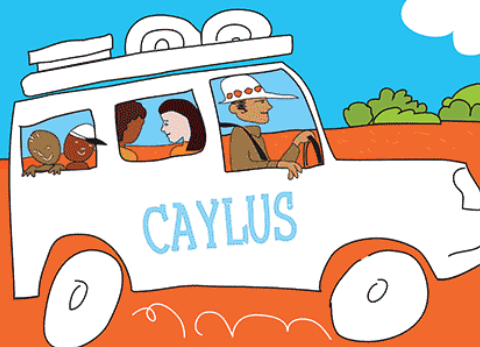


Central Australian Youth Link-Up Service

CAYLUS



Tangentyere Council

## Blue Book Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+

This Blue Book chapter is informed by Central Australian local advocates and Walkern Katatdjin Rainbow knowledge

Walkern Katatdjin  
Rainbow Knowledge



Rainbow Knowledge is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ researchers, Aboriginal researchers, and LGBTQA+ researchers.

Rainbow Knowledge is based in the Youth Mental Health Team, Telethon Kids Institute; Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre, Murdoch University; and Kurongkurl Katitjin, Edith Cowan University.

## Central Australia Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+

In the coming pages you will find one of the resources developed by [Walkern Katatdjin Rainbow knowledge](#). You will find lots of useful info on their website, so please have a good look at everything they have available. CAYLUS has permission to share these resources in the body of this chapter.

### Central Australia Regional Contact

**Teddy McDiarmid 0413 570 814**

Connections to Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+ advocacy, support and health services in Central Australia. Lived experience, remote community youth worker and community development worker.

### A few extra notes for Youth workers

Developing good relationships with young people and families means youth workers become accessible, and that's when we can offer real support. Sometimes this support can look like a well timed toasted sandwich and drink for a hungry kid... simple, quick and tangible support. Sometimes support is more complex, and requires sensitivity and a strong knowledge of the context and the history of the individual, the family, the community, the country. This does not mean don't get involved, but tread carefully, inform yourself, seek guidance and listen.

Sistergirl and Brotherboy are the Central Australian Aboriginal appointed terms for trans/gender diverse people.

If a young Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+ person is getting bullied, one way youth programs can offer safe spaces is by providing activities with select groups where the person is surrounded by friends and family who are not bullies. Pick up the young person with the peers they are with and get them to choose who to collect for a bush trip that day. If for example a young sistergirl is always hanging out with girls, be mindful of how they include themselves and how they are included by others for different activities. Please do not exclude them or question their involvement. If it is a culturally sensitive activity (like traditional dancing, a very specific local/individual response is required, for support contact the regional contact mentioned above.) The bush trip doesn't have to be epic, it can be ten minutes out of town and a movie making session with the group, or sitting around a fire with food.

Be careful to check any photos/slideshows/movies made as part of youth program, ensuring the young Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+ person is represented with dignity and respect. One example, a couple of teens might be making a slideshow of recent photos to show at movie night, and they may alternate images of two people, ie. communicating a connection - so basically just observe and listen to any signs of bullying when media is created.

Generally move away from binarism, activities that may traditionally be made up of male or female participants, for example cooking for disco, or football, give everyone a chance to be take part, don't reinforce those traditional gender roles.

Note to cis-gender straight folk - Essential to being inclusive and making safe spaces it to address language, and not to assume anyone is cis-gender or straight. This helps shape the way we speak about ourselves, our families and others, and it is essential for developing a safe space for further support.

Note to Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+ Youth workers, if you need some support in navigating remote community life, get in touch with the Central Australian Regional contact Teddy McDiarmid.

# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender

A young person's sexuality and gender is a large part of their social emotional wellbeing (SEWB). Friends and family members play an important role in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to explore and discuss their sexuality and gender identity. You might feel shame, unprepared, or worried about saying the wrong thing but approaching the topic with young people can help normalise LGBTQIA+ people in your community and takes the pressure off of young people to start the yarn themselves, (which can be a very scary task). No matter how much you know about LGBTQIA+ identities, showing that you are open to talking about sexuality and gender identity with your friends and/or family members can help young LGBTQIA+ mob feel accepted and validated in their identity.

The purpose of this resource is to provide parents, family members and friends of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ Young People with tips on how to talk about sexual and gender diversity. The information included in this resource was adapted from the 'Yarning Quiet Ways' resource developed by the WA Department of Health in partnership with Aboriginal parents (<https://gdhr.wa.gov.au/web/yarning-quiet-ways>), as well as findings from the Walkern Katatdjin: Rainbow Knowledge project ([www.rainbowknowledge.org](http://www.rainbowknowledge.org)) and Trans Pathways project (<https://www.telethonkids.org.au/projects/trans-pathways/>).



