

A Guide for Gay Allyship



What is Gay?

The dictionary definition states:

“ Noun: a homosexual man. A person, especially a male, who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex or gender. ”

Historically

The sexual orientation meaning of the word “gay” has become so predominant that people hesitate to use the term in its original meaning of “merry, lively” and “bright or showy.” The word’s associated with sexuality is not new.

The word gay has had various associations with sexual conduct since the 17th century. A gay woman was a prostitute, a gay man was a womanizer, a gay house was a brothel.

This sexual word included gay men too, and gay as an adjective in the sexual meaning goes back to at least the late 1930s. After World War II, as social attitudes toward sexuality began to change, gay was applied openly by gay men to themselves, first as an adjective and later as a noun. It is no longer considered slang.

Today

Today, the noun often designates only gay men and is usually used as a collective plural: gays and lesbians.

How do gay men feel about this

Usage as a singular noun is usually perceived as insulting.

It has been argued that gay in reference to being “awkward, stupid, or bad” is independent of the sexual reference and therefore not homophobic. This argument is weakened by the fact that the sexual meaning has long been the dominant one, and thus permeates all usages of gay.

What are some of the issues that Gay men face?

Poor mental health

Gay men may be more susceptible to mental health problems than heterosexual men due to a range of factors, including discrimination and inequalities. Positively, there is a growing acceptance of the LGBT+ community in Europe in recent years. However, there is a clear need for greater evidence on how impactful policies and practices can be effectively implemented to combat inequalities and disadvantages for the LGBT+ community.

Evidence suggests men identifying as gay are at higher risk of experiencing poor mental health.

Members of the gay community are more likely to experience a range of mental health problems such as:

- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-harm
- Alcohol and substance misuse.

The higher prevalence of mental ill health among members of the gay community can be attributed to a range of factors such as discrimination, isolation and homophobia. This can lead to members of the gay community feeling dissatisfied with health services, with mental health services most often perceived to be discriminatory.

Greater risk of hate crime

Members of the LGBT+ community are at a greater risk of experiencing hate crime compared to heterosexual people, with certain LGBT+ groups found to be at particular risk, including gay men, young people and those identifying as LGBT+ from black and ethnic minority groups.

40%

LGBT+ people will experience significant

Mental Health problems

compared to around 25% of the whole population

LGBT+ people are

2 x

as likely to have attempted suicide than the population as a whole

Source: [Stonewall](#)

Lower ratings in quality of life metrics

Ratings in the Office of National Statistics quality of life metrics in 2015 (on life satisfaction, happiness and perception that things they do are worthwhile) are lower for members of the LGB community than for heterosexual people.

Myth Busting

Gay men are 'feminine' and lesbian women are 'butch'

The association between camp, feminine qualities in men and male homosexuality is deeply ingrained. Consequently, camp/feminine men are often automatically categorized as gay, visible in a way that other, more masculine, 'straight-acting' gay men are not.

#MyFemmeSelf is Hornet's (Hornet.com - gay social network) new campaign to fight toxic masculinity in the gay community. Problematic statements like "no fems," "no queens" or "masc4masc" frequently used on dating apps only demonstrate the need to challenge the prejudice faced by camp, feminine gay men from members of their own community.

Same-sex couples have 'male' and 'female' roles

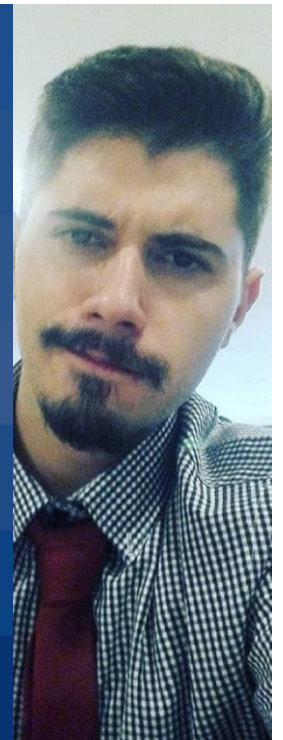
Same sex relationships come in different shapes and sizes. Some people may display attributes or take on responsibilities typically associated with what it means to be 'male' or 'female' but others won't. Even then, there's a longer conversation to be had around the fact that those associations are based on sexist stereotypes, rather than what makes someone 'male' or 'female'.

On the flipside, people's assumptions that same sex couples don't form families is also incorrect. There's a whole host of ways for gay couples to have children, whether that's donor insemination and fertility treatment, adoption, fostering, or surrogacy.



