

# Coming out

at **dentsu**



**dentsu**



**PRIDE**



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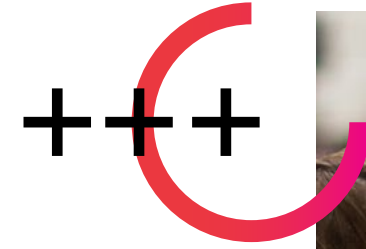
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01.

# Coming out

what is it all about?

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## What is “coming out”?

Coming out is the process of telling people something about yourself that is not immediately obvious. For an LGBTQ+ person this is the self-disclosure of their **sexual orientation** or **gender identity**.

## Why is it a thing?

For all LGBTQ+ people, identity is an aspect of their personal life, history and experience which has shaped who they are today. For some, this is a bigger and more important part in their present than others and the knowledge that the way people treat them will differ depending on how much of their identity they share leads to the decision to be open being one which comes with consideration and risk.

Coming out is a highly personal moment. It is more difficult for some than others. Hiding who you are can be a draining experience and can affect many aspects of a person's life. Coming out allows people to be honest about who they are.



The society we live in is cis- and hetero-normative, meaning that the assumed identity of people is that their gender matches the one they were assigned at birth, and that they are heterosexual (straight). This means that anyone who identifies outside of these groups must actively state their identity to be seen and given support.

## Who decides when people come out?

This decision **HAS** to be up to the person themselves. It is their decision – and their decision alone. The decision to come out belongs to the individual alone and no-one should be outed against their consent or pressured into sharing information about their identity if they would prefer not to. Bear in mind someone may be out in one part of their life but not in others. Some people will be out at work but not with friends and family.

## What is coming out NOT?

Coming out is not something a person does once. Many films, books and other media give the impression that coming out is a big momentous event which transforms a person's life moving forward – and for some, it can be – but the reality for most people is that every new interaction represents a choice: “Do I share my authentic self with this person/group or would it be safer to allow default assumptions?”.

Every individual's coming out experience is different and there's no right or wrong way to do it, if you decide to at all!

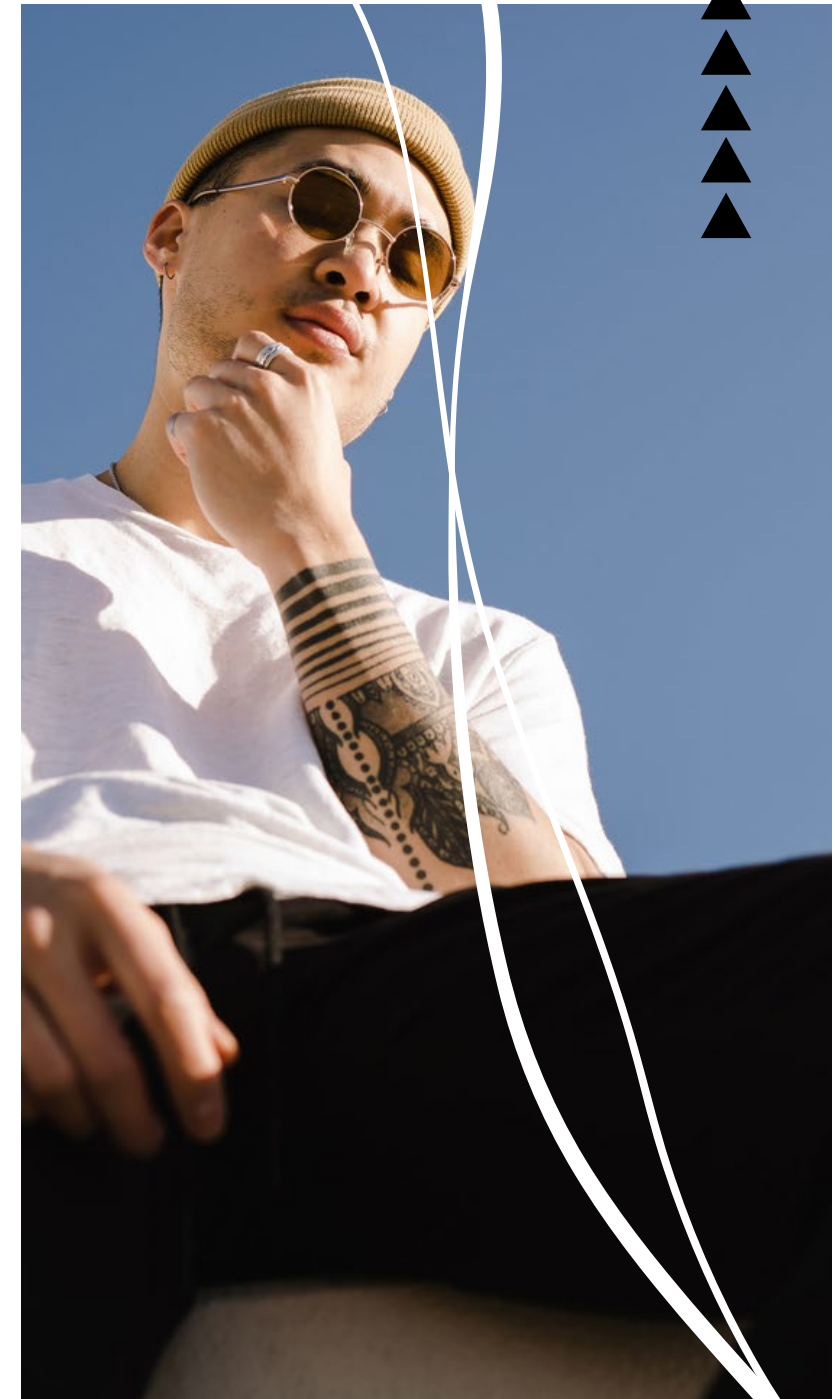
The purpose of this guide is to a. make it clear that Dentsu International is a place where it is safe to share all aspects of your authentic self and b. ensure that this process of coming out is handled sensitively by all involved.



