

We also need to make it clear that this type of discrimination is not accepted in our community. That we recognise that as a minority community, we will not perpetuate discrimination and prejudice based on race and culture, age, gender, disability or HIV/AIDS. That as a community of people who face prejudice based on our own sexuality, we will not inflict even more prejudice on our own community.

And as a community, we can take every opportunity we are presented with to make our community inclusive of these groups. We can make these groups a visibly included part of our community. This means making them visible in our media and our press, in our venues, and in our events and the places we socialise.

## What can I do to help the people who have come to me for support?

The best thing anyone can do when others come to them to talk about this is to listen respectfully and support their decision to speak to trained professionals if they or you think that the person has been seriously impacted on by these experiences.

It is also very useful to be aware of what formal and informal support services exist, and to be able to direct others to them. People need to feel that they are free to raise and discuss these experiences and that they can talk about what they are feeling without having the experience dismissed out of hand.

For more information about this campaign or to discuss having a Health Promotion Officer come to your service to provide staff training on sexuality issues, contact Shaun Staunton on [sstaunton@qahc.org.au](mailto:sstaunton@qahc.org.au)

**See [www.qahc.org.au/prejudice](http://www.qahc.org.au/prejudice) for more information about prejudice, this campaign and to learn about some of the campaign activities.**

During the 2007 Pride Festival QAHC is running a community campaign based on the theme of prejudice towards LGBT people based on ethnicity or culture, disability, gender, age or HIV/AIDS, by other LGBT people within the community. The campaign is called the “One Community Celebrating Diversity” campaign.

Over the last couple of months QAHC has been collecting the opinions, views and experiences of the community about this prejudice through an online survey, both to direct the campaign and to contribute to the pool of knowledge in the community about this often sensitive area.

QAHC has written this fact sheet to provide information to service providers, and to provide assistance in identifying which groups of people are at risk of experiencing this type of prejudice and how to assist them in working through these experiences.

## What is prejudice?

Prejudice means to pre-judge or to form an opinion about something before all the facts are gathered, or is an opinion or attitude about a group of people that is based upon a lack of understanding or incorrect information. If prejudice is an attitude, then discrimination is the manifestation of that prejudice and a stigma, or a ‘label’, is the result. In real world terms, discrimination is when a person is treated unfairly because they are a member of a particular group.

While there is still much debate about the causes of prejudice, the field of psychology argues that we frequently make false generalisations – not through malice or hatred, but just because, in many cases, it is easier to do so than to understand the real differences and complexities of our world.

Psychologists who work within this school of thought suggest that prejudice is a negative consequence of our natural tendency to categorise the world in order to make sense of it. Such stereotypes are not based on fact but rather on what we think is right from our limited experiences and upbringing to those groups.

Unfortunately, this campaign has found that even minority groups (such as the LGBT community) can hold and inflict prejudicial attitudes on other members of the same group.

## What effect is this prejudice having?

The negative psychological effects of discrimination within the LGBT community are probably best summed up in the following way: Anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, attempted suicide, and alcohol and drug dependency (effects which have all been linked with the experience of prejudice and discrimination).

Whether we are discussing the psychological pressures faced by the LGBT community living in a discriminatory and heterosexist society, or the effects of discrimination specifically from within the LGBT community towards other members, the psychological effects of discrimination are still the same.

Certainly, in QAHC’s examination of this issue through surveys, many people identified experiencing many of the negative outcomes commonly attributed to experiences of prejudice, such as suicidal thoughts and depression, low self esteem and anxiety.

## What can we do as individuals?

Whilst psychologists can help us explain and understand what prejudice is, only we can do something to actually reduce it. Each of us, if we so wish, have a responsibility to confront prejudice where we see it, and each of us can play a part in reducing the levels of discrimination in society. Where do we start?

We can start by asking questions about ourselves and quite literally creating a checklist to challenge our own values and views:

- 'Is what I think about this group or person true?'

- 'Do I have all the facts?'

- 'Am I over generalising?'

- 'Am I focusing on one or two negative aspects instead of considering the whole picture?'

