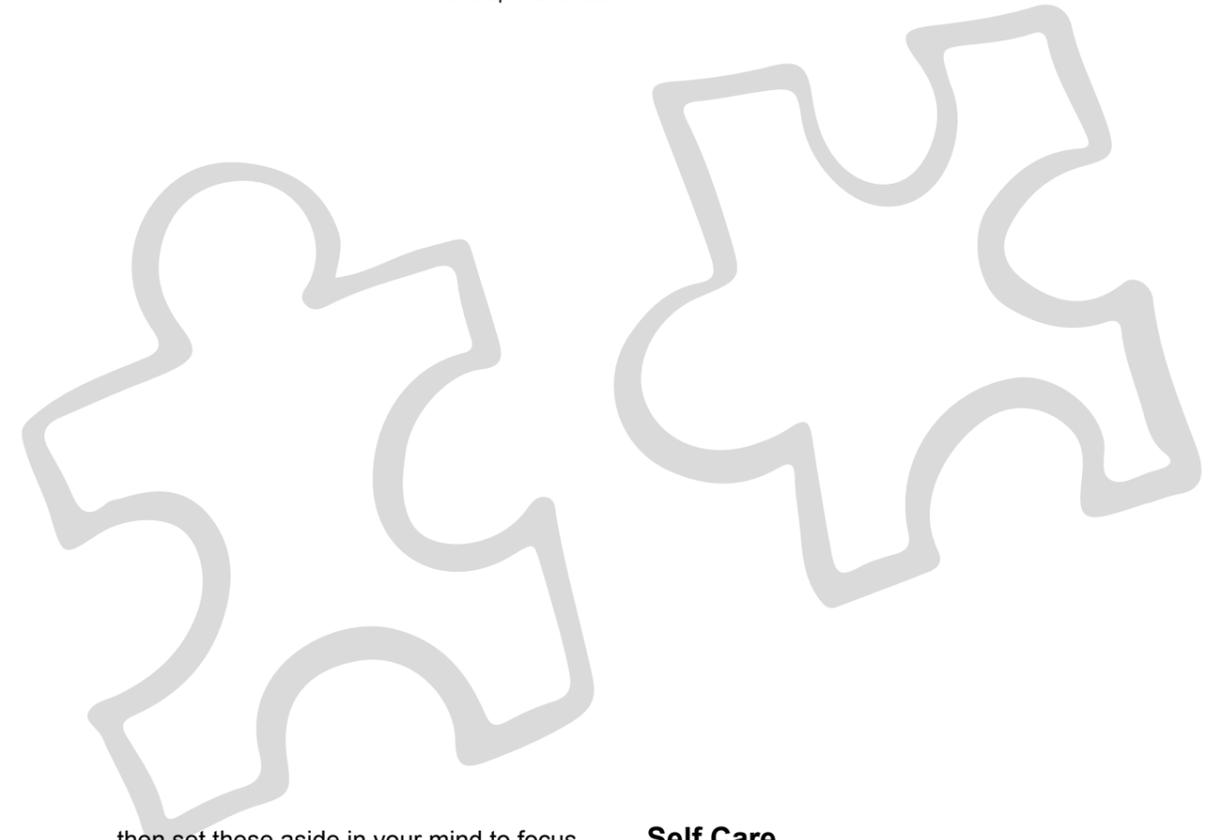
Conflict is a natural part of any group of people that comes together. Conflict can arise for many reasons:

- Miscommunication between group members
- A group member disrespecting another member of the group
- Confusing dislike of an idea with dislike of the person who expresses it

As a facilitator, your role is to de-escalate the conflict, and to maintain a safe space for all group members. Remain calm, acknowledge all sides of the conflict and the feelings of those involved.

Maintain the safe space of the group by making sure members maintain respect for each other, in accordance with the group kaupapa and values. Ask everyone how they would like the conflict to be resolved.

If the conflict can't be resolved within the group space, you can bring the conflict to your group's supportive staff member or get in touch with InsideOUT and RainbowYOUTH for support.



### Dealing with a crisis

As a facilitator for your group, you are never alone when dealing with a crisis. Crises can come in all shapes and sizes. For example:

- A young person is kicked out of home by their parents
- Someone has a medical emergency during a group
- A young person tells you they are going to attempt suicide or harm themselves

Whatever type of crisis you experience or have to deal with, staying calm is an excellent first step to a good outcome. Take a few deep breaths before asking yourself, "What is the first step I need to take in order to resolve this?"

Make the person in crisis feel safe and welcome. Let them know you are here to for them, and will listen to and help them as best you can.

Ask for help, as many times as you need to, until someone provides it.

**If it is an emergency, or you feel yourself or someone else is in danger, dial 111 straight away. If you're worried that someone may attempt suicide, contact your local Mental Health Crisis Team by ringing Healthline on 0800 611 116.**

No matter what the situation, if you are unsure whether you are experiencing a crisis, something that you are not comfortable with, or you're not sure how to handle something, get in touch with your group's supportive staff member, InsideOUT or another person that you trust.

### Disclosures

Disclosure is when someone tells you personal or confidential information such as telling you that they are queer or trans, or that they have experienced a harmful behaviour, such as self harm, sexual abuse, eating disorders, body dysphoria, family or relationship violence or physical abuse, or suicidal thoughts or intent. This may be the first time they have told anyone, and it was likely very difficult thing for them to do.

Just like dealing with a crisis, the first step is to stay calm. Acknowledge any thoughts, emotions or judgements you may have about what the person has just told you,

then set these aside in your mind to focus on supporting the young person effectively and appropriately.

Listen to the young person, accept what they are saying as the truth about how they feel, and thank them for telling you and trusting you with this information. Reassure the person that you are here to support them, and that you will help them find any other support they might want or need.

Always treat what the young person is telling you as confidential, and only share it with people who may need to know (e.g. your supportive staff member).

A great tool for showing you are listening to someone is to summarise what they have said, and say this back to them. This is called reflecting, and also helps to confirm that you have correctly understood what they are saying to you.

After the disclosure, make sure to follow up with the young person, and to put them in touch with any people or services that may be able to help support them. At the very least, tell other facilitators about the disclosure (if appropriate), or put the young person in touch with a staff member who can help them.

### Self Care

Self care is about looking after yourself, and making sure that you are okay before trying to look after others. Remember, the best way you can care for the needs of others is by taking care of your needs first.

