

BENT



**Alcohol & drug info for lesbian,
gay, bi & transgender young people**

Contents

- 3 Intro
- 4 How common is alcohol and drug use?
- 6 Why are LGBT people at risk of using more?
- 10 Drug information
- 22 Sex and drugs
- 26 Drugs, laws and your rights
- 28 Feeling good
- 30 Worried about a friend
- 32 Overdose
- 33 Seeking help
- 34 Resources and support



**Thank you to the young
people from Open Doors and
Hot House who helped to
create this resource.**



intro

Alcohol and drug use is common in our society. Most young people (gay or straight, in-between or not sure) face the choice to use or not use. Although not all alcohol and drug use means problems, there are certain risks and harms than can occur.

This book has been put together by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people, with workers at Open Doors Youth Service (a youth LGBT counselling service) and Hot House (a youth alcohol and drug counselling service) to look at why LGBT people are at greater risk of alcohol and drug use problems and try to come up with ways to reduce harm.

We hope this booklet will provide you with accurate info about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and help you with some ideas and tips on ways to reduce the problems associated with substance use - for you or people you care about. We also hope this booklet will help highlight some people, places and services where LGBT young people can go for support.

How common is drug use

Fast Facts:-

LGBT young people are more likely to be offered drugs, are more likely to come across drugs and are more likely to use drugs - making them a particularly vulnerable group within our community.

Alcohol, cigarettes and other drug use is 2 to 4 times more likely by LGBT people than in the general population.

Around 1 in 3 LGBT young people drink weekly, which is higher than drinking by straight young people.

About 1 in 3 LGBT young people have used an illegal drug (compared to 1 in 10 straight people). Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug.

Cigarette smoking is almost double that seen in the general community. Rates of smoking are significantly higher amongst lesbians than straight women.

Some drugs (like amyl nitrate) are pretty much only used by some gay men, and rates of other drugs (like ecstasy) are used more in clubs and raves.

Rates of use by transgender people have been estimated as very high.

Experimenting often starts at a slightly earlier age compared to straight people. Being younger can mean being less experienced, which can increase harm.



alcohol & in the LGBT community?

Although drugs and alcohol are seen more within the LGBT community, not all LGBT people use. In fact, research has found that around 70% of LGBT young people have never used an illegal drug.

But without a doubt, alcohol and drug use is around us and does place many people 'at risk' of having or experiencing alcohol and drug problems.

The LGBT community is also concerned about this. Beyond Perceptions (an Australian study on LGBT people) found a majority of LGBT people were worried about how common alcohol and drug use is in the community and the negative impact it can have on the wellbeing of individuals and the wider LGBT community.



Why are LGBT at

Alcohol and drugs could be used for a variety of reasons - to experiment, to be social, to fit in, or to cope with problems and stress.

But dealing with homophobia and heterosexism, feelings of not belonging and pressures from the community makes us more vulnerable to using and misusing alcohol and drugs.

“People who put down LGBT people are just plain homophobic and boring.”
P 17 years old



people risk of using more?

Homophobia and Heterosexism

Homophobia and heterosexism are words used to describe the prejudice (similar to racism and sexism) against LGBT people.

Homophobia is the irrational fear, intolerance and hatred of people because they are not straight. **Homophobia** comes in many forms. Internalised homophobia is the negative views about being LGBT that someone has about themselves.

Interpersonal homophobia is when negative words or actions are directed at an LGBT person for being queer. Institutional homophobia is where governments, schools, workplaces, churches etc discriminate or ignore LGBT issues.

Some examples include pretending to be straight to belong, feeling down about being queer or putting down another LGBT person because they are 'too feminine' or 'too gay'. Other examples are experiencing violence, bullying, name calling and negative jokes. Being rejected by family or friends and not being supported because of who we are. Not being able to be 'out' at work/school/uni and not able to take a same sexed partner to your school dance.

Heterosexism is assuming that everyone is straight, that being straight is the 'norm' and pretending that gender identity issues don't exist. Examples can include being asked if you have a girlfriend (if you are a guy) rather than 'a partner' and people not taking our relationships seriously or accepting them. Other examples are having no LGBT characters in tv shows, having to 'come out' (as everyone had previously assumed us to be straight), and people assuming that they know your gender.