02.

# Our culture

of inclusivity at Dentsu



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# Hello!

You're a part of a company that invites you to bring your full self to work and celebrates you for it. You have a community, a support network, and leadership that is invested in you being you.



As Wendy Clark our Global CEO says

*“Diversity, inclusion, and equity in our business is a competitive advantage: Every body of evidence that any of us would read would affirm that. As a business leader, I feel a deep responsibility to give dentsu international that advantage. We are a people-based business, and with our 45,000 people, I want them to feel fulfilled professionally and personally know that they are invited here – their full selves – at work, every day.”*

Wendy Clark reinforces that “Homogeneity is our enemy” and it “restricts thinking, ideation, the solutions, the innovation we can take to our clients”. “dimension, diversity, breadth of point of view, experience, and life journey ...is where all the goodness comes from.”

It's not just at the top but flows through everything we do. You can join the **&PROUD** LGBTQ+ network **here on Teams**, (we marched in Pride!) participate in social and

networking events across dentsu and in our industry with our partners such as **Outvertising**, **Regent's Pride**, and **PrideAM**.

You can also find out more and participate in our other employee networks:





03.

# Risks & benefits

of Coming out: for employees & for managers







## For managers: Perceived risks and how dentsu is working to mitigate them:

- Potential rejection by management and other staff as well as a negative impact on career progression - dentsu international has policies in place to encourage equal opportunity hiring and continually monitors and improves this approach. LGBTQ+ inclusion is engrained in our business values and a wealth of resource has been allocated to alleviate concerns for new and existing employees. This includes DEI & HR initiatives as well as the existing legal protection afforded by the Equality Act 2010.
- Unconscious Bias and Conscious Bias: managers have a responsibility to monitor team sentiment for inclusion, including attending diversity and bias training, leading by example through allyship (see chapter 7), and calling out behaviours.
- Not fully understanding one's own identity yet - being out at work can allow employees to explore and understand this more in a supportive environment. A wide spectrum of intersecting identities is represented across the dentsu international network with resources available wherever needed.
- Current socio-political climate regarding LGBTQ+ in media/politics - dentsu international is working with Stonewall and other charities such as Mermaids to help push positive change in society. There are also initiatives where a more representative set of media partners are

There is a wealth of research that shows being able to be your authentic self at work leads to a happier and more productive individual/team.<sup>1</sup> However, each person will have had a broad range of experiences which impact their propensity to 'remove the mask' and be their authentic self at work.

Studies show those who were out at work had lower levels of biomarkers related to stress such as Cortisol, Adrenaline and blood pressure.<sup>2</sup> Other research shows Trans individuals have fewer incidents of suicidal thought/less depressive symptoms simply by using their chosen rather than given names.<sup>3</sup>

It's important to keep in mind however that a risk/benefit analysis is being made every time an LGBTQ+ individual meets someone new, this of course includes the workplace. Around 50% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported having to come out at work at least once a week.<sup>4</sup> The creation of an alter ego that enables employees to bring what they perceive as an 'acceptable persona' to work can begin from childhood so the habit can be harder to break for some, while Trans employees may see their new identity as the only one that matters and prefer not to disclose their history.<sup>5</sup>

1. [https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/Peak\\_Performance\\_\\_2008\\_.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/Peak_Performance__2008_.pdf)

2. <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/>

3. <https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20180406/risk-for-depression-suicide-drops-when-transgender-youth-use-chosen-names>

4. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/lgbtq-plus-voices-learning-from-lived-experiences>

5. <https://hbr.org/2018/10/7-myths-about-coming-out-at-work>



being selected, ensuring LGBTQ+ spaces have better coverage. This benefits both the community itself as well as the clients' bottom line.

- Previous negative experiences in coming out to friends/family/colleagues - as mentioned, dentsu international has existing policies and values that emphasise inclusion and acceptance and a robust community to provide support.