Facilitating a group of young people can be hard work - dealing with group dynamics, thinking of something to do each session, having young people disclose to you, and dealing with other crises - can take a toll both physically and mentally.

Checking in with your fellow group facilitators or supportive staff member on a regular basis, such as just before or immediately after each session, can help share the load, and is another great way of making sure you are looking after yourself.

Every now and then you may experience a particularly challenging group, or have someone disclose something that is particularly distressing to you. Acknowledging these emotions and taking positive action to diffuse them is important. The ways which work best are different for everyone, but may be as simple as taking some time out for yourself, catching up with a group of friends at a cafe, or checking in with a staff member at InsideOUT or RainbowYOUTH.

# Addressing Challenges

**While running a group you may encounter a number of challenges. We've addressed some common challenges below, but please contact us if you need further support.**

## **How do you find and maintain a private space to meet?**

Find a classroom that will be empty during the time you use it; having teacher permission and support can be important and beneficial to keeping the safe space. Choose a place to meet that is fairly private, or that students don't usually have access to. Look at putting up a curtain over any glass doors or windows if people can see into the room you meet in. Consider making the location of the meetings private. People who want to join must txt or meet with a leader/teacher first to find out where it is and agree to keep this confidential.

## **What can you do if teachers aren't respecting you and/or taking you seriously?**

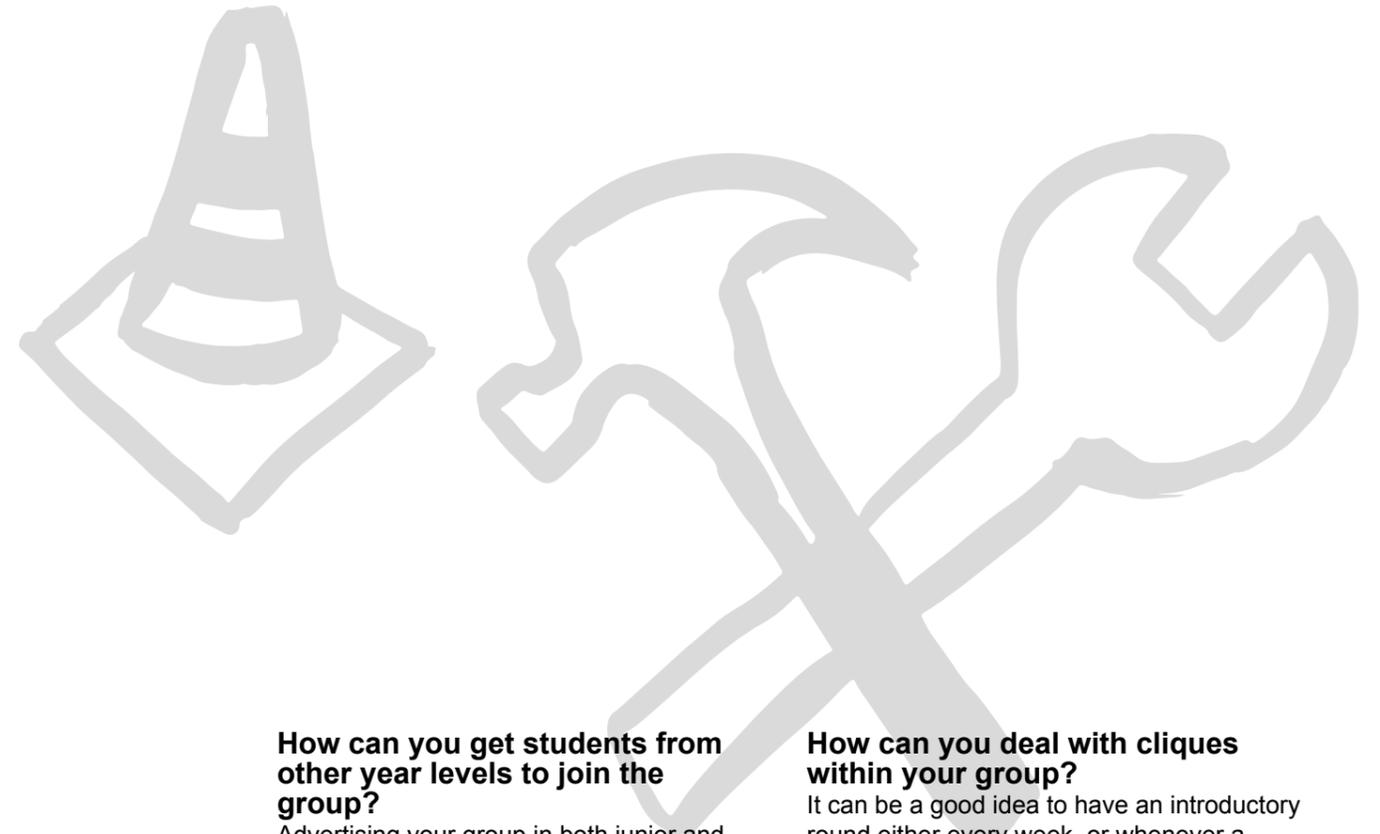
Having the support of another teacher or staff member can be helpful, as teachers will often respect their peers over their students. Bring the issue to senior staff if it is serious enough. Try reasoning with them, providing useful information, and explaining the problem.

## **What can you do if you have too many other commitments and are struggling to juggle them all?**

Delegate tasks, such as coming up with topics of discussion, or providing food for the weekly meeting to another member of the group. Organise your different commitments with a timetable, or a diary. Having a co-leader or a deputy can also be helpful to take some of the workload. This way you can share ideas and tasks between the two of you. Let the group and your staff liaison know that you've got a lot on and ask them to help you out.

## **How to maintain confidentiality within the group?**

Install a 'what happens in the group, stays in the group' rule' for your meetings. If you are worried there is risk of this rule being broken you can reiterate it at the start of meetings, or throughout discussions. Make sure new members are aware of your group kaupapa. Consider having members sign a confidentiality agreement when they join the group - if they break the confidentiality agreement, make sure they understand that the consequences could include being asked to leave the group or needing to apologise to the person they may have caused hurt to. It may be best to deal with this on a situation basis rather than having a blanket rule.