The effects of homophobia and heterosexism are huge. It can cause feelings of guilt and shame and make you feel like you are not 'normal'. Some people feel socially isolated and alone. Most of us will experience times when we feel scared, depressed and mistrustful - thinking that we have to hide who we really are. **Some people say they have used alcohol or drugs to cope with this stress.**

Coming out

Coming out is a celebration! It can also be a stressful time due to worrying about how people will react, as well as trying to fit into the LGBT community. Some young people may use drugs to cope with the stress or party too hard as a way to gain acceptance and feel connected to "the community".

Less likely to help seek

Many LGBT people avoid rocking up to health services out of fear of being discriminated against or believing that services might not understand or are not able to deal with LGBT issues. Because of this, someone might not get the help they need until the issue reaches crisis point.

Socialising and the scene

Because LGBT people often feel judged, gay bars and clubs have become one of the few place to socialise, be ourselves and meet people and partners. This can mean spending more time in places where people are drinking and drugs are being used. Many older people in the community have used alcohol and drugs as well. Sometimes they might offer them to you or expect that you use them, as it is what they did. This can create unwanted stress from having to deal with being offered drugs and feeling the pressure to use to fit in. It may also make substance use seem normal and more common than what it actually is. There is so much more to being LGBT than clubs and drugs!

“When I first started going out I didn’t know anyone. People gave me stuff to try and expected me to use. I didn’t know what I was doing. I learnt through some pretty bad experiences. You don’t need drugs to fit in. Be yourself and get out there and you will meet good people and work out who you really are.”

B 19 years old

“Heterosexism sucks and f#@ks with your mind. Sometimes I pretend to be straight but most of the time I’m myself and celebrate it. If you don’t like it then that’s your problem.”

L 21 years old

“Be nice to others and help other LGBT people. Don’t tease or judge them that’s your own homophobia. Get over it and celebrate how diverse we all are.”

P 17 years old



"Sometimes it seems like everyone is drinking. I feel the pressure. But I'm no stereotype and I only do what I want to do."
S 19 years old

'My perception is that within the trans community, there's quite a lot of alcohol abuse that I've noticed, and recreational drug use as well, and I think that's down to frustration with one's self - having to go through the process or not being able to go through the transition process or barriers that are put up and accepted by the community.'

"Look after yourself. If you drink or use do it safely, find out about it and stop if it's hurting you or costing lots of money."
21 years old

"I grew up in a very conservative family and felt like I couldn't be myself. I am still trying to work out who I am and what it's like to be LGBT. I sometimes freak out about it, but then I tell myself that I am good and normal and that I am proud to be me."
M 18 years old



Drug information

The following drug information is a guide on some of the different drugs in the community and some ways to keep safe. Types of drugs come and go, so its important to find out as much as you can.

The effects of alcohol and drugs can be different for different people. Harms don't just include physical health problems but how alcohol and drugs can affect our emotions, mental health, lifestyle, the law and our relationships with others.

Tips:

- 1. Not everyone uses alcohol and drugs.**
- 2. The safest choice is to not use at all. If you drink, the safest choice is to drink moderately. If you use other drugs, find out as much as you can about them, try to limit how much and how often, and do it safely.**
- 3. Take time off and take care of yourself. Have regular breaks from drinking or drugs to keep up with other things in life (like work, friends, sport) and to keep healthy.**
- 4. Plan ahead when you're heading out. Be prepared with condoms, lube, dams and gloves, sort out your transport home ahead of time, let other people know where you are going and stick with your friends when you are out.**

For more information, if you're worried, or if you find yourself in a bit of trouble, see the RESOURCES and SUPPORT section on page 34 of this booklet to find out more.

Alcohol

Binge drinking is common among young people (LGBT or straight) and can cause major problems. With pubs and clubs as popular social and meeting places, drinking is common in the LGBT community. But most of us who do drink do it safely and moderately.

Alcohol is a depressant - it slows your body and mind down. Not everyone manages the same amount of alcohol in the same way, and effects vary depending on how much is drunk.

Common effects can include feeling relaxed, loss of inhibitions, reduced co-ordination and concentration, slurred speech, and intense moods.