- 'Am I labelling this group or person unfairly?'

Australian Transgender Support Association  
Queensland (ATSAQ) - (07) 3843 5024/  
trans.atsa@pacific.net.au

ATSAQ provides support to Queensland's transgender population and their families and friends, information on medical and health services for transgender people and addresses problems of legal recognition and human rights for transgender people

Changing Aspects –  
(07) 3286 9155/ 0417 738 941/  
knoble@iinet.net.au

Changing Aspects is a support organisation for all transgendered people including transsexual and transsexual. Changing Aspects is for transsexual people before, during and after transitioning.

Queensland Positive People (QPP)  
- 07 3013 5555 or 1800 636 241

Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Ltd  
(ECCQ) - 07 3844 9166/  
health@eccq.com.au

ECCQ is a voluntary, not-for-profit, community-based State peak organisation representing the interests of the people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds who are part of the broad social community of Queensland.

There are a number of more informal community and social support services. These include;

Men in the Middle – a six weeks support workshop for gay men.  
Contact QAHC for more information on 3017 1777

Out&About –  
An informal social group for men and women of all ages.  
Contact Ash Denley for more information.  
adenley@gahc.org.au

Certain prejudice can be a crime. For more information contact the Anti-Discrimination Commission - Qld on 1300 130 670

## What do we do now?

Seventy to eighty percent of the community believes that increased knowledge of and more visibility of these groups will help reduce prejudice and discrimination.

## Services

Surveys of the community show that the majority of LGBT people who have experienced prejudice from the LGBT community have spoken to their friends and family for support rather than accessing formal counselling and support services. Most people felt that they didn't need this level of support. However, some people do consider accessing formal support services.

These are some of the services which people can access, over the phone and in person, to talk about their experiences.

Men's Sexual Health Line - (for support)  
1800 155 141

Open Doors – A support service for young LGBT people and their family, including counselling and a social drop in service.  
Open Doors: (07) 3257 7660

GLWA  
(Gay and Lesbian Welfare Line  
(07) 3017 1717 1800 184 527 -  
7pm to 10pm everyday

Lifeline - (07) 3250 1900

Indigo House - (07) 3358 1311 860  
Brunswick Street New Farm 4005  
www.indigohouse.com.au

IndigoHouse is a private counselling, healthcare and wellbeing provider which specialises in working with the lesbian and gay community.

The most common outcome reported by people was disconnection from social networks and social scenes. This was

sometimes imposed (as a result of ridicule or exclusion by others), but was more often self-imposed. People felt that they had little choice but to withdraw.

This can often result in lack of vital support networks for LGBT people and avenues of social contact.

## What did we find out?

We have found that over 90 percent of the LGBT community believes that this discrimination and prejudice does occur as they have witnessed it themselves. The majority of the prejudice was directed towards the aged and the transgender community, with the lesbian community third. Over 50 percent of people taking part in the survey had directly experienced prejudice themselves.

## Where does it happen?

Most of the prejudice occurred in an LGBT nightclub, followed by in public.

## What are people experiencing?

People reported that the most common type of prejudice is ridicule by others towards a member of the group. This was followed by unintentional exclusion, such as a lack of imagery of the Asian community in the press.

## What did you do about it?

Most people who experienced this ignored it, or talked to their friends and family about it. Few people felt the need to access formal support services.

Indigo House - (07) 3358 1311 860  
Brunswick Street New Farm 4005  
www.indigohouse.com.au

IndigoHouse is a private counselling, healthcare and wellbeing provider which specialises in working with the lesbian and gay community.

Lifeline - (07) 3250 1900

Indigo House - (07) 3358 1311 860  
Brunswick Street New Farm 4005  
www.indigohouse.com.au

## What can we do as a community?

The community has told us that they want to talk about these experiences with their family and friends. As a community, we can be supportive of anybody who has experienced this type of prejudice.

See [www.gahc.org.au/prejudice](http://www.gahc.org.au/prejudice) to see further techniques to identify styles and some outcomes of dealing with prejudice