

Position Statement

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

Jewish Care has one clear vision: **Together, building and supporting a healthy, resilient, and inclusive Jewish community.** Our values are universal and enduring in nature, but are also particular to the Jewish approach to creating a meaningful life, and a strong, cohesive community.

Our foundational values define who we are and underpin everything we do. The values, **Respect** (*derech eretz*), **Community** (*kehilla*), **Inclusion** (*hachlala*) and **Social Responsibility** (*achrayoot chevratit*), are about people - they provide a moral compass for the way we respond to challenges and the decisions we make.

These values pervade every aspect Jewish Care, informing relationships between colleagues, staff and clients, and our organisation and the wider 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.

Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI+)¹ communities often experience the negative effects of culturally entrenched attitudes and prejudices.

Understanding the lived experience of LGBTI+ people is fundamental to cultural change and achieving inclusive practice. The diverse groups within the LGBTI+ community continue to be subject to discrimination from governments, institutions, and individuals which can lead to social marginalisation and reduced health and wellbeing².

דרך ארץ
derech eretz
respect

קהילה
kehilla
community

הכללה
hachlala
inclusion

אחריות חברתית
achrayoot chevratit
social responsibility

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¹ Please refer to definitions section below to clarify the meaning of these terms.

² Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV) 2017, *Promoting the health and wellbeing of LGBTI Victorians*, viewed 27 September 2017 <<http://www.glhv.org.au/>>.

Research identifies that discrimination, exclusion, and prejudice are all contributing factors to the higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide that is experienced within LGBTI+ population³.

Many older LGBTI+ people have lived through a period of intense homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and intersex discrimination, where they were subjected to ongoing acts of institutional and individual violence and abuse. LGBTI+ inclusive practice needs to consider and address the impacts of this history on the lives of LGBTI+ people today⁴.

Position Statement

Jewish Care believes that no one should be excluded, marginalised, or discriminated against based on gender diversity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Jewish Care is committed to working together with individuals, their support networks, and other organisations to implement LGBTI+ inclusive practice, and ensuring access and equity to services for people in the community who identify as LGBTI+.

The organisation seeks to support community strategies that actively address heteronormativity and heterosexism⁵, and promote culturally safe and acceptable services to the LGBTI+ community.

Jewish Care recognises that the LGBTI+ population is not a single homogenous group, that there is intersectionality within and across the LGBTI+ population and that these diversities can often be cross cut by other characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and/or age. Differing approaches will be required to meet the varying and unique needs of each individual or group.

The time of disclosure can be an extremely risky and/or difficult time for an individual and Jewish Care recognises the importance of how and when information is collected and stored, as well as accessible and responsive support options.

Jewish Care respects the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression of all people, including those we support and provide services to, our staff, our volunteers, and our visitors. We are committed to providing welcoming and accessible supports and services that are culturally safe, and free from prejudice and discrimination.

³ Rosenstreich, G 2013, *LGBTI People Mental Health and Suicide*, 2nd edn, National LGBTI Health Alliance, Sydney.

⁴ Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV) 2017, *Promoting the health and wellbeing of LGBTI Victorians*, viewed 27 September 2017 < <http://www.glhv.org.au/> >

⁵ Please refer to definitions below to clarify meaning of these terms.

Definitions

Cisgender – Describes a person whose gender conforms to the dominant social expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cultural safety/security – Cultural safety and security acknowledge and affirm cultural differences while at the same time addressing the power imbalances that exist between marginal and dominant groups. They involve addressing the risk to minority individuals and groups that this power imbalance can bring.

Disclosure – Also metaphorically known as ‘coming out’, this refers to the self-disclosure of a LGBTI+ population sexual orientation or of their gender identity. LGBTI+ populations are not required to disclose any information about their identity, and often do not, as past experience or present circumstances do not always assure the individual that they will be free from discrimination, harassment, judgement, or security of disclosure.

Gender Diverse – A broad term that encompasses a diversity of gender identities and gender expressions including: bigender, transgender, gender fluid, gender questioning and non-binary. Gender diverse refers to identities and expressions that reject the belief that gender is determined by the sex someone is assigned at birth.

Heteronormativity – The belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and cisgender and that other sexualities or gender identities are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society.

Heterosexism – Describes a social system built on heteronormative beliefs, values and practices, in which non-heteronormative sexualities and gender identities and people with inter sex variations are subject to systemic discrimination and abuse.

Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia – Fear, hatred or intolerance of people based on their gender identity or gender expression, sexual orientation, or perceived gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, that often leads to discriminatory behaviour or abuse. From 2013, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 has provided federal protection from both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, relationships status, gender identity, and/or intersex status. LGBTI+ people are also recognised as a special needs group in the Aged Care Act 1997.

Intersectionality – Understanding that identity, a person’s sense of ‘who they are’ is not singular but rather an effect of multiple, intersecting social categories.

Intersex – A person who is born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

LGBTI+ – Now recognised by the Commonwealth Government in federal legislation, policies, and programs, this acronym refers collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex. These five distinct but sometimes overlapping groupings are part, but not all, of what is meant when referring to ‘LGBTI’ communities/populations. Given the vast spectrum, and to acknowledge all diversity and expression, Jewish Care is adopting LGBTI+ to include any and all people that identify outside the five distinct groupings.

Non-binary – a model of the relationships between sex and gender that does not assume a radical division between **sex** (a person is either male or female but not both or neither) and **gender** (a person is masculine or feminine but not both or either). People who identify as non-binary may have sex characteristics that do not fit a binary model of male or female or may express their gender in ways that do not match the dominant social expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.

Sexual orientation – Describes a person’s sexual or emotional attraction to another person based on that other person’s sex and/or gender. The term is restricted in law to sex only and refers to attraction to persons of: the same sex (**gay** and **lesbian**); different sex (**heterosexual**); or persons of both the same and different sex (**bisexual**). **Pansexual** is a term that is used to describe someone who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to other people regardless of their sex, gender, or gender identity. **Asexuality** is having no, or very little, sexual or emotional attraction to another person.

Transgender/transwoman/transman/transperson – A person whose gender identity or expression is different from that assigned at birth.

This Position Statement was reviewed and approved by the CEO in August 2021.