RISKS:

- Alcohol reduces inhibitions and intensifies moods such as sadness and anger.
- Poor decision making and unsafe choices, such as unprotected sex, saying or doing things you later regret, or drink driving.
- Memory loss - like not remembering what you said or did.
- Larger amounts can cause overdose - vomiting, passing out or death.
- Physical harms such as damaging your brain, liver, heart and kidneys, or being injured from fights, crashes, falls.
- Being out of it can make you vulnerable and less able to stand up for yourself if someone tries to hurt you or take advantage of you.
- Dependence can occur, where your body starts to rely on alcohol to get by.



After 1 or 2

Relaxed, less inhibitions, energy, confidence, slower reaction times.



A few more

Fewer inhibitions, loss of coordination slurring, intense emotions (sad, mad, happy).



Even more

Vomiting, passing out, collapsing, falling over, aggression, looking like a fool. Can cause coma or death.

Still more

Emotional, trashy, nausea, stumbling, tired, blurred vision, poor decisions, memory trouble, maybe vomiting.



Consider...

- Start with a non-alcoholic drink and some food. Try to space out alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks.
- Pace yourself – keep track of how much you're drinking. Stick to standards. A standard drink has 10grams of alcohol. 1 drink is a shot glass of spirits, 100mls of wine or a pot of beer. Try to keep it under 4 standard drinks and have alcohol free days every week.
- Aim for one drink per hour. Avoid buying in rounds.
- Keep an eye on your booze. Don't leave it unattended. Drink spiking does occur.
- Watch your moods – if you are getting too loud, upset or angry – slow down and chill out for a bit.
- Avoid other drugs – including smoking. Mixing types of alcohol (eg wine then beer) or using other drugs increases your risk of getting sick.
- Plan how you are getting home. Tell friends where you are going. Plan for tomorrow – sleep, drink lots of water, eat well to help your body recover.

Cannabis

Weed/Pot/Marijuana

Cannabis use is higher in the LGBT community, with around 30% of LGBT young people using recreationally and around 5% smoking it daily.



Consider...

- Smoking too much (at a time or too often) can send you nuts. If you (or someone else) starts feeling sick, paranoid, starts freaking out or acting weird, stop smoking and take some time to rest and recover. It might be worth seeking some help.
- Take care where you use and where you go. Being stoned in the wrong place can be frightening and intimidating.
- It is better for your health not to mix tobacco with cannabis. Smoking with tobacco adds to health risks and can lead to you using more cannabis because of nicotine addiction.
- Smoke harms lungs. Eating cannabis is safer on your lungs, but the effects are less predictable and longer lasting.
- Sharing isn't caring. When you share joints, pipes or bongs you can also share germs and infections.
- "Beer then grass, you're on your arse."
Mixing Cannabis with other drugs, including alcohol, can be risky.

Cannabis is a depressant (it slows the body down). It affects different people in different ways.

Small amounts generally last 2-4 hours and effects include feeling relaxed, sleepy and uncoordinated. Thoughts, memory and perceptions of colour, sound and other senses are affected (including paranoia). Heart rate and appetite increase, blood pressure drops and eyes redden. Larger amounts make the effects stronger and often cause restlessness, confusion, anxiety or panic, detachment from reality, hallucinations and getting sick (greening out).

Being stoned can significantly impact on how well someone can communicate and make safe decisions.

RISKS:

- Dependence can occur. Some people find when they stop using they feel irritable, anxious and down, have sleeping problems, no appetite, poor concentration and low motivation to do things.
- Use can lead to low sex drive, forgetfulness, loss of energy or having no motivation.
- Even small amounts have been linked to depression, anxiety, panic attacks and psychosis.
- "Cannabis psychosis" is a condition that can last up to a few days. Symptoms include hallucinations, losing touch with reality, paranoia, memory loss, panic and confusion.
- Cannabis is illegal in Australia.



Amphetamines

Ecstasy/E's/Crystal/Ice/Speed

Although over 70% of LGBT young people do not use illegal drugs, use is still higher than that seen in the straight community. Within clubs and some scenes in the community, ecstasy and amphetamine use is pretty wide spread.



Amphetamines are stimulants and can cause feelings of wellbeing, high energy and alertness. Other effects include hallucinations, irrational behaviour, anxiety or panic, aggression, psychosis, vomiting and convulsions.