## Benefits of coming out at work

Bringing one's 'Full self' removes the weight of any 'masking' or 'covering' an individual may feel they need to fit in with their colleagues. Studies show that if an LGBTQ+ person is out at work, they are 67% more likely to be satisfied with their sense of achievement.<sup>6</sup>

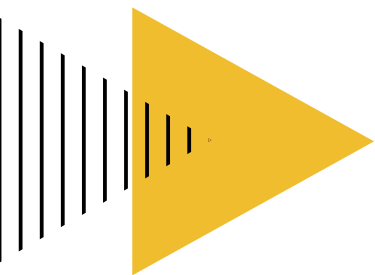
<sup>6</sup>. <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/en/topics/blogs/being-out-at-work>



## Benefits of being 'out' at work include:

- Ability to form deeper relationships with colleagues/clients
- Coming out gets easier and easier over time, increasing opportunities for growth and connections
- Helps to break down barriers in understanding for those less exposed to LGBTQ+ individuals
- Ability to bring partners to corporate/social events will alleviate anxieties around accepting and allows employees to share more of themselves
- Builds trusting working relationships
- Coming out requires strength and courage, these qualities will be applauded by management and colleagues, even celebrated
- Ability to bring ones 'whole self' to work emboldens employees to explore wider interests and build real, meaningful friendships
- Ability to contribute different opinions, experiences and perspectives that can benefit a project/brief – in a London Annual business survey, groups with a diverse team were more likely to develop products that went to market than non-diverse teams.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>. <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter>



## For employees coming out at dentsu international: Perceived risks you may feel when coming out at work and how to mitigate them:

- You may fear an element of rejection by management/other staff as well as experiencing a negative impact on your career progression - dentsu international has policies in place to encourage equal opportunity hiring and are continually monitoring/improve their approach. LGBTQ+ inclusion is engrained in our business values and a wealth of resource has been allocated to alleviate concerns for new and existing employees. This includes D&I/HR initiatives as well as the existing legal protection afforded by the Equality Act 2010. Details on support available to you can be found in the next section.
- You may not fully understand your own identity yet - being out at work can provide a safe space to explore and understand this more in a supportive environment. A wide spectrum of intersecting identities are represented across the dentsu international network with resources available wherever needed.

- There may be a prevailing socio-political climate that might make you feel apprehensive when coming out at work e.g. in the media/political discourse - dentsu international is working with Stonewall and other charities such as Mermaids to help push positive change in society. There are also initiatives where a more representative set of media partners are being selected, ensuring LGBTQ+ spaces have better coverage.
- You may have had negative experiences before working at dentsu international when coming out to friends/family/colleagues. Dentsu International has an inclusive culture supported by policies and values that emphasise inclusion and acceptance. Mentoring is one way of ensuring you're paired with someone who has a greater understanding of your experience and can provide support/guidance.





## Benefits of coming out at work

Bringing your 'Full self' removes the weight of any 'masking' or 'covering' you may previously have felt necessary in order to fit in with your colleagues. Studies show that if an LGBTQ+ person is out at work, they are 67% more likely to be satisfied with their sense of achievement.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup>. <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/en/topics/blogs/being-out-at-work>



## Benefits of being 'out' at work include:

- It can help you to break down barriers in understanding for those less exposed to LGBTQ+ individuals
- You will be able to build trusting working relationships
- The ability to bring your 'whole self' to work will emboldens you to explore wider interests and build real, meaningful friendships
- Our business thrives on the contribution of different opinions, experiences and perspectives that can benefit a project/brief as well as day to day life – in a London Annual business survey, groups with a diverse team were more likely to develop products that went to market than non-diverse teams.<sup>9</sup>
- It's unfortunate you need to come out at all and it takes strength and bravery to do so. The more we do it, the easier it becomes over time, increasing opportunities for growth and connections
- Any anxiety you might feel about bringing partners to corporate/ social events will be removed, allowing you to share more of yourself
- As we've said, Coming out requires strength and courage, these qualities will be applauded by management and colleagues, even celebrated

<sup>9</sup>. <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter>

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# Support

available to you

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Coming out at dentsu

04 Support available to you





While this guide is primarily from an at-work perspective, we recognise that depending on where you are in your journey, you may be coming out to your friends and family as well.

**Stonewall's Guide to Coming Out** is a valuable resource. Dentsu International has policies that outline and explain our commitments and standpoints on diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as:

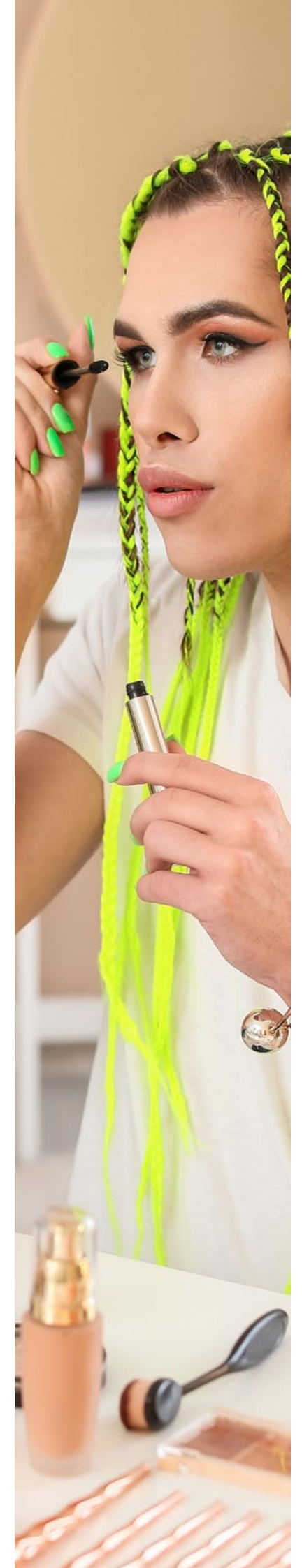
**DEI Policy** – for our stance on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Respect at Work Policy** – for our stance on bullying, harassment, and discrimination

**Transitioning at Work Policy** – for supporting you to transition at work, or if someone in your team is transitioning.