## **How can you get students from other year levels to join the group?**

Advertising your group in both junior and senior assemblies can be a good way to get members, especially if you offer food to those who come to meetings. Holding workshops about sexuality, sex and gender diversity with younger year health classes can be a good way to introduce your group to younger students, as well as educating them. Speak in form classes across year levels about your group or events you are running. If you already have members from different year levels in your group, make this known to a wider audience. For example, having a junior and senior student speaking in assembly about your group shows that it's there for all students.

## **What can you do if members of the group are fighting?**

The ultimate purpose of your group is to provide a space that is safe and supportive for all members. While this may seem redundant, it is something that people can lose sight of and individuals may need reminding. There are multiple ways in which you can establish and maintain this. Talk to your guidance counsellor or staff liaison - maybe you need to organise a mediation between those who are fighting.

## **How can you deal with cliques within your group?**

It can be a good idea to have an introductory round either every week, or whenever a new member comes to the group, even if it is just names and pronouns. Have group discussions involving the entire group. Split the group into smaller groups for activities, telling them to join with people they don't know well yet. Discuss with your group the kind of environment you want to create. Prompt them to think of times when they have felt excluded? How did that feel? All work together to make sure the group is an inclusive and welcoming place for all members. Make an extra effort when a new member joins your group to welcome them, talk to them, and let them know you'd like to see them back next time.

## **How can you put a stop to the idea that your group is a queer hook-up group?**

Whenever discussing or advertising your group maintain that the group is for support and making change, working to create a safe environment for the LGBTQIA+ students within the school. Reiterate that the group is for anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, sex or gender.

### **How to talk about your group in assemblies and deal with any judgement?**

People respond to witty and clever presentations. Using “Yes” language-- that is refrain from telling people they are not behaving correctly or aren't being supportive.

Humour and lightheartedness often come across better than anger and seriousness to students.

Make or play a video to engage your audience and draw the attention away from yourself.

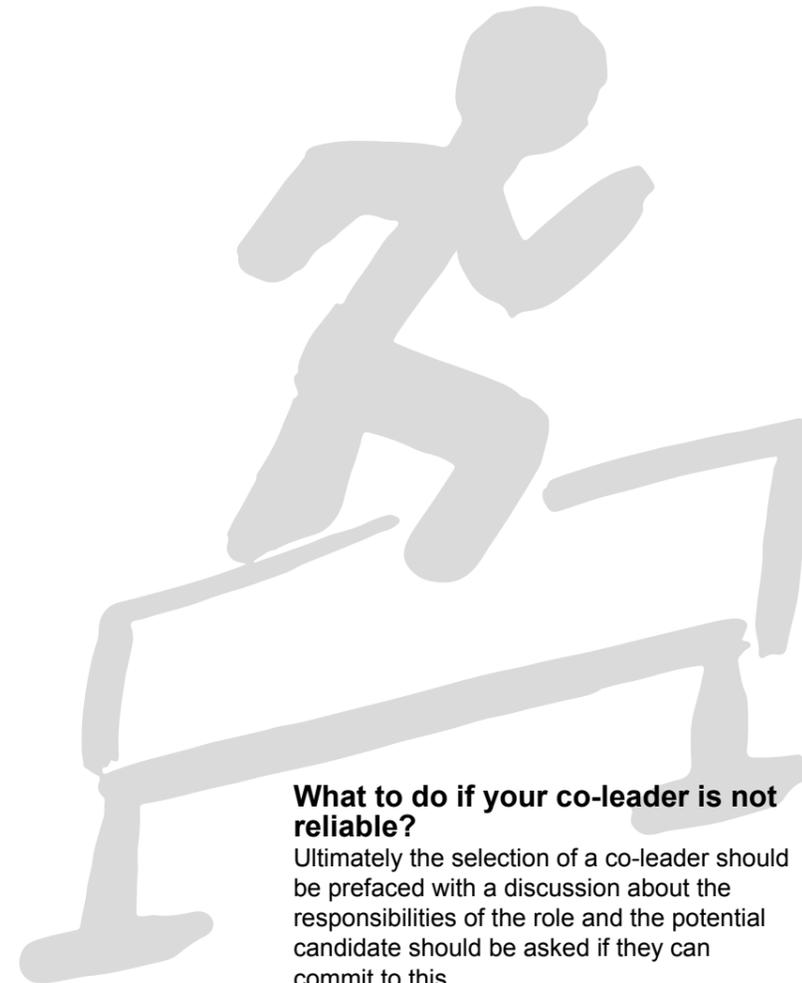
Make it clear that anyone can be part of the group to avoid people assuming it is only there for LGBTQIA+ people. Sometimes having popular or respected student allies in the school who everyone knows (maybe they are the student leaders or peer mentors) standing up and supporting the group with you can make it harder for people to respond negatively.

### **What can you do if straight cisgender supporters are taking over your group and behaving negatively or not listening to the LGBTQIA+ students?**

With the beginning of the group and introduction of new members, it should be established that the group is in fact intended to be a safe space and to predominantly support LGBTQIA+ individuals in the group. It could be wise to establish the role of friends and those who don't identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, and what they need to do in order to be supportive. A good constructive activity for your group could be to advertise what it means to be supportive, as part of a school wide campaign.

Behaviour that contradicts the role of a supporter should be taken seriously, as it undermines the core function of the group. So if negative behaviour does arise, firstly try to speak to them and explain how their behaviour is negative. If they continue to act accordingly once spoken to it may be wise to ask them to leave the group, or get your staff liaison involved.

Have an outside group in your community come in and do a session with the group on what it means to be supportive, or addressing other social issues (eg. why it's not okay to say that's so gay, even if you don't mean for it to be offensive).



### **What to do if your co-leader is not reliable?**

Ultimately the selection of a co-leader should be prefaced with a discussion about the responsibilities of the role and the potential candidate should be asked if they can commit to this.

In the event a co-leader is not reliable or fulfilling their responsibilities, you should meet with them to find out the reason for their lack of commitment. Approach them in a way that gives them the benefit of the doubt. A number of personal factors or a lack of clarity about what they are supposed to be doing could be affecting their performance.

If they can no longer commit to the role than do not force them to continue. If this is the case it would be best to advertise for a new co-leader, who once assured of their responsibilities can commit to the role.

### **What can you do if a teacher or guidance counsellor is being too controlling or spreading the wrong message about your group?**

Try to ensure the group is lead by students. Try and tell your teacher if they are doing something wrong and explain why eg. transphobic behaviour. Remind them the purpose of the group, or let them know that you think it would improve the group if they had more of a background role. Get another staff member involved to help you speak to them if needed.