Physical effects include higher pulse rate, body temperature and blood pressure, jaw clenching, teeth grinding, sweating, dry mouth, enlarged pupils, reduced appetite and difficulty sleeping. Seizures can occur.

Effects usually last between 6 – 12 hours. Coming down can last for days following and often includes loss of appetite, insomnia, depression, muscle aches, difficulty concentrating and total exhaustion.



RISKS:

- Use has been linked with mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, aggression and mood swings.
- Decision making can be impaired. Many people regret decisions they made (such as unsafe sex, getting into fights etc) when using.
- Amphetamines are illegal and you never know what's in them. Ecstasy rarely contains the active chemical MDMA, but is made from a variety of other unknown chemicals.
- Overdose can occur and some deaths have been related to overheating, dehydration and drug interactions (eg using with alcohol, Viagra and prescription medications).
- Long term use may cause damage to the heart and liver. The long term effect on the brain is unknown.
- Psychological dependence (relying on amphetamines to cope or have fun) can occur.

Consider...

- You never know what you are actually getting. Use a regular supplier, find out about quality & use a small amount at a time.
- Dehydration is common & a major risk. It is important to keep sipping water. This does not reduce the effects of amphetamines, but prevents dehydration. Drinking too much water can lead to serious health complications. Stick to 1 bottle (600mls) per hour.
- Take regular breaks from dancing & activity. Use the chill out spaces at clubs & festivals.
- Never inject. Drinking, smoking or shafting (putting it up your bum) are the less risky ways of using.
- Take care where you use & where you go. Seek help immediately if you (or someone else) starts feeling sick, sweating, overheating or acts wierd (paranoid, has hallucinations etc).
- Plan your recovery. Rest, sleep & eat well for the few days after. Avoid alcohol or other drugs (including valium, cannabis, etc). It might seem like a good idea to take stuff to help come down, but mixing drugs makes the effects unpredictable & can make the come down trickier.
- Make safe decisions. Have fun & not regrets. Safe sex every time.



Downers

Pain Killers/Valium/Heroin

Heroin use is rare in the straight and LGBT community. Prescription pills are a bit more common and are often misused to help handle pain, sleep problems, or coming down from other drugs.

These are strong pain killers that are depressants (slow the body down). Effects are fast acting and usually last a few hours, but the drugs can be active in the body for days following.

People describe pain relief and feeling relaxed. Coming off them is the opposite – feeling stressed, anxious and tense.

Other effects include nausea, vomiting, shallow breathing, constipation, tiredness and small pupils.

Risks

- Tolerance quickly develops (i.e. need more to get the same effects). It can make pain problems, sleep difficulties or emotional hassles worse.
- Dependence can quickly occur, where your body and emotions start to rely on drugs to get by, or when the main thing you do is use or deal with come downs.
- Overdose is common due to having too much or mixing these drugs (with each other or with alcohol or other drugs). Because downers can hang around in your body for a few days, people can accidentally overdose.
- It is illegal to have heroin or misuse prescription drugs (buy, sell or use someone else's).

Consider...

- Be aware of how tolerance can affect you.
- Don't use when drinking or using other drugs.
- Never inject. Drinking, smoking or shafting (putting it up your bum) is less risky.
- Seek help immediately if someone starts feeling sick, collapses, has seizures (fits), breathes slowly, has cold skin, low body temperature or goes blue.
- If you are using or stop using, seek medical help. Withdrawal can be uncomfortable and can be life threatening.