**Speak Up hotline** – for anonymously reporting breach of any of our policies or **code of conduct**

**Dentsu Wellbeing Hub** – events, on-demand resources, and support. You can always find the most updated versions and more via **MyApps** → People Matters portal.





05.

# Your rights:

legality & liability



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Coming out at work should be a personal choice and should come down to personal perspective. But sadly, individuals may find that other factors - factors which shouldn't have any weight - are impacting on their decision making. Will I get treated differently at work? Could this impact on my chances of promotion? What if I just want to tell one person and they tell everyone else? Concerns may also arise around safety: what if I have to travel to countries which aren't accepting of the LGBTQ community? That feels riskier if I am out.

Fortunately, there are a number of laws out there to tackle these concerns. Here is what you need to know:

## The Equality Act:

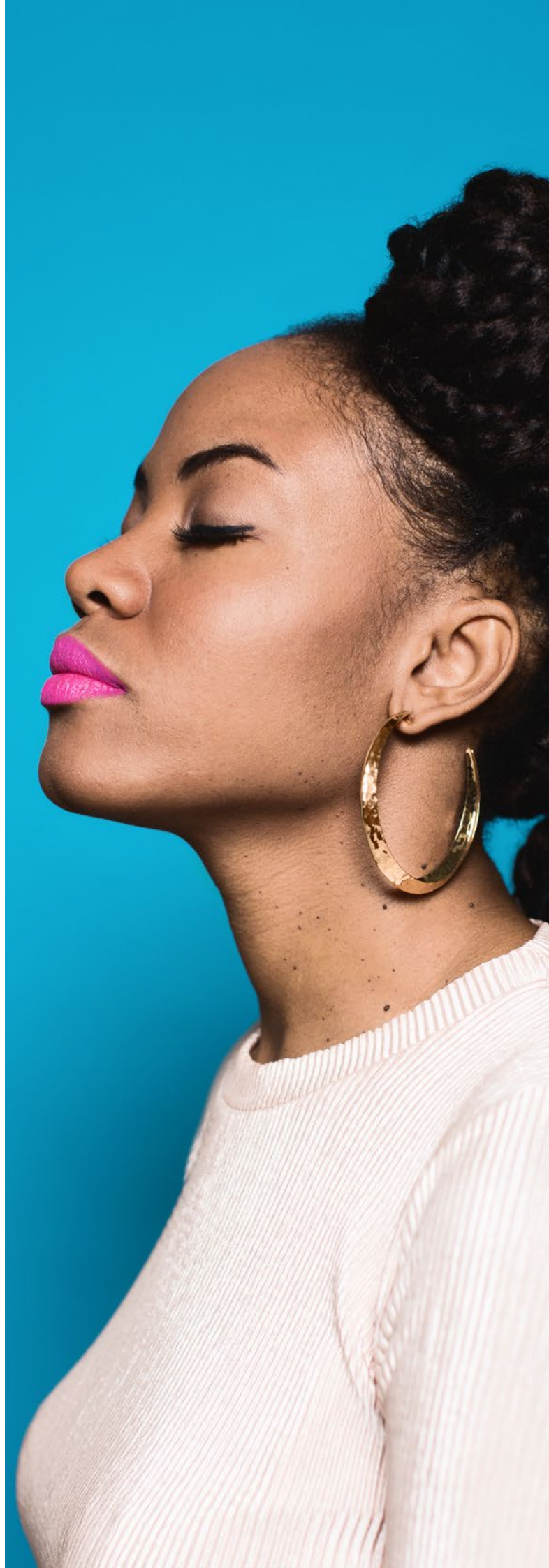
*It is illegal to discriminate against a person, or to harass or victimize a person, in a work context, because of their sexual orientation or their gender identity*

There are four offences under this act:

- Direct discrimination happens when someone is treated less favorably than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, you're not given a job because of your gender identity.
- Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or practice in place which applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it's a reasonable act in managing the business, for example to support inter-generational fairness or succession planning.
- Harassment can take many forms, but is generally seen as unwanted behavior that's intended to be or has the effect of being intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive, or is behaviour which violates someone's dignity. A one off act can be classed as harassment if its serious enough. The behaviour must be related to a person's protected characteristic, i.e. their sexual orientation or gender.
- Victimisation occurs when someone is subjected to a detriment because they have supported a complaint, or because they're suspected of doing so. A person is not protected from victimisation if they have supported or made a malicious complaint.



Remedies for breaches of the Equalities Act are found by bringing court claims (usually in the Employment Tribunal), however at Dentsu International we will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment. Any reports will be treated sensitively and thoroughly investigated, anyone found to be breaching the Equality Act 2010 may be subject to disciplinary action which could lead to their dismissal (either with or without notice).



## What should I do if I feel I am being discriminated against, victimised or harassed?

Firstly, you should report it to your Line Leader, but if the complaint is against your Line Leader you should report it to a HR representative i.e. via People Matters; who will advise you on the correct process to follow. If you feel uncomfortable about reporting it to HR you could consider reporting it to another Senior Leader within your area.