### **What can you do if some people are coming to the group in secret and want to pretend they don't know you outside of the group?**

Establish a method of allowing members to know who within the group is open about their identity. In your group rules/values, ensure that everyone having their needs and privacy respected by other members is addressed.

It is always best to find out each individual's comfort level, as some may be out to friends and not family, or not out to anyone else at school.

Don't force anyone to put a label on their identity to be part of the group.

# About the Day of Silence



## Why Be Silent

Being silent draws attention and creates visibility around the issue of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in New Zealand schools. The Youth'12 report conducted by the University of Auckland shows that same or both-sex attracted young people in New Zealand are three times more likely to be bullied weekly than their heterosexual peers. 57.9% had been afraid that someone would hurt or bother them at school, 43.3% had been hit or physically harmed on purpose at school in the last year and 1 in 5 reported being bullied at school at least weekly. Of those students who had been bullied, eight times as many (46%) had been bullied because they were gay or because people thought that they were gay compared to their opposite-sex-attracted peers (5%). These statistics show us that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is a major issue in New Zealand schools and it's time something was done about it. The Youth'12 report also highlights the concerning levels of depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug abuse, self-harm and suicide experienced by young people of

diverse sexualities. The Youth'12 report on transgender students shows that nearly 20% had attempted suicide in the previous year and nearly 50% had been physically abused.

By taking part in the Day of Silence, students can bring the topic of bullying to light and then work with school staff and students on follow up actions to break the silence. These could include starting up a queer straight alliance, improving the quality of education on sexual orientation and gender in health classes or specifying homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in your school's anti-bullying policies and strategies.

## Organising for Day of Silence

Organising a Day of Silence (DOS) activity or event can be a positive tool for change—both personally and community-wide. By taking a vow of silence, you're making a powerful statement about the important issue of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and when you organise others to join you, that message becomes stronger.

Visit [www.dayofsilence.org.nz](http://www.dayofsilence.org.nz) to register and access resources to help you run the campaign in your school!

The National Day of Silence is a day of action in which students across the country vow to take a form of silence to call attention to the silencing effect of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, name-calling and harassment in schools.

# For School Staff



**Youth'12 was a national survey conducted by the University of Auckland that interviewed over 8,500 students from 91 separate high-schools across Aotearoa. The findings from this survey highlighted a dire need for schools to work harder to create safer environments for young people of diverse sexualities, sexes and genders.**

**These elevated statistics indicate the coping mechanisms these young people have developed as a result of the harassment they experience within their society and within their school. Young people of diverse sexualities and genders need to be in school environments that affirm and celebrate their identities, and provide opportunities for them to seek support, connect with people like them and be free of bullying and discrimination.**

**The Youth'12 University of Auckland study showed that of the young people in NZ who are same or both-sex attracted eg. lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, takatāpui, fa'afafine and of other diverse sexualities and genders:**

**A third** of young people with diverse sexualities had come out by the time they were 11 years old and the majority knew by the time they were 15

**Over 50%** have come out **but less than 15%** can talk to family about it

They were **5x more likely** to attempt suicide than heterosexual cisgender young people

**59.4%** of them had deliberately self-harmed  
Depressive symptoms had **increased from 27% in 2001 to 41.3% in 2012**, while the symptoms in heterosexual young people had remained consistent and much lower

**35.7%** had difficulty getting help for their emotional concerns

**57.9%** had been afraid that someone would hurt or bother them at school (one or more times in the previous year)

**43.3%** had been hit or physically harmed on purpose at school in the last year

A higher proportion of same/both-sex attracted (**36.3%**) than opposite-sex attracted students (**22.0%**) had truanted (wagged or skipped school for a full day or more without an excuse) in the last year

**1 in 5** reported being bullied at school at least weekly – there has been no improvement in the levels of bullying reported in over 10 years  
Of those students who had been bullied, over eight times as many same/both-sex attracted students (**46.1%**) reported that they were bullied because they were gay or because people thought that they were gay compared to their opposite-sex attracted peers (**5.4%**). This indicates that same/both-sex attracted students (as well as some opposite-sex attracted students) experience bullying because others thought they were gay. This also suggests that same/both-sex attracted students are subjected to additional harassment 'over and above' the bullying related to their sexuality

#### **Transgender Students**

**Approximately 40%** of transgender students had significant depressive symptoms and nearly half had self-harmed in the previous 12 months

**One in five** transgender students had attempted suicide in the last year

**Nearly one in five** transgender students had experienced bullying at school on a weekly (or more frequent) basis – this was nearly 5 times higher than the proportion of students who were non-transgender

**More than half** of transgender students were afraid someone at school would hurt or bother them

*Use these pages to show teachers, counsellors, principals or other school staff to help explain the need for a group in your school and how they can support you.*

### Supporting your Students

With 1 in 12 high school students in New Zealand identifying as something other than heterosexual and 4 in 100 identifying as transgender or unsure of their gender (Youth'12), there are many students in your school who are in need of support. If these students don't know anyone like them and don't see their diversity embraced by the school, they will feel incredibly isolated. Calculate how many students should be out in your school, based on these statistics. If you don't have this amount of students that are 'out' at your school about their sexuality or gender, it is because they don't feel safe.

Having a diversity group or queer straight alliance addresses this issue by providing young people with a safe space and community within their school to find peer support, see their identities reflected and work with others to make positive change.

### How this group will add to your school:

Having a group like this in your school shows that you accept and embrace diversity, and take the health and wellbeing of all students seriously. The group provides opportunities for young people to take up leadership and volunteer roles, and contributes to their feelings of belonging and safety at school, providing the support they need to stay in education.

### Who else is in support of diversity groups?

Sometimes it can be really hard to get behind a diversity group because of the stigma and connotations that are still associated with being queer, gay, tākatapui, or transgender. A great way to challenge this stigma is to support the students in your school that do have these identities. This can be done by supporting the students to support each other. Legislation, reports and other organisations have recognised this and are advocating for sexual orientation, gender identity and youth leadership to be prioritized on school board agencies. If you want to support your students but have hesitations, consult these documents:

Sexuality Education: A Guide for Principals, Boards of Trustees and Teachers by the Ministry of Education.  
<http://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines/Sexuality-education-a-guide-for-principals-boards-of-trustees-and-teachers>

PPTA (see Affirming Diversity of Sexualities in the School Community PPTA 2003)

Ministry of Youth Development ([www.myd.govt.nz/about-myd/publications/youth-development-strategy-aotearoa.html](http://www.myd.govt.nz/about-myd/publications/youth-development-strategy-aotearoa.html))

Yogyakarta Principles: The application of international human rights law to sexual orientation and gender identity ([www.yogyakartaprinciples.org](http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org))



### How to get a group started

Teachers and counsellors can champion groups too. So what if you see the importance of diversity groups and understand the need for your school to have one, but you don't have any students that are rearing to go yet?

