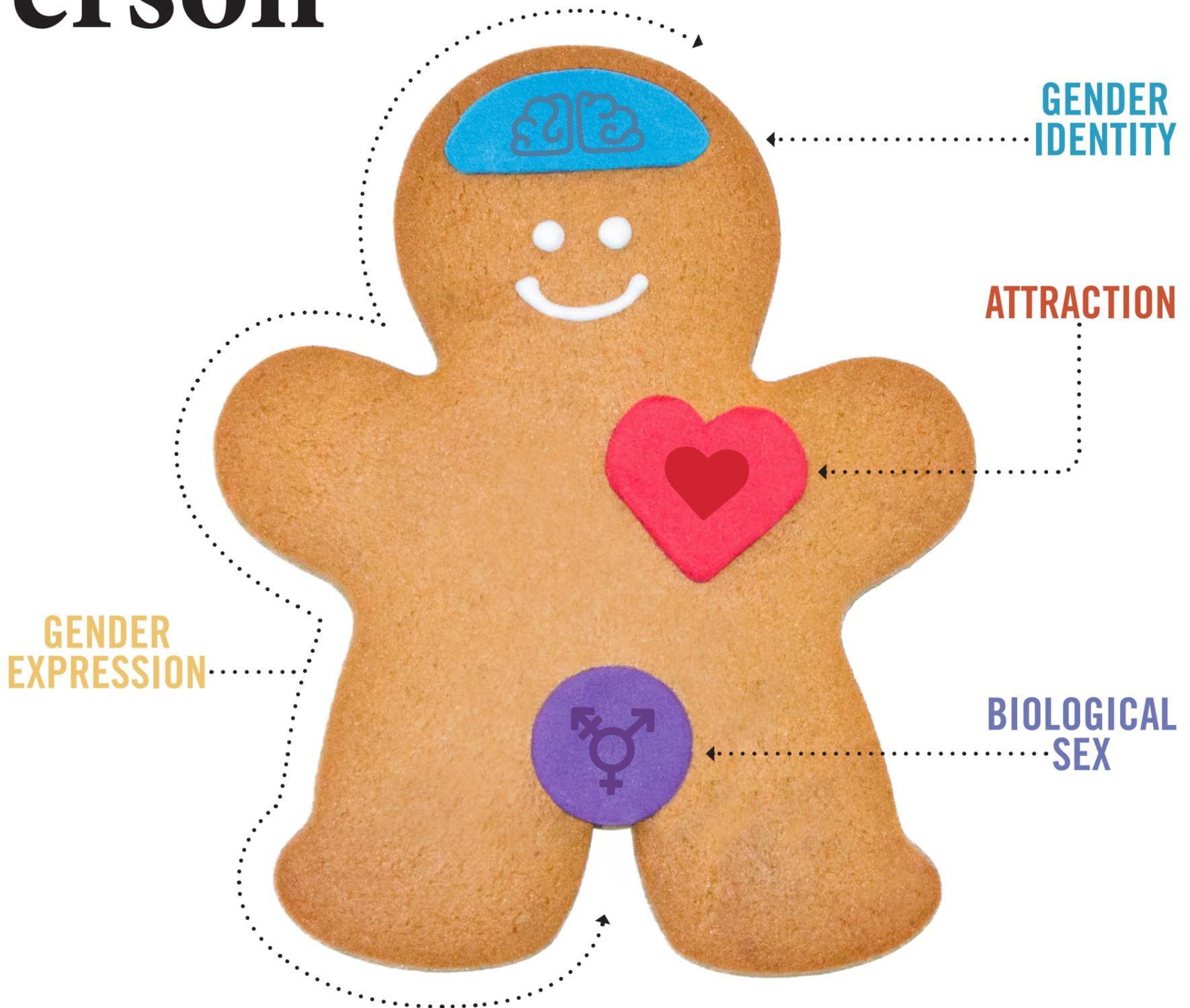


The Genderbread Person

STREAT

Our vision is for young people to belong, and be thriving with a healthy self, home and job.



Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that.

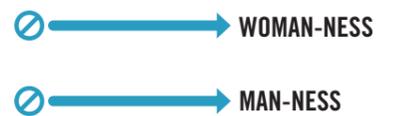
GENDER EXPRESSION

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.



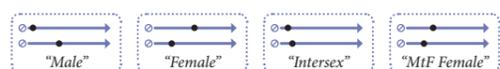
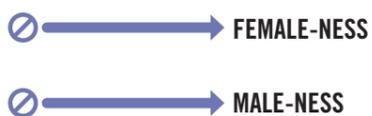
GENDER IDENTITY

How you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.



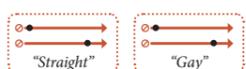
BIOLOGICAL SEX

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes etc.



ATTRACTION (ROMANTIC)

Romantic attraction
An emotional response that results in a desire for a romantic relationship with a person.



ATTRACTION (SEXUAL)

Sexual attraction
An emotional response that results in a desire for sexual contact with a person.



Dear You,

STREAT opened its doors—and arms—to its first young people in 2010. And since then hundreds of young people have come to us seeking our help.

Tragically, up to 1 in every 5 young people in each class at STREAT has been excluded, bullied or discriminated against because they identify as LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning). And this discrimination has devastating effects on their young lives—increased mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, family conflict, homelessness, verbal and physical abuse, unemployment, bullying, suicidal ideation and self-harm. These issues have arisen not because they're LGBTIQ, but because the people around them lacked understanding and empathy which directly or indirectly lead to exclusion, bullying and harm. *Again.*

We know it's easy to fear the things we don't understand. And most of us don't really grapple with an issue until it's affecting someone close to us. Like the person we see every day on the tram. Or in our street. Or at work. Or at home. *Or in the mirror.*

STREAT is often the first place a young person feels safe and accepted enough to 'come out' and tell us who they really are. Sometimes they tentatively whisper it. Sometimes they can't even say the words but write them down for us. Sometimes they might just show us the self-harm scars on their arms, hoping desperately that we'll understand. Often it will take many months—or even years—of walking alongside a young person until they trust that they won't be hurt.