In situations where you don't feel you can report the incident(s) to the people listed above you can do it via speak up on 0800 9151571 or via email [speakup@safecall.co.uk](mailto:speakup@safecall.co.uk), or visit Safecall's independent page at [www.safecall.co.uk](http://www.safecall.co.uk).

## General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):

*Sexual orientation and gender identity constitute special category data under the GDPR. Special category data cannot be collected or processed without explicit consent*

What does that mean? It means that a manager should not write down the sexual orientation or gender identity of an employee without explicit consent; that they must not share that information without explicit consent and that they cannot deal in any way with that information without explicit consent. (There are some exceptions to this, which may arise in extreme circumstances, but this is the general position).



That makes it quite difficult to abuse or share that information. Very few people will want to seek consent to using information for the purpose of discriminating against the data subject.

Breaches of GDPR attract significant fines into the millions of pounds. They also attract a lot of press attention. This should be a strong deterrent for misuse

## Gender Recognition Act:

*The gender of a transgender person is legally recognized under this Act. The Act also makes it an offence for an employer to disclose the fact that a person is pursuing or has completed the process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. It is an offence to disclose the gender status of an individual prior to the affirmation of their current gender.*

Please note that the Act only deals with gender disclosures in the context of pursuing or obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (which isn't something everyone will / will want to do).

It should also be noted that there are exceptions to this rule, including (but not limited to) that employers can make disclosures of information if the person involved cannot be identified; if disclosure is necessary for the purpose of preventing or investigating a crime; or if the disclosure is made for the purposes of a social security system or pension scheme.

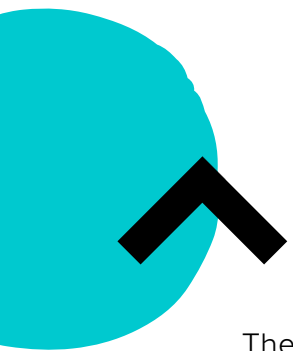
Breach of the Gender Recognition Act is a criminal offence and may result in conviction and a fine. That fine will apply to the person committing the breach.

## Travel risks

It is an unfortunate truth that there remain regions and countries around the world which do not accept or respect the LGBTQ+ community and where members of the community may face legal discrimination. In light of this fact, members of the community may wish to avoid travel to those regions or countries. This may prove problematic in the event that an individual is asked to travel for work purposes. A number of dentsu offices are located in high risk locations.

It is therefore critically important that managers are aware of these risks and that no employee is asked to travel to a country that they consider unsafe. If a manager knows that an employee is a member of the LGBTQ+ community then they should consider the risks for that employee in travelling to certain destinations and should consult with the employee about whether they are comfortable travelling there.



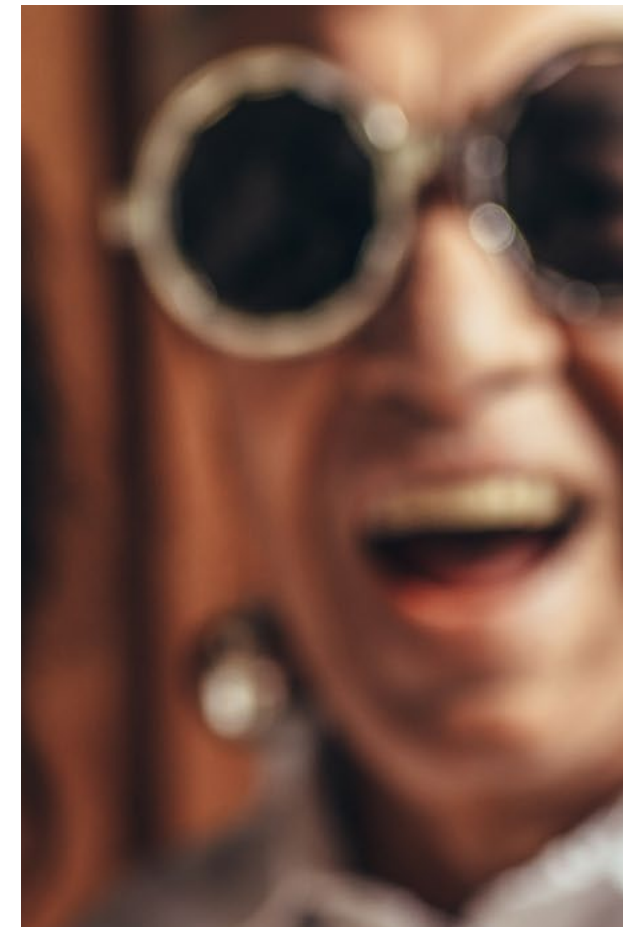
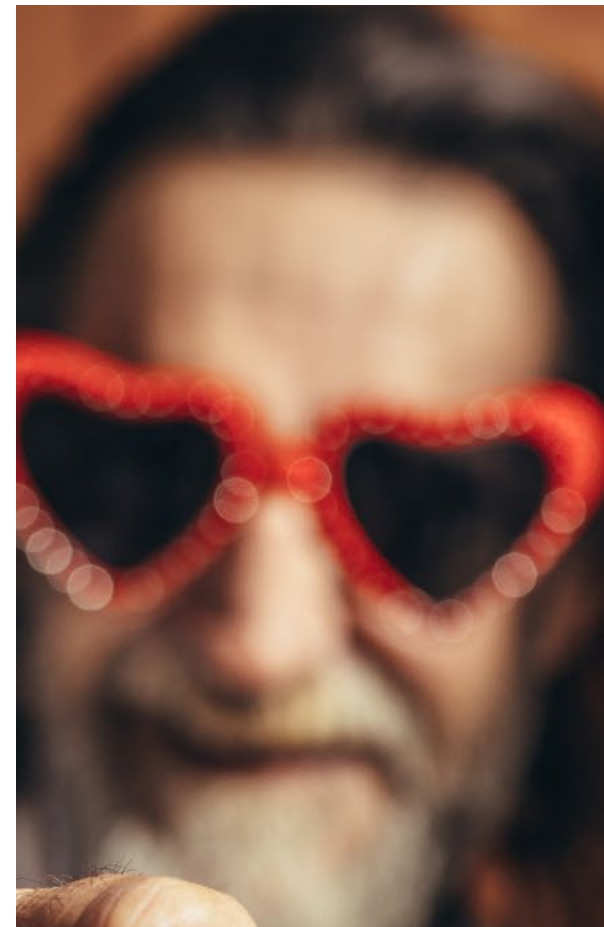