There are different ways to promote and achieve the student engagement for a group:

You can advertise the group in the school news or an assembly.

You can advertise a guest speaker or lunchtime assembly coming in to talk about sexuality and gender, or even simply about bullying. At the end of the presentation mention a meeting that students can come to if they want to know more or be part of a group.

The school counsellor can pose the ideas to the students they know who may be interested in forming such a group.

Word of mouth is a great way to promote - once you have a couple of students interested, encourage them to bring their friends along.

Consider ways to ensure the safety and confidentiality of young people being involved in a group. For example, you might want to hold meetings in a room that's out of the way, or emphasise during advertising it that it is a queer straight alliance and people of any sexuality, sex or gender can join.

Ideally a group would be youth lead, with adult support and guidance. Sometimes it is necessary for a staff member to help facilitate the group or take on more responsibility during certain periods (eg. when a previous student leader of the group has graduated) but where possible, young people should be involved in all leadership and decision-making.

More information and source at:

[https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/ahrg/docs/Youth'12%20Young%20People%20Attracted%20to%20the%20Same%20or%20Both%20Sexes%20Report.pdf](https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/ahrg/docs/Youth%20Young%20People%20Attracted%20to%20the%20Same%20or%20Both%20Sexes%20Report.pdf)

# The Importance of Rainbow Diversity Groups

School based rainbow diversity groups can play an important role in encouraging students to play an important and valuable role in creating an inclusive schooling environment where a diverse range of students can feel valued and affirmed.

Given that the cultures of many schools are shifting to engage more fully with students' emotional and social wellbeing, as well as their intellectual development, opportunities for creating more inclusive schools are increasingly important.

New Zealand research into school-based diversity groups (Quinlivan, 2015, 2014; Quinlivan, Goulter, & Caldwell, 2010) shows that Diversity Groups provide empowering peer based learning contexts to value difference and diversity, and challenge heteronormativity and gender normativity. The events they create often speak powerfully to their peers because they are characterised by a humour and creativity that young people can relate to.

Diversity Groups provide a context for students who have a strong desire to make a difference and engage with social justice issues in their school to create social change. They grow the participating students' leadership potential, as well as break down divisions between age groups, through mentoring of younger students.

Students gain confidence through participating in the groups, and successfully organizing events. A safe and supportive environment can be created which focuses on developing the talents and abilities of members to contribute to developing and staging events.

There is no 'recipe' for developing a school-based Diversity Group. Initially it's important to develop initiatives and events in ways that fit within the existing structures and culture of your school- they can expand out from there as they grow.

Connecting your school's diversity group with those in different schools within your town or in nearby towns, or nationally, can help to get ongoing ideas, maybe plan joint events, and provide support for the group's initiatives.

Diversity Groups provide important vehicles for students to work together to make a difference and create social change. They show that students can work together to create something beyond themselves, and contribute meaningfully to the broader school community.

Diversity Groups need the support of school management and staff who take social justice issues seriously- however it is most effective when it supports students from a distance, and doesn't dominate- go with students' enthusiasm, creativity and desire to make a difference. They will benefit your school by creating a safer and more inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued, and feels they can make a contribution.

#### References:

- Quinlivan, K. (2015).** Acknowledging and Working Double Binds: The Im/Possible work of A High School Queer Straight Alliance. In A. Gunn and L. Smith (Eds.) *Sexual Cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand Education* Dunedin: Otago University Press, pp. 135-149.
- Quinlivan, K. (2014)** "Butterflies Starting a Tornado" *The Queer 'Not Yet' of a New Zealand School Based Queer Straight Alliance As A Utopic Site of Learning.* In E. Meyer and D. Carlson (Eds.), *Gender and sexualities in education: A Reader.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing. (pp.272-283).
- Quinlivan, K., Goulter, M., & Caldwell, F. (2010).** Diversity Groups as Sites of Learning in New Zealand School and Community Contexts, Report to the New Zealand Aids Foundation, June 30th 2010.

By Assoc. Professor Kathleen Quinlivan,  
College of Education, Health and Human Development,  
University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ

# Group Profiles

**We have collected profiles on four different rainbow diversity groups from different parts of Aotearoa. We hope this will inspire and help you get a feel of what a group at your school could be like, and what it might be able to achieve!**

## **Makoura College - Rainbow Squad Masterton**

We are a newly formed group. We formed our QSA group named "Rainbow Squad" in Term One this year and celebrated with a launch at a full school assembly in Term Two presenting a short video about the pronouns associated with identities in our community. The primary goal of our group is to create a safe environment for queer and gender diverse students within our school. The group provides a space where LGBT+ students can discuss issues they face and receive support from those battling similar problems. The group promotes a strong sense of belonging, acceptance and understanding within the school and community, where so commonly LGBT+ people are misunderstood. We provide resources about issues that we struggle to find elsewhere. The formation of an LGBT+ support group has had a positive impact on our school to date, with conversations taking place around how the school uniform can better support LGBT+ students.

The teaching staff have had professional development to foster deeper understanding and awareness to LGBT+ issues and are actively working to eliminate all forms of bias



and or discrimination towards LGBT+ with a focus currently on discriminative language whether said in jest or deliberate.

We celebrated our launch after the full school assembly with an afternoon tea and the cutting of a cake.



## **Nelson College - TAQS Nelson**

Hello! My name is Te Maungarongo, they/ them pronouns and I am gay. I am also the official/non-official leader of TAQS Nelson College, The QSA at Nelson College. Our group began in 2015 when Year 10 Te Maunga finally got tired of the bigotry around them. They decided to create a space in which queer people, like myself, are safe from prejudice. In the beginning many people had been against a QSA and tried to stop it from happening, but alas I prevailed, by never stopping, I never stopped trying to make this space. I couldn't stand the thought of other people never being able to feel safe because they have nowhere to go when the world seems to be against them. After three months of bickering ....I HAD MY GROUP! Since the actual officiating of TAQS we have had many incidences where our pride flag was pulled down from it's (rightful) place and our posters have been torn and thrown around. I have also received multiple notes expressing homophobic rage (at least they cared enough to write a note).