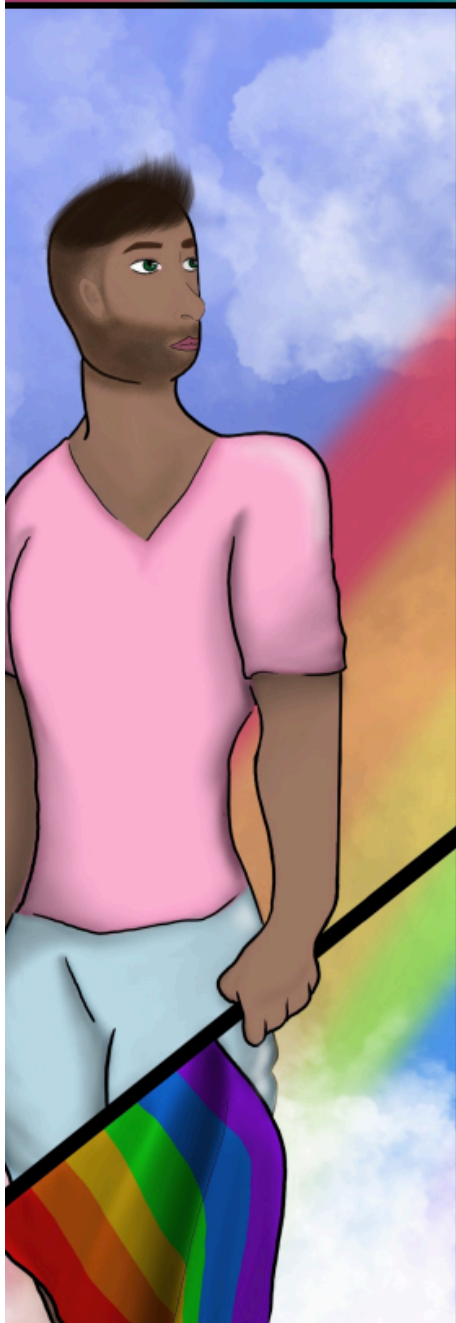
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# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender



## Sexuality VS Gender

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of being a man, woman, somewhere in between or something else altogether. Gender identity comes from within and is a reflection of how a person sees themselves within their mind, heart and spirit.

Sex assigned at birth (Also known as biological sex) is different to gender identity. Sex refers to the classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on a combination of anatomy (private parts), hormones (Estragon, testosterone) and DNA. The term "Sex assigned at birth" is used in place of "biological sex" to acknowledge some people's 'biological sex' doesn't always align with their gender identity.

Sexuality is a person's identity in relation to the gender or genders they are romantically, emotionally or sexually attracted to. A young person doesn't need to have experience of being attracted to certain gender identities in order to identify what their sexuality is. Like gender identity, sexual identity comes from how a person feels within their mind, heart and spirit.

In summary, gender is who you go to bed **as** and sexuality is who you go to bed **with**.

*"It was just a part of me, if you wanna say - I don't know. It sounds a bit cheesy but I suppose so. There was never one event that triggered it..."(Walkern Katatdjin study participant).*

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# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender

## Things to know when yarning about sexuality and gender with young mob.

- Talking about sexuality doesn't always mean talking about sex. Sexuality is about who a young person is attracted to romantically and sexually, not necessarily who they have sex with.
- Similar to yarning about sexuality and gender development with heterosexual and cisgender young people, it is important to “yarn early and yarn often” (<https://gdhr.wa.gov.au/web/yarning-quiet-ways>) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ young people about gender and sexuality.
- Talking about gender and sexual diversity can have a positive impact on a young person's SEWB (e.g., feeling like they are being their true self). It can also help young people feel comfortable and proud expressing their gender and sexual identities. While it might appear to make some people feel a bit shame, showing that you are open to having a chat about sexuality and gender is a positive thing.
- Using the word ‘queer’ can be offensive to some LGBTQA+ people and their family members, as this word has historically been used as an insult and is linked to feelings of hurt. However, some members of the LGBTQA+ community have reclaimed this word and use it to describe themselves. Only use the word queer when it is how a person prefers to describe themselves.
- Other aspects of talking about sexuality include: healthy relationships with friends, family and romantic partners, ‘coming out’, how sexuality can change over time, and how comfortable a young person might feel in their family and community.
- Some people experience romantic attraction without any sexual attraction (sometimes referred to as asexual) or never experience romantic attraction (sometimes referred to as aromantic) (<https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-topics/sexual-health/sexuality/>). This is part of natural spectrum of sexuality.



# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender

## What to do when a young person shares with you that they are LGBTQA+

There are several things you can do if a young person 'comes out' to you or brings up questions about their sexual or gender identity.

### These include:

- Thank them for sharing this with you.
- Reassure them they have agency over who they choose to share this information with and if they would like it to remain confidential, that is something that you will respect.
- If someone comes out as trans, check what name/pronouns feel right to them and try your best to use these when referring to them. It's also good to check who they are comfortable with you using these around, especially if there are people they have not yet come out to.

### Check in with how things are going and ask:

- How are they feeling about themselves? Do they feel strong in their sense of self?
- Can they express themselves the way they want to?
- Are other people's response to their sexuality/gender impacting their relationship with them?
- Do they have accepting friends?
- How things are going at school?

### Explore what support they need.

- Offer to go to LGBTQIA+ events with them or watch movies and TV shows that include LGBTQIA+ characters together.
- Do they need help coming out to other members of the family/ their friends group?
- Remind the young person that you are there to support them.