There is no law that imposes this specific obligation on a manager, however, such an obligation may be deemed to arise as a consequence of:

- what is known as a ‘common law’ duty of care – meaning it isn’t written in a legal text but is enforced by courts. Employers are deemed to have a common law duty to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees. This includes physical and mental safety.
- Obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act, which impose on employers a duty to ‘ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees’

It should be noted that under the Employment Rights Act, section 44, an employee has a right to refuse to undertake a workplace task if they consider that pursuit or completion would place them in danger. The Act provides that an employee cannot be penalised or suffer a detriment because:

- ‘in circumstances of danger which the employee reasonably believed to be serious and imminent and which he could not reasonably have been expected to avert, he left (or proposed to leave) or (while the danger persisted) refused to return to his place of work or any dangerous part of his place or work, or
- In circumstances of danger which the employee reasonably believed to be serious and imminent, he took (or proposed to take) appropriate steps to protect himself or other persons from the danger’



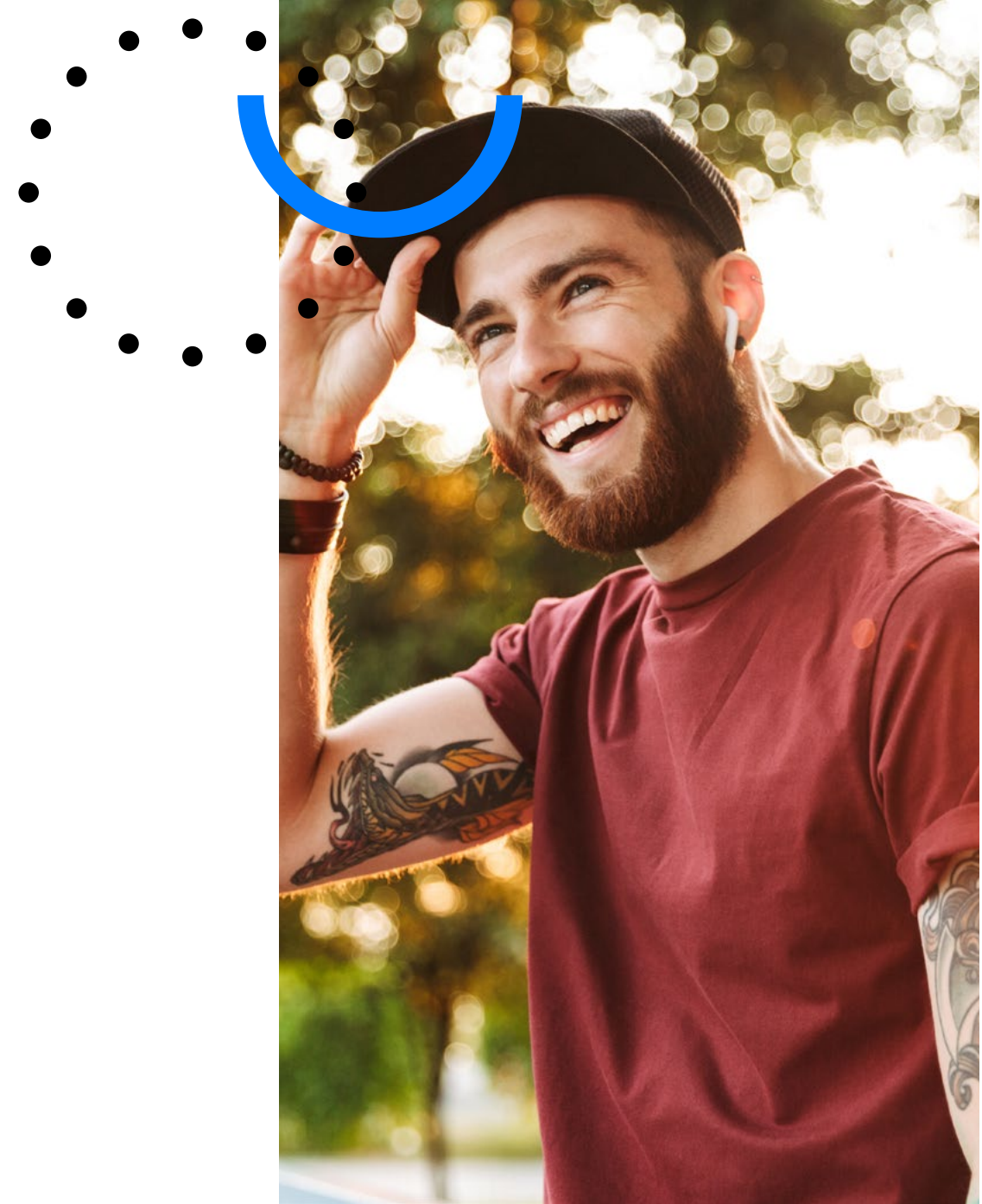


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06.

