

Caring for diverse populations

A resource for GPs supporting the LGBTQIA+ community



Executive Summary

This resource provides practical guidance for GPs to deliver inclusive, affirming and trauma-informed care to LGBTQIA+ patients during Mental Health Treatment Plans (MHTPs), and supports culturally safe, person-centred approaches that respect diverse identities and experiences.

Resource inclusions

- Medicare item numbers for MHTPs and eating disorder plans
- Interpreter services information
- Referrals to LGBTQIA+ support services and mental health resources

Key objectives of this guide

- Helps GPs ask respectful, inclusive questions and navigate sensitive topics such as gender identity, sexuality, mental health and safety
- Developed by an expert working group with lived experience input and reviewed by RACGP and external organisations
- Intended as a flexible guide – clinical judgment and individualised care remain essential

Core principles

- **Trauma-informed care (TIC):** Emphasise safety, trust, empowerment, collaboration
- **Affirming practice:** Use chosen names and pronouns, avoid assumptions
- **Consent and confidentiality:** Explain clearly and respect privacy
- **Intersectionality:** Recognise overlapping identities and their health impacts

Practical guidance

- **Introductions and rapport building:** Share pronouns, ask about identity respectfully and offer choice of clinician if preferred
- **Physical and emotional health:** Explore sleep, energy, physical symptoms, emotional wellbeing and body image concerns
- **Eating disorders and body image:** LGBTQIA+ individuals have higher prevalence; use sensitive language and evidence-based approaches
- **Safety and suicide risk:** Conduct culturally safe risk assessments for harm from others and self-harm; prioritise crisis planning
- **Strengths and support networks:** Identify affirming relationships, safe spaces and coping strategies
- **Trauma disclosure:** Screen for PTSD symptoms without probing trauma details
- **Future care preferences:** Discuss goals, preferred practitioner characteristics and therapy expectations

Clinical context

- 74.5% of LGB+ people have experienced a mental disorder in their lifetime vs 41.7% of heterosexual people.
- Trans and gender-diverse youth report depression (74.6%), anxiety (72.2%) and suicide attempts (48.1%).