

Position Statement

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI)¹

Jewish Care (Victoria) Inc proudly fulfils its mission of supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of the Jewish community of Victoria by providing excellent support and care for individuals and families. Our values, *chessed*, *mishpacha*, *derech eretz* and *tzedakah*, define who we are and underpin everything we do. They are also particular to the Jewish approach of creating a meaningful life and a strong, cohesive community.

The Board of Jewish Care seeks to demonstrate our commitment to these values by clearly stating Jewish Care's position on important issues that are contextual to the Jewish community's rich history or because it frames the way we will conduct ourselves and our engagement with members of the community.

Preface

Jewish Care acknowledges that within Australian society, there is embedded prejudice and discrimination against members of many minority groups based on gender, ethnicity, religion, cultural affiliation, level of ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Such discrimination creates marginalisation, isolation and vulnerabilities that affect the health and wellbeing of those being judged.

Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) communities often experience the negative effects of culturally entrenched attitudes and prejudices. Research identifies that discrimination, exclusion and prejudice are contributing factors to the higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide that are experienced within LGBTI populations compared with the broader populationⁱ.

According to Headspaceⁱⁱ, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, the ages between 12 and 25 years are considered to be a critical period for the development of identity, with questioning one's gender identity

חסד
chessed
kindness

משפחה
mishpacha
family

דרך אדע
derech eretz
respect

צדקה
tzedakah
charity

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and sexual preference being common. “Young people who are LGBTI face particular pressures in their relationships with family, peers and schools, which can lead to vulnerability, depression, homelessness and drug use in response to lack of acceptance and bullying.”

Position Statement

Jewish Care believes that no one should be excluded or discriminated because of their gender identity, sexual orientation or sexuality. Each member of our society has the right to feel safe from discrimination and to access health and welfare services that affirm their personal identity.

Jewish Care is committed to working together with individuals, carers and other organisations to eradicate discrimination and respond to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTI individuals. The organisation seeks to support community strategies that actively address hetero-sexismⁱⁱⁱ, and promote inclusive and supportive environments.

Jewish Care recognises that the LGBTI population is not an homogenous group, and that different approaches will be required to meet the varying and unique needs of each individual. The organisation acknowledges that the time of disclosure can be an extremely risky time for the individual and recognises the importance of accessible and responsive support options.

Jewish Care respects the sexual orientation and gender identity of our clients and residents and seeks to ensure they are provided with support and care that is free from all forms of discrimination.

Jewish Care is committed to providing its staff and volunteers with a healthy and safe work environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and occupational violence. As an EEO employer, Jewish Care Victoria expects all workers to abide by the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and all anti-discrimination legislation (eg. race, sex, disability)^{iv}.

Definitions

Lesbian – a homosexual or same sex attracted woman.

Gay – a homosexual or same sex attracted man.

Bisexual – sexually attracted to both men and women.

Transgender – when ones gender identity does not match ones assigned sex. That is, a male who experiences their gender identity to be female and vice versa. A person who is transgender may be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. Transgender is about identity not sexual orientation. Other related terms are transsexual or gender-queer.

Intersex – An intersex person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, they may have body parts of both male and female. Another term for intersex is hermaphrodite. Intersex anatomy isn't always obvious at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until they reach puberty or find they are infertile.

Hetero-sexism – a term comparable with sexism, anti-Semitism and racism, describing an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community. To differentiate it from *Homophobia* the following can be applied: homophobia is typically used to describe individual antigay attitudes and behaviours whereas hetero-sexism has referred to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalised oppression of non-heterosexual people

This Position Statement will be reviewed June 2016

ⁱ <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/resources?type=publications&cats=7841baa9-f371-61bc-846e-ff0000e9d3fc>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.headspace.org.au/media/10062/LGBTI%20Position%20Paper.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Please refer to Definitions below to clarify meaning of these terms

^{iv} Refer to Jewish Care's Code of Conduct