Despite all of the trouble we endured, our group exists, and at the moment, that is all that matters really. As long as the space is open and safe, then it is worth it. The beginning of 2016 has been our most

eventful. We hosted a stall at our school's club day, where we showcased TAQS in all her fabulous glory, we have gained more and more members from that and our group is slowly but continually growing. On this clubs day we encouraged people to come along and support their fellow peers. In the early stages of this year we requested that our school support the Mental Health Foundation by hosting a Pink Shirt Day event to express our solidarity to anti-bullying. This day was very significant for Nelson College as it was the first time since Pink Shirt Day was created that we have participated in it. The most positive and significant thing that we have done in Nelson College is create this space...this safe place where sexually, romantically, and gender diverse people can be who they are and express that healthily in such a school as Nelson College. Our group is in it's early, awkward stages as it is a new group and we are just getting used to each other. In my entire life, creating this QSA is the one thing that I will continually be proud of. To all of the QSAs out there which are struggling, please know that your troubles will melt away and it will all be worth it. Please stay. Stay here. Stay beautiful. Stay proud. Above all-stay proud.



### Logan Park High School - Technicolour Sandwich Dunedin

As senior students we formed our group upon realisation that our school's supportive network for queer students needed to be improved; it wasn't catering to the diversity present in our school. We thought starting a group was the way to accomplish greater inclusivity. Issues that inspired us to form the group included former unisex bathrooms being labeled as gendered toilets by a member of staff and the absence of a gender neutral uniform choice. Not having a support network to discuss these necessities for queer students was our initial motivation; we didn't think the current situation was acceptable and this group was a way to start changing this.

We did not encounter any significant problems in the initial stages of creating the group; senior management approved the proposal of student support because they realised it would be a positive addition to the school. When informing the students of its creation we labelled it as a diversity group, before deciding on our final name (Technicolour Sandwich). To get the word out we put it in the school's daily notices, and spoke to staff in a morning briefing. We welcomed students of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and sexes to come along, as well as allies wishing to learn more and support their peers.

The first few weeks were quite hard, trying to establish a positive, sharing and comfortable environment for everyone. So to help this we found the funnest ice breakers and get to know people games we could find. We tried to be as silly and as ourselves as we could to let them know you can do that here!

Our group has given students a support network of friends and a safe space to express themselves. It has become a place to take action. Students can bring forth

issues, question the structure of our school and consider how we can make positive changes. Most of all it is a place to learn and have fun; a safe environment all students are welcome to be a part of. Our group is proud of the actions we are taking; all the changes we make advocate greater awareness of queer issues amongst the staff and students.

It's also received very strong support from the staff! One staff member attends regularly and loves to be involved in the discussion and learning, another staff member came out to our group which was amazing and we're so happy that our group is a safe space for the teachers as well as the students.

Some of our group's achievements so far include:

**Pink Shirt Day** - raising awareness for anti-bullying while fundraising for the NZ Mental Health Foundation and InsideOUT. Huge turnout!

**Gender Neutral Formal Awards** - in previous years the awards have been King and Queen and Best Dressed Male and Female. Our group decided it wasn't okay to have such binary awards so we changed it to 'Formal Royalty' and having two best dressed people.

**Unisex bathroom labelling** - In the process of having clearly and visibly labeled Unisex Bathrooms.

**Gender neutral language in permission forms** - forms usually asks permission "for your son/daughter" to go on a trip, so we decided it could easily be changed to "child"

**Speaking to health classes** - We've started speaking in the junior health classes about what are group is and does and letting people know there is a place of support at our school.



### Wellington Girls' College - Spectrum Wellington

Spectrum, Wellington Girls' College QSA, has been going for over five years. Originally it was founded as a small support group for gay students at WGC with around ten members. Now it has over thirty members, making it one of the largest student run clubs in the school.

Our group works very hard to foster inclusiveness and support to the many LGBT students who might otherwise be overlooked at this single sex school. Our goal is to help this school be the safest environment for MOGAI (marginalized orientations, gender alignments, and intersex) adolescents as possible and our Spectrum group is a large part of that effort. It's purpose is to provide a safe space within the school where MOGAI kids can meet people like them and learn more about their community.

One of our group's latest and largest achievement has been the promise of pants being introduced into our school uniform next year. Spectrum has been pushing this idea for years as including pants in our uniform would be able to help with the dysphoria our trans students go through as well as giving the diverse student body freedom of expression, making the school a

more comfortable environment for everyone. This year our board proposal to introduce pants into the uniform was accepted and manufacture for culottes are beginning. The school's response to this has been wonderful and we are all looking forward to the changes next year will bring. In general, Spectrum is currently working with staff members in order to extend understanding about the LGBT community in the classroom and the wider aspects of the school.

Every QSA group is bound to face challenges, whether they are problems individuals in the group face or obstacles the QSA has to overcome to move forward. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is something we work with the school to address, and last year a team of people from within Spectrum organised for the entire school to participate in the Day of Silence, which was excellent in demonstrating the school's solidarity and support for all those who needed it. There were serious bullying problems when the group was founded, but now we are working through it and we believe having the group has made a difference. We're all really proud of how far this group has come and are all looking positively towards its future.