“ It took me a long time to be open about my sexuality in my personal life and being open about it in the workplace was always a concern. Thanks to Fujitsu inclusion and diversity, I always feel respected, integrated and confident that you can achieve success no matter who you are. Our diversity makes us a stronger team. ”

Adílio Peixoto



Multiple 'Coming Out'

Gay men like other LGBT+ people experience 'coming out' as something that LGBT+ people have to do again and again, if they choose to do so. Whether starting a new job, meeting new neighbors, making new friends, coming into contact with old friends or meeting up with distant relatives, it's a decision gay men have to make constantly.

Only Young people 'Come Out'

There's also a misconception that people usually come out at a young age. Realizing you're LGBT+, and feeling comfortable enough to tell others, can happen at any stage of life, whether you're 15, 55 or 95 years old.

We all act like the gay men you see on telly

Unfortunately, LGBT+ representation is often white, young, cisgender and of non-faith background. That leaves out a lot of people who are part of the gay community. Gay people talk about 'visibility' frequently, that is because it's vital. Have you heard the phrase, 'you can't be what you can't see?' Without visible role models, it can be really hard to understand and embrace your own identity.

Don't forget that gay men are present across all communities within society, this means there are:

- Senior citizens
- People of different ethnicities
- People with disabilities
- People of faith
- Young people

That might sound obvious, but often the specific experiences of those groups are overlooked, which in part is because gay representation is not diverse enough.

A phase you're going through

The last thing a person needs after opening up about their sexuality is to have this trivialized as a phase. It's not likely that a person just woke up and thought, "You know what, I think I'll try being gay". You may well be one of the first people, the person sharing has had the confidence to tell; so it's a privilege they are telling you - appreciate this!

Do not change the focus to be about your own feelings, but by giving positive feedback and not making assumptions, support them by asking questions about how they feel.



Homophobia

Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward gay men. It has been defined as contempt, prejudice, aversion, hatred or antipathy, which may be based on irrational fear and ignorance, and is often related to traditional/religious beliefs.

Here are a few ways that society erases gay identity and experiences:

Outing

This is when someone shares your story without your consent and this makes the information outside of your control. Each person's story is theirs to share when they choose.

Association with perversion

Homosexuality in men is often associated with forms of perversions. This is thought to be because sexuality is based on the sexual dominance of men over women.

If a man is sexually attracted to men it's thought to mean he wants to dominate, or be dominated, by another man. This is seen as abnormal but can also lead to sexual violence towards men – with over twice as many gay men experiencing sexual violence compared to heterosexual men. Source: [Stonewall](#)

There is also less chance of gay men reporting an abusive relationship compared to heterosexual men.



What can I do?

See it

Be self confident in recognizing when inappropriate behavior / actions / conversations are taking place.

Say it

Being confident in ones self to "call out" the inappropriate behavior / actions / conversations. This can be at the time that it is taking place or after the event (whatever is appropriate, in your judgement). If the inappropriate behavior / actions / conversations are taking place in a public environment NEVER put yourself in any danger – **Seek Assistance**.

Sort it

By seeing the inappropriate behavior/ actions / conversations and calling it out – Report it now through the correct channels.

Here's a great start to find out more...

Fujitsu Internal Links

Be a better [Gay Ally](#)
Sign our [Fujitsu Pride Pledge](#)

Gay in the Workplace

Myths about [coming out in the workplace](#)
Myths about coming out in the workplace [video](#)

Help and Support

Internal [Helplines](#)

External Helplines:

[AKT](#) supporting young LGBT+ people between 16 and 25 years old.

[LGBT Foundation](#) LGBT Foundation support the needs of the diverse range of people who identify as LGBT

[Imaan](#) the UK's leading LGBTQ Muslim charity.

[Stonewall](#) and [LGBT Consortium](#) services that enable you to find LGBT mental health services in your local area.

Learning and Myth-Busting

Gay Myths Busted: [Setting the Record Straight](#)

Coming Out in the [Workplace](#)

Challenging Homophobia in the Workplace: [video](#) and [article](#)

Opinion Articles

Internal [Helplines](#)

External [Helplines](#)





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We respect each individual's human rights and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, social status, family origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, nor will we commit other violations of human rights. Such discrimination will not be tolerated.

We will be resolute in upholding human rights in everything we do and will not tolerate such discrimination in others. Ignorance and inaction do not constitute excuses for discrimination. We will make every endeavour to be fully aware of human rights issues and foster respect and equality for all.

We seek through our actions to uphold human rights, ensuring that our organization is well respected by society.

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