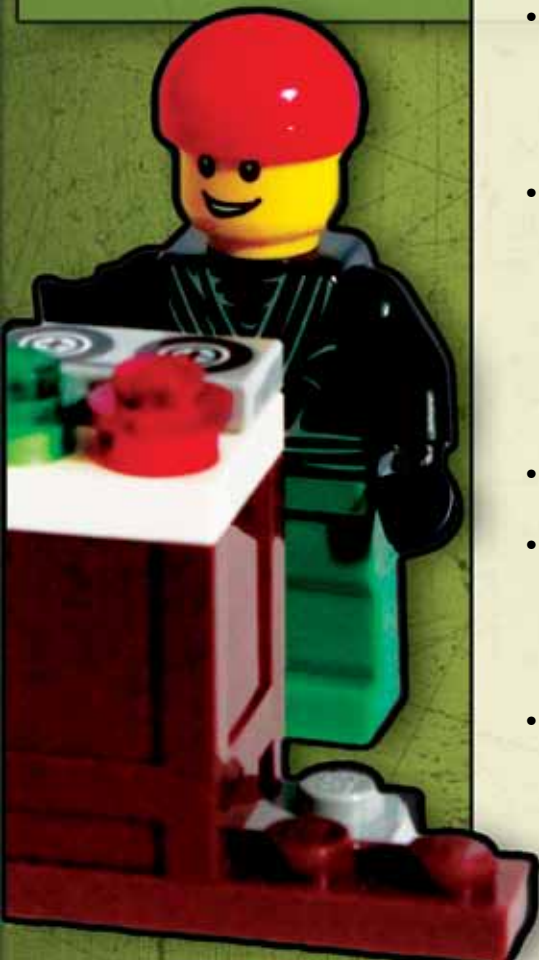
Club 'n Other Drugs

LSD/Cocaine/Ketamine/GHB/Herbals

Different drugs come and go, according to what is available at the time and what is being pushed as 'popular'. Some speed you up, some slow you down and some turn you upside down. These drugs are notoriously unreliable. The effects, risks and dangers are unknown and commonly contain substances that aren't actually the drug you think.

Consider...

- You never know what you are actually getting. Ask people about the effects and where they got their information from. Pill report sites are unreliable.
- Effects will be different for different people, for different drugs, and varies a lot in quality from batch to batch. The right amount and effects for one person will be different for the next. Start with a small amount. Wait long enough to see if there are any effects before taking anymore.
- Mixing drugs (even with alcohol) can result in complicated reactions.
- Feeling unwell? Let friends know what you are taking. Seek medical assistance immediately. If in doubt it's best to react than do nothing. See "overdose" info on page 32
- Play it safe. Take care where you use and where you go. Do not drive and keep safe sex in mind.



Amyl / Poppers

Most people do not use amyl, but around 30% of guys in their 20's reported having used it. Amyl seems more commonly used by older guys and in sex on premises venues.

Amyl (aka 'poppers') is one of a group of drugs called nitrates. Amyl is sniffed, with effects lasting 2 to 3 minutes.

Effects include expanded blood vessels, relaxed muscles, light headedness/dizziness, increased skin sensitivity and sexual awareness, less inhibitions, headaches and nose bleeds.

RISKS:

- Many harms are still unknown.
- Risks include poor decision making (especially unsafe sex) when under the influence.
- Amyl effects blood pressure. Many people have lost consciousness and passed out.
- Amyl can interact with other drugs, especially Viagra. This has caused people to collapse and has resulted in death.
- Swallowing it will cause poisoning and severe sickness. It also burns if it touches someone's skin.

Consider...

- You don't need amyl for good sex. Relax and enjoy sex naturally and drug free.
- It's okay to say no to partners and not use it. If he wants to use it, it is okay to ask him to do it away from you and before having sex.
- It's very smelly stuff. Open windows to allow fresh air in.
- Not using is the safest option. If you are using, take it slowly and pace yourself. Small amounts at a time.
- If it touches your skin it will burn!
- Don't use when drinking or using other drugs (especially Viagra and prescription meds).
- Seek help immediately if someone starts feeling sick, collapses, or has headaches.

Cigarettes

Smoking rates are double in the LGBT community than the general population and especially high among lesbians. But not everyone smokes with around 60-70% of young gay guys choosing not to smoke.

Cigarettes contain nicotine which is a stimulant - they speed up the messages to and from the brain. Some of the effects include raising blood pressure and heart rate, less blood flow to fingers and toes, dizziness, nausea, less appetite, bad breath, and weakened senses of taste and smell.

RISKS:

- Cigarettes are highly addictive. Our bodies quickly get used to them and crave more cigarettes.
- Missing a great opportunity. Many people don't want to kiss or be with someone who smokes.
- They are also very expensive, leaving less money for other important stuff.
- Long term effects include cancers and illness, and sexual dysfunction (can't get it up) and fertility issues (you might want to have a family in the future!).
- Smoking is linked to having bad skin and getting wrinkles at a younger age.



Consider...