# Resources and Support

**InsideOUT** - making schools safer, support for QSAs  
<http://www.insideout.org.nz>

**RainbowYOUTH**  
<http://www.ry.org.nz>

**Breaking Boundaries** - NZ online youth forums  
<http://www.breakingboundaries.org.nz>

**I'm Local** - resources and support near you  
<http://imlocal.co.nz>

**Naming New Zealand** - helping trans youth to update their identity documents  
<http://www.naming.nz>

**TraNZgear** - binders etc for trans youth  
<http://www.tranzgear.com>

**InterACT**  
<http://interactyouth.org/>

**Intersex Youth Aotearoa**  
<https://intersexyouthaotearoa.wordpress.com/>

**Equasian**  
<http://equasian.org.nz>

**Making Schools Safer For Trans and Gender Diverse Students**  
[www.insideout.org.nz/trans-resource](http://www.insideout.org.nz/trans-resource)

**Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau Resource**  
<http://shop.mentalhealth.org.nz/product/758-takatapui>

**You, Me, Us** - Healthy Relationships Resource  
<http://www.youmeus.co.nz>

**Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura** - Outing Violence  
<http://www.kahukura.co.nz>

**Day of Silence** - Anti-Bullying Campaign  
<http://www.dayofsilence.org.nz>

**Inside Out** - Sexuality and Gender Teaching Resource  
<http://www.insideout.ry.org.nz>

**PPTA Rainbow Taskforce**  
<http://www.ppta.org.nz/communities/glbti-teachers>

## Ministry of Education Sexuality Guidelines

<http://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines/Sexuality-education-a-guide-for-principals-boards-of-trustees-and-teachers>

## Youth 12 Young People Attracted to the Same or Both Sexes Report

<https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/ahrg/docs/Youth%2012%20Young%20People%20Attracted%20to%20the%20Same%20or%20Both%20Sexes%20Report.pdf>

## Youth '12 Transgender Report

<https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/central/about/news-events-notice/news/2014-news/1UOAYouth%2012%20transgender%20young%20people%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

## Regional Trans or Sexuality and Gender Diverse Support Groups

**RainbowYOUTH Peer-Support Groups:**  
*in Auckland, Tauranga, Whangarei*  
[www.ry.org.nz/groups](http://www.ry.org.nz/groups)

**TaurangaPryde**  
<http://www.ry.org.nz/tauranga-pryde/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/LGBTYouthTauranga>

**WhangaReinbow - Whangarei**  
<http://www.ry.org.nz/groups/whangareinbow>

**School's Out - Wellington**  
<http://evolveyouth.org.nz/whats-on/schools-out-2/>

**Tranzform - Wellington**  
<http://www.tranzform.org.nz>

**Q-Youth - Nelson**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/72311749717/>

**Alphabet Soup - Dunedin**  
<https://www.facebook.com/alphabetsoupdunedin>

**Rainbow Collective - South Auckland**  
<http://villagecollective.org.nz/what-we-do/rainbow-collective>

**QCentral - Rotorua**  
<https://www.facebook.com/qcentrallyouthgroup>

**WaQuY - Waikato Queer Youth - Waikato**  
<https://www.facebook.com/WaQuY-Waikato-Queer-Youth-253274271379320>

**BeUnique - Hawke's Bay**  
<https://www.facebook.com/hawkesbaylgbtqi>

**Closet Space Whanganui**  
<https://www.facebook.com/Closet-Space-Whanganui-234994883202703>

**Transcend - Palmerston North**  
<https://www.facebook.com/transcendpn/?fref=ts>

**Rainbow Taranaki**  
<https://www.facebook.com/RainbowTaranaki/>

**Qmunity - Gisborne**  
[qmunityyouth@gmail.com](mailto:qmunityyouth@gmail.com)

**Spectrum - Marlborough**  
<https://www.facebook.com/thespectrumclubqt/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/MBCSpectrum?fref=ts>

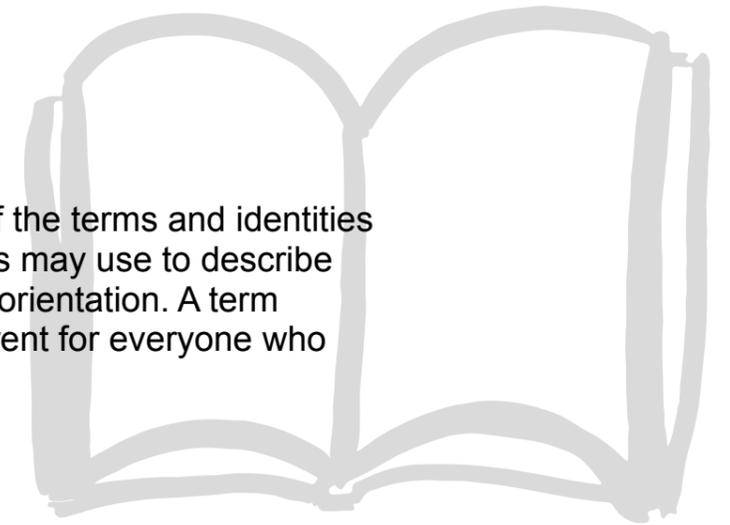
**Q-Topia and Phoenix - Christchurch**  
<http://www.qtopia.org.nz/>

**E14E - Everyone For Equality - Southland**  
<https://www.facebook.com/Number10Invercargill/>

**The Spectrum Club - Queenstown**  
[thespectrumclubqt@gmail.com](mailto:thespectrumclubqt@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/thespectrumclubqt/>

# Terminology

Here are the meanings for some of the terms and identities that people in rainbow communities may use to describe their gender, sexuality or romantic orientation. A term may mean something slightly different for everyone who identifies with it.



**Agender** An identity that means 'without' gender. Agender individuals have no gender identity and/or no gender expression. They often identify as a person rather than a gender.

**Aromantic** An Aromantic person is someone who experiences little to no romantic attraction and/or lacks interest in forming romantic relationships. Aromanticism exists on a spectrum, as does Asexualism.

**Asexual** An Asexual individual experiences little to no sexual attraction and/or lacks interest or desire for sexual partners. Asexualism exists on a spectrum, as does Aromanticism.

**Bigender** A bigender person can identify as any two genders at the same time or go back and forth between the two. Some bigender individuals use different pronouns and/or names for each gender.

**Biphobia** Intense hatred, fear or aversion towards bisexuals or bisexuality, which may include negative stereotyping or denial of the existence of bisexuals. People of any sexual orientation can experience such feelings of aversion.

**Bisexual** Someone who is sexually attracted to people of more than one gender.

**Cisgender (cis for short)** A term used to describe someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth. It is the opposite of transgender.

**Cisnormativity** A viewpoint based on the assumption that being cisgender is the 'default' or 'normal' gender identity, instead of being just one of many possibilities.

**Cross-dresser** A person who sometimes wears clothing that is considered by society to correspond with the opposite gender. This is not the same as being transgender.

**Demiboy** A term to describe someone who partially, but not wholly, identifies as male or masculine.

**Demigirl** A term to describe someone who partially, but not wholly, identifies as female or feminine.

**Drag** The act of dressing in gendered clothing as part of a performance. Drag Queens perform in highly feminine attire. Drag Kings perform in highly masculine attire. Drag performance does not indicate sexuality, gender identity, or sex identity.

