

How to help others?

- Just listen
- Provide welcoming and non judgemental environments
- Check in on friends and colleagues
- Inform peers and colleagues about information, campaigns and services
- Don't feel like you have to have all the answers



Contact us

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LGBTIQ+ and mental health

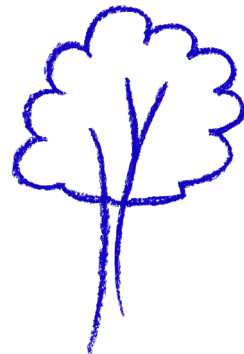


At HEH Mind we work to promote good mental health within our locality. We seek to support and empower people to lead a full life as part of their local community. Our services include

- Adult wellbeing
- Family wellbeing
- Children and young peoples wellbeing
- Training and workplace wellbeing
- Advocacy
- Anti stigma/ discrimination campaigning
- Fund and awareness raising

HEH Mind services and support are available across the Havant Borough and East Hampshire District, with some projects and service available across Hampshire.

Importantly we are a separate charity to National Mind. When you choose who to fundraise for us you will need to select 'Havant and East Hants Mind' to raise for the local services we deliver. Donations to 'Mind' will not come to us or to local services.



Supporting someone who is LGBTIQ+

Join a support group

A range of groups exist to support parents and friends of LGBTIQ+ people. Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) has a list of parent support groups.

Read about LGBTIQ+ issues

Many organisations have advice for anyone looking to support LGBTIQ+ family members or friends. FFLAG has guides for family and friends supporting people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Learn more about their specific problem

If you are supporting a friend or family member with a specific mental health diagnosis like depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder, you can look up more information about it on the national Mind website (www.mind.org.uk).

Their website lists types of mental health problems, resources to support different mental health diagnoses and experiences. All these resources include a page of tips for friends and family.

Take care of yourself

Looking after someone who is struggling can be stressful. Remember that your mental health is important too.



Supporting someone who is LGBTIQ+

A good support network helps all of us have higher self-esteem and better mental health. This is especially true for LGBTIQ+ people, who may be facing extra challenges.

Don't make assumptions

Everyone's experience is different. Try to avoid making assumptions based on what you already know about mental health problems or LGBTIQ+ issues. Instead, ask the person what is going on for them.

Listen to their experiences

Growing up with a different sexual or gender identity means it's likely they have faced negativity. They may feel worried to open up and speak about their experiences. Giving them space to talk is important.

If they don't feel ready to speak to you, you could suggest they call a helpline.

Show them you care

Internalised homophobia, biphobia and transphobia means many LGBTIQ+ people struggle with low self-esteem. It may seem obvious to you that you care about them, but they may not realise this. Try to find ways to show them you care. For example, write them a card, cook them a meal, or take them out somewhere they'd enjoy.

Support them to seek help

You could reassure your loved one that it's ok to ask for help, and that there is help out there. Even if it's not always easy to find. If they would feel more comfortable using an LGBTIQ+ service, you could help them research one.

LGBTIQ+ mental health

Some of us identify as LGBTIQ+. This means we may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, non-binary, queer or questioning. Or we may define our gender and sexuality in other ways.

Anyone can experience a mental health problem. But those of us who identify as LGBTIQ+ are more likely to develop problems like:

- low self-esteem
- depression
- anxiety, including social anxiety
- eating problems
- misusing drugs and alcohol
- self-harm
- suicidal feelings
- other mental health problems

Being LGBTIQ+ does not cause these problems. The reasons why those of us with LGBTIQ+ identities are more likely to get them are very complicated. But it is most likely to do with facing things like:

- homophobia, biphobia and transphobia
- stigma and discrimination
- difficult experiences of coming out
- social isolation, exclusion and rejection

Being you

It's important to remember that embracing your LGBTIQ+ identity can also have a positive impact on your wellbeing. It might mean you have:

- increased confidence
- improved relationships with your friends and family
- a sense of community and belonging
- the freedom of self-expression and self-acceptance
- increased resilience



Support and services

• Asking your Doctor for help

Your doctor (GP) is there to help you with your mental health as well as your physical health. They could:

- make a diagnosis
- offer you support and treatments, such as self-help resources, talking therapies, and possibly medication
- refer you to a specialist LGBTIQ+ mental health service, if one exists near you.

• Working with a therapist

Talking therapies involve talking to a trained professional about your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. They can help you manage and cope with:

- difficult life events
- relationship problems, such as rejection
- difficult emotions, such as guilt, sadness, confusion, anger, low self-esteem and internalised homophobia, biphobia and transphobia



Support and services

- **Talking to someone you trust**

It might feel hard to start talking about how you are feeling. But many people find that sharing their experiences can help them feel better. It may be that just having someone listen to you and show they care can help in itself.

- **Peer support**

Making connections with people who have similar or shared experiences can be really helpful. This could be other people with mental health problems, or other LGBTIQ+ people, or both. Search for regional, workplace, social or faith groups in your area.

You can also try online peer support such as Side by Side (www.sidebyside.mind.org.uk).

- **Self care**

Self-care means things we do for ourselves to help improve our mental and physical health.

Internalised homophobia, biphobia or transphobia might mean you struggle to be kind to yourself. But practising self-care can help boost your self-esteem. We have included some ideas below which may help.

- Try joining an LGBTIQ+ specific group
- Try volunteering
- Think about your diet and sleep
- Try to do some physical activity
- Try to avoid recreational drugs and alcohol
- Look after your sexual health

Other identities and challenges

We're using 'LGBTIQ+' as an umbrella term. But we know that LGBTIQ+ people do not exist as one group. Everyone is different. Our identities are a complicated mix of factors, including:

- age
- ethnicity
- religion
- cultural background
- socio-economic background
- gender identity and gender expression
- sexuality
- physical ability
- many other characteristics



You might face many challenges in your life that other LGBTIQ+ people don't face, or even understand. This might include many other kinds of discrimination, social exclusion or social disadvantage.

This can make you even more likely to develop problems with your mental health, and make it even harder to get help.

Other organisations

[Albert Kennedy Trust—akt.org.uk](https://akt.org.uk)

Supports LGBTQ people aged 16-25 who are homeless or living in a hostile environment.

[Brook—brook.org.uk](https://brook.org.uk)

Provides wellbeing and sexual health information and support for young people.

[Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(FFLAG\) - fflag.org.uk](https://fflag.org.uk)

Offers support to parents, friends and family members of those who identify as LGBT+.

[Gender Identity Research & Education Society—gires.org.uk](https://gires.org.uk)

Works to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people of all ages, including those who are non-binary and non-gender.

[LGBT Foundation—lgbt.foundation](https://lgbt.foundation)

Advice, support and information for people identifying as LGBTQ+.

[Mermaids—mermaidsuk.org.uk](https://mermaidsuk.org.uk)

Supports gender-diverse young people aged 19 and under, and their families and carers. Offers a helpline and webchat.

[Pink Therapy—pinktherapy.com](https://pinktherapy.com)

Online directory of qualified therapists who identify as or are understanding of minority sexual and gender identities.

[Stonewall—stonewall.org.uk](https://stonewall.org.uk)

Information and advice for LGBT people on a range of issues.

Support for LGBTIQ+ mental health

HEH Mind is here for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. But we know that those of us with LGBTIQ+ identities may face extra challenges around getting the right support. And we sometimes have extra needs or concerns.

Remember that different things work for different people at different times. Only try what you feel comfortable with, and try not to put too much pressure on yourself.

- Talking to someone you trust
- Peer support
- Self care
- Asking your Doctor for help
- Specialist LGBTIQ+ services
- Working with a therapist