- Become more kissable There is no 'safer way' or amount that can be smoked.
- Try to cut back, smoke less and have smoke free days.
- Eat well and keep your fitness up.
- Avoid other people's smoke. Try not to hang out in the smoking areas.
- See your GP or consider contacting Quitline for help to quit.



Sex, Drugs & Rock n Roll

Playing it safe means having an awesome time, feeling good about yourself and not having to worry about it later.

What do you want? What are you after and what does it mean to you? Casual sex, monogamy, love? What do you want it to be like?

Communicate what you want. In order to get the type of sex or relationship you want, you have to communicate your wants, needs and limits (what you will and will not do) with your partner/s.

Safe sex is respect. Respecting yourself and others means playing it safe - use condoms, lube, or dams and gloves every time.




Communicate and negotiate what you want. Alcohol and drugs can make communication difficult. Make sure you let your partners know what you want and stick to the plan of safe sex, regardless of being caught up in the mood or if they aren't interested in safer sex. You can always say 'no' and you never have to do things you are unsure about doing. You don't want to regret what you did, like being talked into bare-backing or feeling cheated and used after.

Intimacy can be hot! Respect yourself and who you're with. Only play if it feels right, if you're into them and everyone is using protection.

Think about it. Alcohol and drugs can cloud the decisions we make. For example not thinking of usual precautions like safe sex, or hooking up with people you normally wouldn't go for. It can be easy to not think about risks, but being out of it isn't an excuse for unsafe sex. Enjoy the moment, but be safe every time to prevent having any regrets or be stuck worrying about HIV or STI's afterwards.

Be prepared. You might get lucky! Carry condoms, dams, lube and gloves, and use them every time. No exceptions.





Peak performance. Alcohol and drugs might make you feel more like having sex, but often they can reduce performance (like make it harder to get it up, keep it up and have less sensation).

Take care when out of it in public. Stick with friends and don't go off alone. Intoxicated people are often targeted for sexual assaults and bashings.

Avoid mixing drugs. Combinations of drugs make the effects dangerous and impair decisions. People have collapsed and overdosed from taking combos of either alcohol, Viagra, meth/ecstasy and amyl.

Have sexual health checks every 3 months. If you have had unprotected anal sex (topped or bottomed) or other unprotected sex, get to your GP / Sexual Health Clinic ASAP (in 72 hours). There are treatments available (such as PEP) which can help reduce the risk of HIV and STIs. This isn't just for the boys - there are risks for women too, such as the transmission of STIs.

"I think when people first start going out often they are by themselves. It can feel scary and weird. Some people might try and take advantage of it as well and all you want is to fit in. Be yourself, say hi to people and just do what you like. You will meet cool people who respect it."

B 19 years old



Drugs, Laws & Your Rights

Laws about alcohol and drugs vary across Australia but in general:

- It's illegal to buy alcohol or tobacco if you are under 18
- You can be charged (or fined) for drinking in public places, being drunk (or out of it) in public or smoking in non-designated areas.
- It's illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol (depending on amount of alcohol and type of licence you have) or have any illegal drug in your system.
- Purchasing or possessing illicit drugs, regardless of amounts is illegal. Passing illegal drugs (even small amounts among friends) is 'supplying' in the eyes of the law.

If you get caught you could face substantial penalties, including a prison sentence. A criminal record can make it hard to get certain jobs, a credit card or a visa to travel or work in certain countries.

If you are approached by the police, it's wise to be polite and helpful. Tell them your name, address and date of birth. If you're under 17, you must have a support person with you in a formal police interview.

Depending on where you live there may be a **LGBT Police Liaison Officer**. These Officers have a greater understanding of LGBT issues. Ask for them if you need help!

It is also against the law for anyone to discriminate against you on the basis of your gender or sexuality. If this happens tell someone (see resource list in back)!

By law, you must tell the police your name, date of birth and address. Then you have the right not to answer any more questions and you can ask for a lawyer.



Feeling Good

Feeling good (physically, mentally and emotionally) is about looking after yourself – making good choices, controlling your stress and keeping a positive attitude to life (even when things are tough).

Depression, stress, anxiety and negative thoughts about life are more common amongst LGBT young people. This is because of the negative impacts of homophobia and the added stress in coming out.

