



Mental Health  
Australia

# GENDER AFFIRMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH



## Who are trans and gender diverse people?

**Trans and/or gender diverse people** are those whose gender is different to the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Some trans and/or gender diverse people may position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being a woman, man or non-binary. For others, being transgender is an important part of their identity. Being trans or gender diverse is different to sexual orientation, and trans people might be gay, straight, bisexual or any other sexuality.

**Gender affirmation** describes the journey or process for a person, from their presumed or assigned legal sex to the gender with which they identify (whether binary or non-binary). The processes of gender affirmation may or may not be a major part of a trans and gender diverse person's life. It may be a short, well-defined period of life, or they may perceive it as an ongoing journey without a clearly defined or known endpoint. When trans and gender diverse people come to your health services, their gender identity may or may not be relevant to them in seeking care. Transition may be a journey that is ahead of them, something they are currently experiencing, or something in their past.

Mental Health Australia would like to thank and commend our member organisation LGBTIQ+ Health Australia for their ongoing advocacy supporting healthy lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex, queer and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities throughout Australia. This issue paper is just a snapshot of their great work in providing guidance to support gender affirming care for mental health. [www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au](http://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au)

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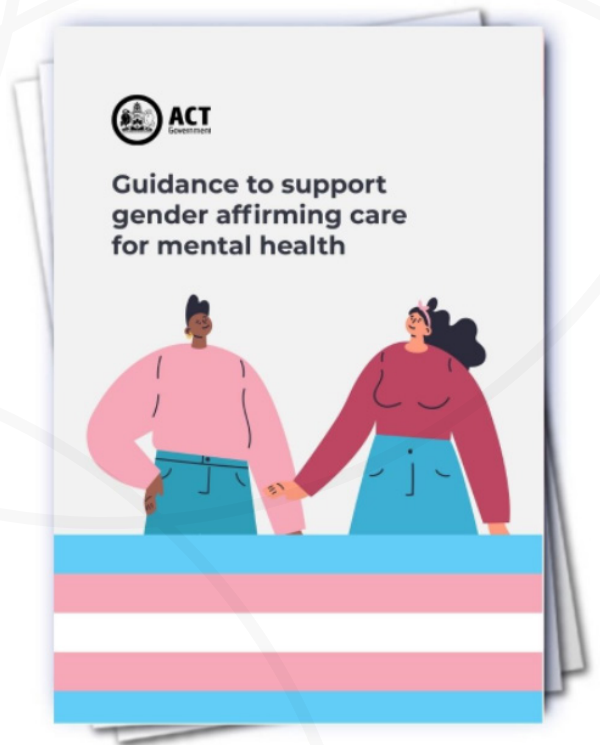
# THE FACTS

Around half the trans and gender diverse population will experience anxiety, depression or both at some point in their adult lives, and this is up to three quarters for young people. Unfortunately, many trans and/or gender diverse young people report self-harm or suicide attempts.

Trans and gender diverse people of all ages can experience stigma, discrimination, or violence that might impact on their mental health.

For example, trans and gender diverse adults are four times as likely to experience sexual violence or coercion than the general population.

Factsheet: Understanding Suicide Among Trans and Gender Diverse People  
[https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/understanding\\_suicide\\_among\\_tgd](https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/understanding_suicide_among_tgd)



People from all backgrounds may need mental health support at some point in their lives. Because of stigma and discrimination, trans and gender diverse people experiences high rates of poor mental health outcomes. When trans and gender diverse people seek mental health support from General Practitioners (GPs) or mental health specialists, it may be for similar needs that a cisgender person may require: however sometimes it will be associated with their specific experiences of gender, stigma, or discrimination.

## WHAT CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO?

Stigma and minority stress can deeply impact trans and gender diverse people. A non-judgmental stance toward gender diversity is critical to help to counteract the pervasive stigma faced by many trans and gender diverse people and provide a safe environment to explore gender identity, mental health issues and the broader impacts of stigma and discrimination.



Find out more at

[https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/guidance\\_to\\_support\\_gender\\_affirming\\_care\\_for\\_mental\\_health](https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/guidance_to_support_gender_affirming_care_for_mental_health)

LGBTIQ+ Mental Health and Suicide Prevention strategy

[https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/beyond\\_urgent\\_national\\_lgbtiq\\_mhsp\\_strategy](https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/beyond_urgent_national_lgbtiq_mhsp_strategy)

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