# Inclusive language

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It's important to remember that this language a. is not universally accepted by all and b. is constantly evolving and growing. It's OK to get things wrong – attitude matters – don't assume and keep learning!

*Stonewall has an excellent glossary available [here](#); some commonly used terms include:*

**LGBTQ+:**

Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning. The order and letters included can vary, but LGBTQ is considered standard. The + is an important part because the community is constantly growing in both numbers and diversity and aims to acknowledge and include all people in the acronym.

**Lesbian:**

Refers to a woman who has a romantic and / or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.

**Gay:**

Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

**Bisexual / Bi:**

is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

**Transgender/Trans:**

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Cisgender or Cis:**

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Deadnaming:**

Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.

**Gender:**

Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is often assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

**Heterosexual/straight:**

Refers to a man who has a romantic and / or sexual orientation towards women or to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men.

**Homophobia:**

The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people.

**Non-binary:**

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'.

**Outed:**

When a lesbian, gay, bi or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

**Pansexual / Pan:**

a person whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.

**Queer:**

a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and /or gender identity. Importantly, this term has historically been (and in some cases still is) used as a slur.

**Questioning:**

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



07.

# Allyship



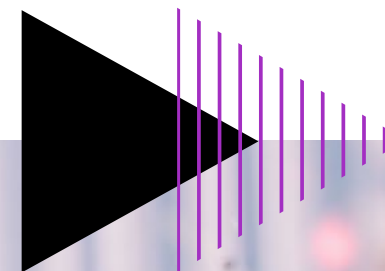


## Ally:

*An individual who takes a stand against social injustice directed at target groups (White people who speak out against racism, men who are anti-sexist, LatinX people supporting Black people, heterosexual people supporting the LGBTQ+ community, etc.) They actively call out microaggressions, challenge assumptions, and speak up for underrepresented communities.*

### Characteristics of Allies:

- Listens openly with respect
- Uses inclusive language
- Actively pursues a process of self-education, takes responsibility in learning about their own and other identities
- Understands the challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community
- Be mindful and sensitive to confidentiality
- Recognizes that unlearning socialized beliefs is a lifelong process
- Takes a public stand against discrimination and prejudice
- Confident in sign posting sources of learning and education to others
- Is willing to make mistakes and learn from them
- De-centers themselves and uplifts the underrepresented and marginalised







08.

# Dealing with

an unsupportive individual



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08 dealing with an unsupportive individual



Dentsu International is proud to be an open, equal opportunities workplace. There has always been an emphasis on diversity when hiring, and an open-minded approach to employee support once individuals join. In the unlikely event an employee feels a colleague is not fully supportive of an individual's gender expression, sexuality, or any other criteria however, there are several steps to follow.

Whether direct discrimination is experienced, for example homophobic/sexist/racist comments aimed directly at you, or explicit comments about others in these groups, or you feel an individual is being unsupportive in words or actions, always open a dialogue with the local HR representative. Employees should always feel safe, welcome and accepted at work.

- Cases where discrimination is irrefutable should be raised with HR immediately e.g. homophobic comments made on a Teams call or in email.

- Document all instances of discrimination
  - Times
  - Names
  - Witnesses
  - Dates
  - Location
  - Description of what occurred

*\* In the UK, employees can generally only commence the process of a discrimination claim within 3 months less one day of the last act of discrimination.*

- Where there is a perceived lack of support from a manager/colleague, document examples (emails, comments etc).
- Speak with HR/relevant D&I committees e.g. &Proud for advice on whether comments/actions constitute discrimination.
- Inform your line manager if you feel comfortable or another senior member of the team.
- If comfortable, speak with the person directly to highlight areas of concern.
- Send to HR – actions and outcomes – is it a formal complaint or were they combatant, if so – escalate.