**Gender** A range of characteristics that a society or culture delineates to masculinity and femininity.

**Gender Binary** The idea that there are only two genders: man and woman, and that a person must be gendered as either/or.

**Gender identity** A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, neither or both. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with their sex.

**Gender expression** How someone expresses their sense of masculinity and/or femininity externally.

**Gender diverse** An umbrella term used to encompass people who do not necessarily identify with being transgender, but don't feel their gender fits into the binary of male or female.

**Genderfluid** Describes a person whose gender changes over time and can go back and forth. The frequency of this depends on the individual.

**Genderqueer** Usually an umbrella term used to describe those whose identity is non-normative (not male or female). It can also be used as a stand-alone gender identity itself, pertaining to feelings of being neither male or female, both, or somewhere in between.

**Gender reassignment services** The full range of medical services that trans people may require in order to medically transition, including counselling, hormone treatment, electrolysis, initial surgeries such as a mastectomy, hysterectomy or orchidectomy, and a range of genital reconstruction surgeries.

**Fa'afafine (Samoa and American Samoa), Mahu (Tahiti and Hawaii), Vaka sa lewa lewa (Fiji), Palopa (Papua New Guinea), Akava'ine (Cook Islands), Fakaleiti/Leiti (Tonga), Fakafifine (Niue)**

Terms that some Pasifika people may use to describe their gender. Their meanings are best understood within their cultural context and may mean something different to each individual. These terms do not have a Western equivalent, but are usually translated to mean 'in the manner of a woman'.

**Feminine presenting** A way to describe someone who expresses their gender in a more feminine way.

**Heteronormativity** A viewpoint that is based on the assumption that heterosexuality is the 'default' or 'normal' sexual orientation, instead of being just one of many possibilities.

**Homophobia** An irrational negative response to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other sexuality diverse people.

**Homosexual** A person who is exclusively attracted to those of the same gender. Can refer to someone who is Gay or Lesbian.

**Intersex** Intersex is an umbrella term that describes people born with variations of internal and/or external sex anatomy, resulting in bodies that can't be classified as the typical male or female. There are many different conditions that fall under the intersex umbrella.

**LGBTQIA+** An acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and more sexuality and gender diverse identities.

**Masculine Presenting** A way to describe someone who expresses their gender in a more masculine way.

**Multisexual** An umbrella term for people who are attracted to multiple genders. E.g. bisexual, pansexual.

**Non-binary** Usually an umbrella term for those who do not identify as strictly male or female (for example: gender variant, gender nonconforming, genderqueer). It can also be used as an individual identity.

**Pansexual** A Pansexual person is someone who is attracted to people regardless of biological sex, gender, or gender identity, or someone who is attracted to all genders.

**Pronouns** The words that are used when referring to someone in place of their name. Examples of pronouns include: she/her/hers, he/him/his; and gender neutral ones such as: they/them/their, ze/hir/hirs.

**Queer** A reclaimed word that is often used as an umbrella term encompassing diverse sexualities and gender identities. It may also be used as an individual identity for someone who is multisexual - they are attracted to people of multiple or all genders opposed to being strictly gay or straight. Queer is used by many people, but it may not be the preferred term for everybody as it has a history of being used as an insult.

**Romantic orientation** A person's pattern of romantic attraction based on a person's gender.

**Sex** A person's sex refers to how someone's genitals, chromosomes, gonads, etc were developed when they were in the womb. People often confuse sex and gender as the same thing.

**Sexual orientation** A person's sexual identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are attracted to. Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different things.

**Tangata ira tane** A Māori term describing someone who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity.

**Takatāpui** Takatāpui is a traditional word that originally meant 'intimate friend of the same sex'. It has since been embraced to encompass all Māori who identify with diverse genders and sexualities such as whakawāhine, tangata ira tāne, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer.

**Trans** An umbrella term encompassing gender identities that are not cisgender, such as transgender, genderqueer, whakawāhine, etc. A trans individual may identify with any gender identity (not only male or female), and may or may not have medically transitioned. Not all gender diverse people will identify with the word trans.

**Transgender** A term used to describe someone whose gender is the opposite to that which they were assigned at birth.

**Transsexual** The term transsexual is similar to transgender, but is usually used to describe someone who has had gender reassignment surgery. This is an outdated term and the majority of trans youth would use the term 'transgender' instead, regardless of whether or not they have medically transitioned.

**Transition** Steps taken over time by trans people to live true to their gender identity. Transition may include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps, telling people in one's life, using a different name and new pronouns, dressing differently, changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents, hormone therapy, and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person.

**Transphobia** An irrational negative response to transgender and intersex people, as well as other gender identities. Transphobia often carries the assumption that gender is natural, rather than learned and conditioned.

**Trans man** A transgender person who was assigned female at birth but identifies as male.

**Trans woman** A transgender person who was assigned male at birth but identifies as female.

**Transfeminine** A term used to describe trans people who were assigned male at birth but identify with femininity to a greater extent than masculinity,

**Transmasculine** A term used to describe trans people who were assigned female at birth but identify with masculinity to a greater extent than femininity

**Whakawāhine, Hinehi, Hinehua** Some Māori terms describing someone who was assigned male at birth but has a female gender identity.

**InsideOUT would like to extend a huge thank you to the following people for their contributions to this resource, which could not be possible without their support!**

**Art and design**

Cover Art by Jaye Barclay  
<http://sonoko-arts.tumblr.com/>

Design by Siobhan McCarthy  
<http://behance.net/siobhanmccarthy>

**Writing and Editing**

Tabby Besley, Harold Coutts, Priscilla Penniket, Antica Lyn-Hill, Charlotte Sirvid, Georgia Coutts, Jaye Barclay, Annick Fenaughty, Rosie Sandiford, Duncan Matthews, Kathleen Quinlivan, Lorren Grabarek and Toni Duder.

**Facilitating Focus Groups**

Connor Mcleod, Alex Ker, Joris Kingsley.

And a huge thank you to all the young people who generously shared their experiences and ideas with us online and in focus groups with School's Out, Tranzform and Rainbow Collective.





Inside  UT Rainbow YOUTH

©Copyright 2016 InsideOUT and Rainbow Youth