***"I think family, number one, number one, absolutely... it's really important that family is there to support you, and it's just sad that some people don't understand what that person is going through and they want support from family. And with work and your health and that, that will fall into play once you have the support of family... at the end of the day, my family accepts me, I'm happy." (Walkern Katatdjinn study participant).***



# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender

## What to do when a young person shares with you that they are LGBTQA+

### General tips.

- Reflect the language they use to talk about themselves, e.g., if they say that they are gay, continue to use the word 'gay' when talking about them, instead of substituting in other words to like 'homosexual', 'queer', or 'LGBT'.
- It is helpful to discuss things that are specific to being LGBTQA+, but young people do not want you to treat them differently when you find out that they are LGBTQA+. Be aware of your attitude towards the young person, to make sure that it does not change after they come out to you.

## How to start conversations about sexuality and gender

You don't need to know a young person's sexual or gender identity to be able to show signs of acceptance. You can show your support by watching TV shows, videos, and articles that feature Aboriginal LGBTQA+ people or LGBTQA+ issues. You can also use these videos and resources as an ice-breaker to start yarning about sexuality and gender with your mob.

### Some content you might want to watch include:

(These videos can be found on YouTube)

- Supporting our LGBTIQ Youth - Young Deadly Free
- Brotherboys Yarnin' Up - Trans Health Australia
- Brotherboy: - Multiculture Vic
- Taz's Story - Headspace Headspace Australia
- Taz's Story: LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal Communities - Headspace Australia
- Simone and Rosalina's story - Beyond Blue Official
- Open Doors: Perspectives on Working with LGBTIQAP+ Sistergirl & Brotherboy Young People - Dovetail QLD

### Articles and webpages:

- ATSI Rainbow Archive: <https://indigblackgold.wordpress.com/>
- Journey of love, acceptance: The Kimberley Echo





# Yarning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Young People about Sexuality and Gender

## Starting conversations about sexuality and gender

You might feel worried about saying the wrong thing and causing offense – it's ok to make mistakes sometimes! It helps if your intention is good, and you take a generally curious and non-judgemental stance.

***“When I grew up this wasn't something that people talked about so I feel like I have a lot to learn.” (Yarning Quiet Ways, p.33).***

- If you are going to talk about gender differences, keep an open mind as to what gender identity means to the individual young person you are talking to.
- Pay attention to what your non-verbal responses are showing. Are you unconsciously reacting negatively to hearing about diverse gender or sexuality?
- Gender and sexuality are fluid across the lifespan. It is okay if young people identify a certain way at one point in time and then change their 'label' (how they identify). This does not take away from the legitimacy of how they identified then or now.
- Some young people know they are LGBTQA+ from a very young age and others might not know they are LGBTQA+ until they are much older. It is okay to give young people time to explore their sexual or gender identity. This is not the same as thinking that being LGBTQA+ is 'just a phase'. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ young people in the Walkern Katatdjin study told us that they want to be accepted for their true and authentic self at any point in time.



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## Links

Here are some links to LGBTIQ+ advocacy groups in the Top End and interstate.



### [Black Rainbow](#)

Black Rainbow is a national volunteer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+SB social enterprise to pursue positive health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+SB community located in the Top End capital, Darwin, Northern Territory.



### [NTAHC](#)

NTAHC is a peak non-government organisation operating across the Northern Territory, with a purpose and vision, to eliminate the transmission of Blood Borne Viruses through support, advocacy and ending stigma and discrimination. With the support of its stakeholders, community members and board of directors NTAHC is working towards a world that strengthens and sustains people affected by blood borne viruses.



### [BLAQ](#)

BlaQ is the peak organisation for Aboriginal Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + Sistergirl and Brotherboy (LGBTQ+SB) Peoples and Communities in NSW.



Koorie [Resource Guide](#)

## Helplines

### Central Australia Regional Contact

#### Teddy McDiarmid 0413 570 814

Connections to Sistergirl Brotherboy LGBTIQAP+ advocacy, support and health services in Central Australia. Lived experience, remote community youth worker and community development worker.

### Northern Territory

#### Aboriginal Medical Services Alliances Northern Territory

<https://www.amsant.org.au/nt-map/>

#### NT Aids and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)

<https://www.ntahc.org.au/lgbti-living-well>

Darwin: (8944 7777)

Alice Springs: (8944 7700)

#### Pandanus Medical Centre

Darwin: [www.pandanusmedicalnt.com.au](http://www.pandanusmedicalnt.com.au)

#### Northside Health NT:

##### LGBTI Specialist Clinic:

Darwin: Visiting doctors specialising in LGBTI health provide a 3-day clinic on a monthly basis. [www.northsidehealthnt.com.au](http://www.northsidehealthnt.com.au)

(08 7999 7448)



#### Brother to Brother

National, phone service

24-hour support line for Aboriginal men who need someone to talk to about relationship issues, family violence, parenting, drug and alcohol issues or other reasons.

This line is staffed by Aboriginal men, including Elders, who have lived experience in the issues that the line offers support for.

**National helplines** see [here](#)