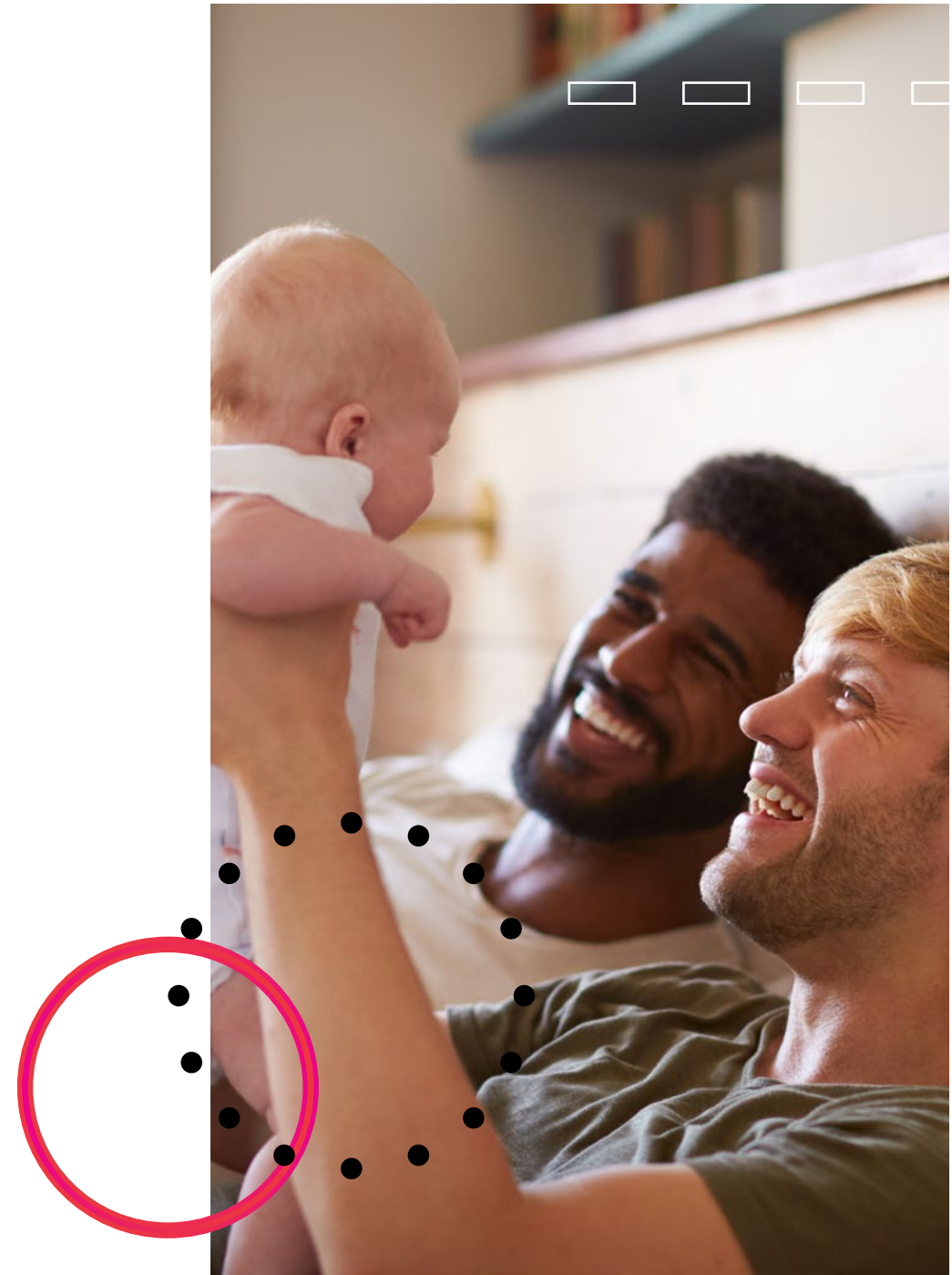
*As a manager:*

- Refer your team member to this document to inform them of their rights and relevant policies.
- Partner with HR, the employee LGBTQ+ Network, and Mental Health First Aiders if necessary, to provide additional support to your team member.
- There is a legal obligation and a business risk if discrimination is tolerated within your team and our business. Please swiftly inform and escalate as necessary any issues that are brought to your attention.



09.

# Appendix



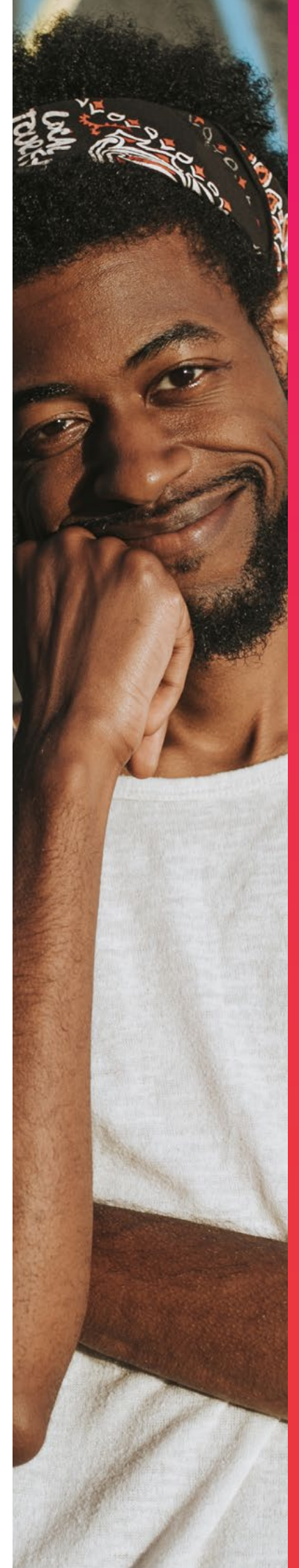




The Americas Pride group has a comprehensive 'LGBTQ+ 101' with definitions about sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, intersectionality, allyship, jargon-busting, and more.

[Check it out here.](#)

The guide also has insights into LGBTQ+ spending habits, marketing trends, and demographics, and history.





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