We dream of the day when a young person growing up in Australia NEVER has to 'come out', because they've always been seen for who they fully are, they've always been loved for it, and they've always felt a deep sense of belonging. They're not trans. Or gay. Or queer. *They're just human.*

Big love,
The STREAT Team

FACTS WE CAN'T STOMACH

Tragically, LGBTIQ young people are at increased risk of mental ill-health, experience higher levels of psychological distress, have self-harmed more frequently and have considered or attempted suicide more frequently. The recently released *Trans Pathways study* undertaken by the Telethon Kids Institute (2017) showed that of their trans research participants:

- 48% have attempted suicide
- 80% have self-harmed
- 75% have been diagnosed with depression
- 72% have been diagnosed with anxiety
- 25% have been physically abused by family
- 22% have experienced homelessness
- 42% have experienced employment issues
- 74% have experienced bullying
- 94% have experienced body dysphoria
- 60% have felt isolated from services

How you can help

It could be easy to assume that if you're not queer yourself, then this issue doesn't concern you. But there are about the same number of people who identify as queer as there are people who are left-handed. In short, there will be people in your family, people in your workplace and people in your community who are queer. So how you speak and act about this issue affects people you love. And how we collectively speak and act determines how much equality, fairness, acceptance and mutual respect we ALL experience in our country and ultimately the world we live in.

Here's a few ideas:

GET EDUCATED AND SHARE WHAT YOU LEARN

Learn more by reading, by having respectful conversations, by really listening, by grappling with the issues with others, by being open to having your opinions changed.

CONFRONT YOUR PREJUDICES

Your background, personal experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context could be impacting your decisions and actions without you even realizing it. You can try the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) at implicit.harvard.edu (The results might make you squirm but you'll be a far better human for doing it!).

MAKE YOUR SPACES INVITING

A simple rainbow flag sticker on a door or window at home, school or work will signal that it's a safe and accepting place for queer people to be. Ensure that in addition to the standard male and female toilets, you also have toilets that are ungendered.

BE A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY MEMBER

With about 10% of the population identifying as queer, almost certainly someone in your family or extended family will be queer. If you're a parent, start the conversations with your kids about these issues early. According to the *Trans Pathways study* (2017) children who began identifying as trans, first did so at an average age of eleven. Having a supportive family is the most critical protective factor for a young person coming out. Also ask the school what they're doing to support queer youth. It's also good to encourage the school library to get some resources and books on the topic.

BE A GREAT WORKMATE

Make your workplace equal for everyone. Check out the HR policies your company has. Are they queer friendly? Do the forms you use in your workplace only ask people if they're male or female? Do queer parents get the same parental leave options? Will your queer workmate also have their partner asked to the work social event? Ask a transperson what preferred pronouns and name they'd like to be known by, and then work to make sure this is respected across the whole team. And if you make a mistake, rather than hoping they didn't hear it, simply apologise and endeavour to use the right one next time. The apology will mean a lot because it means you're trying and that you care about how they feel.

BE A ROLE MODEL

You don't just have to be queer and 'out' to be a great role model. We also need a world full of great allies who are role models to others.

GET INVOLVED IN ADVOCACY OR ACTIVISM

If you have a queer friend, support them at a rally or queer march. For example, you could march as part of your local PFLAG (Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbian And Gays and all queer people) float at a pride march. Or maybe volunteer at an event.

HELP CHANGE STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES WITH YOUR VOTE

Societal attitudes are influenced by the government and the policies and laws they make. Lobby your local politicians to be supportive in all areas (legislation, education and research about the issues, funding of service providers that are supporting queer people). So check out the policies of the local candidates in your next local, state or federal election. And if your preferred candidate is silent on the issue, engage with them and make it clear to them that this issue matters to you as a voter.

DON'T TREAT QUEER PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE AS A NOVELTY

Most queer people can spot pretty quickly when they're 'token' and have been invited to something because they're queer. And it's never OK to introduce your queer friends to others this way.

SEEK OUT AND SUPPORT GOOD SERVICES

Most support services rely heavily on volunteers, donations and fundraising, so help wherever you can.

SPEAK UP

When you see someone being discriminated against, don't just be a by-stander, but speak up. Sometimes it might not be physically safe to do so, but ensure that the queer person knows they have your support. This also includes speaking up when the media are being hurtful. When you hear anti-LGBTIQ comments and jokes that are hurtful, make it clear that you're not OK with this. The 1700's quote from Edmund Burke still rings true, "All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men [or people] to do nothing."

SAY SORRY AND RECONCILE

If you've hurt someone—either accidentally or deliberately—have the courage to say sorry. Don't live with regrets or wait until it's too late and they've gone from your life.

ASK HOW ELSE YOU CAN HELP

Most queer people have spent years being discriminated against—and unfortunately often by those closest to them—so their first response may well be to burst into tears. They'll be incredibly grateful for your offer and will feel very loved and supported.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

- Qlife LGBTIQ: 1800 184 527
[www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- Headspace: 1800 650 890

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www.STREAT.com.au / [f](https://www.facebook.com/STREATMelbourne) [i](https://www.instagram.com/STREATMelbourne) [t](https://www.tiktok.com/@STREATMelbourne) @STREATMelbourne
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