



## Lesbian Visibility Day Fact Sheet

#LesbianVisibilityWeek

#LVW21

#LwiththeT

Lesbian visibility is crucial to health and wellbeing. Many of us think of visibility as representation in the media and popular culture. Being seen – often quite literally – can foster identity affirmation and a sense of self-worth<sup>i</sup>. This isn't just the case for media representation but is equally important in the areas of health (physical and mental) and community services. It's crucial that lesbians are represented in these areas and experience 'affirmative visibility'<sup>ii</sup> in order to feel comfortable and safe accessing care, support and resources.

### Some statistics on lesbians

- 20.5% of LGBTIQ people aged 18 and over identified as lesbian in a survey of 6,835 participants<sup>iii</sup>
- 12% of LGBTQA+ people aged 14 to 21 identified as lesbian in a survey of 6,418 participants<sup>iv</sup>
- 2.7% of Australian adults identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual in the 2019 Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey<sup>v</sup>
- 63% of lesbian people aged 18 and over reported currently being in a relationship<sup>vi</sup>
- 19.1% of lesbian people aged 18 and over reported having ever experienced homelessness<sup>vii</sup>
- 80.2% of lesbian people aged 18 and over reported feeling accepted 'a lot' or 'always' at LGBTIQ venues/events, compared with 63.8% at work, 57.3% with family members and 40.1% accessing a health or support service<sup>viii</sup>
- 61.8% of LGBTIQ people aged 18 and over in Australia reported that they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that participating in Australia's LGBTIQ community is a positive thing for them<sup>ix</sup>



Image: The Gender Spectrum Collection

## **Health and wellbeing**

Lesbian people tend to have poorer health outcomes than the general population of women, particularly in relation to mental health. It's most effective when mainstream preventive health interventions are inclusive of, and targeted at, lesbian, bisexual and queer women<sup>x</sup>, both in mental health services and in physical screening and tests (including Cervical Screening Tests, STI testing, mammograms, bowel screens, etc.) Healthy relationships (and supporting those in unhealthy relationships) are also being promoted in LGBTIQ communities. Primary prevention campaigns are being developed to raise awareness of intimate partner violence in LGBTIQ relationships and to challenge the drivers of violence.

- 32.9% of lesbian people aged 18 and over rated their health as very good or excellent<sup>xi</sup>
- 37% of lesbian, bisexual and queer women (cis and trans) aged 16 to 71 were overdue for a Cervical Screening Test<sup>xii</sup>
- 42% of lesbian, bisexual and queer women (cis and trans) aged 16 to 71 reported that they had ever been in a relationship where a partner had physically or emotionally abused them<sup>xiii</sup>
- The average life satisfaction reported by people who identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual was relatively low (6.8 out of 10, while Australians rated their overall life satisfaction as 7.5) on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not at all satisfied' and 10 means 'completely satisfied'<sup>xiv</sup>
- 83.3% of lesbian people aged 14 to 21 reported experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress<sup>xv</sup>
- 49% of lesbian, bisexual and queer women (cis and trans) aged 16 to 71 had received a diagnosis of depression, an anxiety disorder or another mental health disorder<sup>xvi</sup>
- 39.1% of lesbian people aged 16 and over reported having been diagnosed or treated for any mental disorder in the past three years<sup>xvii</sup>
- 31% of lesbian people aged 16 and over reported having been diagnosed or treated for anxiety in the last three years<sup>xviii</sup>
- Lesbian people aged 16 and over averaged a K10 score of 19, indicating a moderate level of psychological distress<sup>xix</sup>
- 70% of lesbian, bisexual and queer women (cis and trans) aged 16 to 71 had accessed psychological services in the last five years<sup>xx</sup>
- 63.6% of LGBTQA+ people aged 14 to 21 in Australia who accessed an LGBTQA+-specific service the most recent time they accessed a professional support service reported that it had made the situation 'better/much better'<sup>xxi</sup>



Image: The Gender Spectrum Collection

## **Community connections**

Recent research into LGBTIQ communities suggest that community connection can protect against the effects of discrimination, stigma and rejection<sup>xxii</sup>. Part of Lesbian Visibility Day is about connecting with others – who may be peers on a counselling service or at a social event, or lesbians located all around the world who are celebrating the day. We have compiled resources to ensure that you can get in touch with the services you need, such as health, relationships, housing, socialising and community engagement (or all of the above).

### *For support and referrals:*

QLife (Australia-wide anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral): <https://qlife.org.au>

Switchboard (connecting the Victorian LGBTIQ+ community to the services needed):  
<https://www.switchboard.org.au>, <https://www.switchboard.org.au/rainbow-door>

ACON (initially formed to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in NSW, ACON remain committed to ending HIV for everyone in the community, and now work with a diverse range of people to ensure their voice and health needs are represented): <https://www.acon.org.au/what-we-are-here-for>

Thorne Harbour Health (initially formed as the Victorian AIDS Action Committee and later the Victorian Aids Council, THH serve the health needs of LGBTI communities to ensure gender, sex, and sexually diverse individuals are treated with dignity and can participate fully in society): <https://thorneharbour.org/lgbti-health>

Living Proud (WA's main LGBTI service, including a peer counselling phone line and community capacity building):  
<https://www.livingproud.org.au>

queerspace/Drummond St (VIC-based LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing support service with a focus on relationships, families, parenting and young people): <https://www.queerspace.org.au/our-services>

Trans Hub (digital information and resource platform for all trans and gender diverse people in NSW, allies and health providers): <https://www.transhub.org.au>

Say It Out Loud (Australia-wide service for those who have experienced sexual, domestic and/or family violence):  
<https://sayitoutloud.org.au/>

### *Lesbian-friendly health services:*

DocList (Australia-wide list of doctors and mental health professionals recommended by lesbian and bisexual women in Australia): <https://www.doclist.com.au>

Rainbow Health Victoria (a program that supports LGBTIQ health and wellbeing):  
<https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au>

### *For lesbian young people:*

Minus 18 (Australia-wide services for LGBTQIA+ youth, including life-affirming social inclusion, empowerment and advocacy): <https://www.minus18.org.au>

Twenty10, incorporating the gay & lesbian counselling service of NSW (providing specialised services for young people aged 12-25, including housing, mental health, counselling and support): <https://www.twenty10.org.au>

## **Happy Lesbian Visibility Day!**



## References

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- <sup>vi</sup> Hill et al., 2020.
- <sup>vii</sup> Hill et al., 2020.
- <sup>viii</sup> Hill et al., 2020.
- <sup>ix</sup> Hill et al., 2020.
- <sup>x</sup> Mooney-Somers, J., Deacon, RM., Anderst, A., Rybak, LSR., Akbany, AF., Philios, L., Keeffe, S., Price, K., & Parkhill, N. (2020). *Women in contact with the Sydney LGBTIQ communities: Report of the SWASH lesbian, bisexual and queer women's health survey 2016, 2018, 2020*. Sydney: Sydney Health Ethics, University of Sydney. ISBN: 978-1-74210-475-1
- <sup>xi</sup> Hill et al., 2020.
- <sup>xii</sup> Mooney-Somers, J. et al., 2020.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Mooney-Somers, J. et al., 2020.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2019). *General social survey: Summary of results 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/general-social-survey-summary-results-australia/latest-release#data-download>
- <sup>xv</sup> Hill et al., 2021.
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- <sup>xxi</sup> Hill et al., 2021.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Mooney-Somers, J. et al., 2020.