As an LGBT person, we are often exposed to some unique stressors throughout our lives which can affect how we feel about ourselves. Coming out, worrying about how others may react, fighting off homophobia (and maybe loss of family and friend's support) is all stressful. At times some people may use alcohol or other drugs to try to feel better or to feel accepted.

Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs (even just experimenting) can impact on our mental health and coping as well. At first things might feel better, but commonly people later start to experience depression, anxiety, panic or worse.

you are not alone

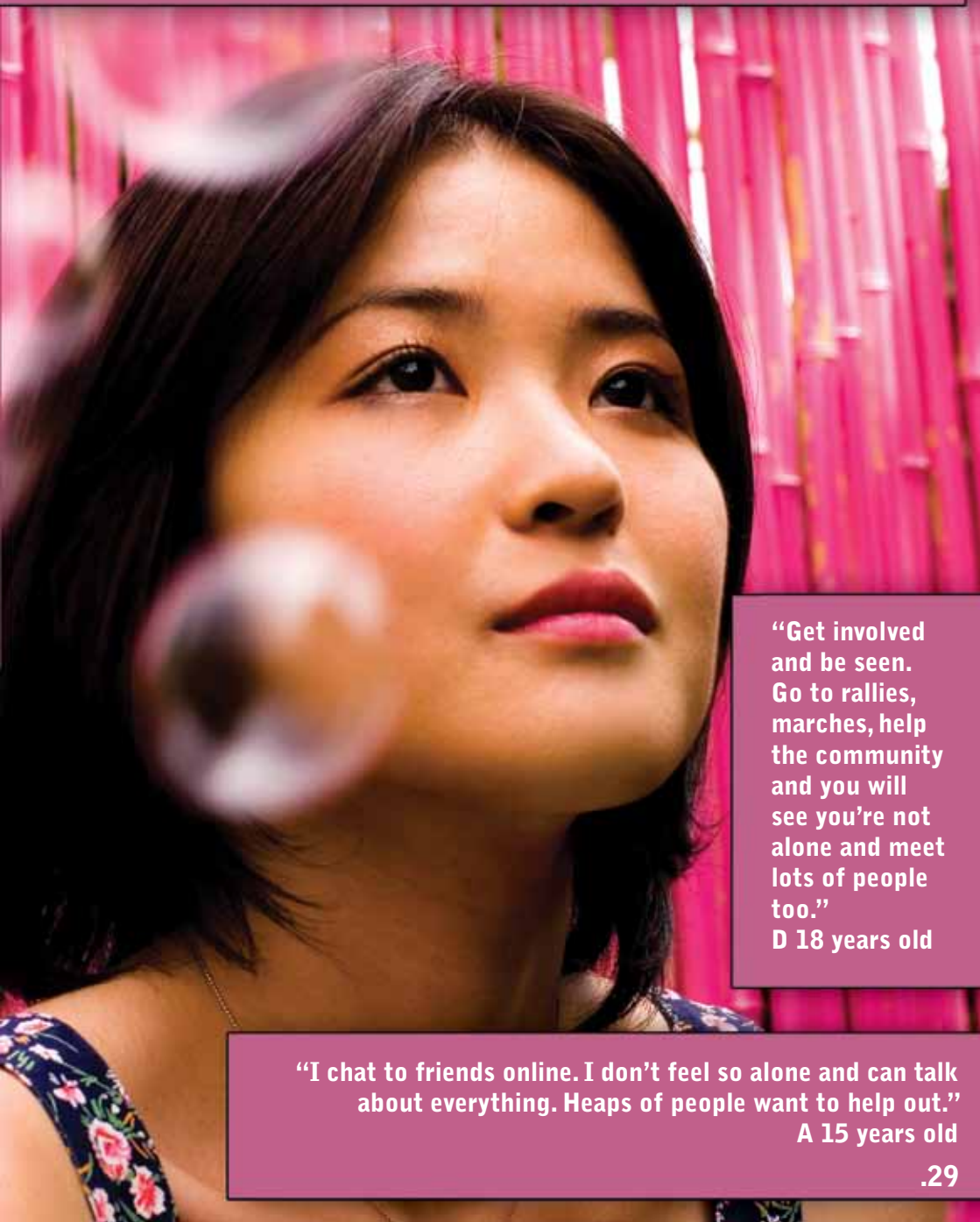
If you are feeling stressed, down or just not quite right then **TALK TO SOMEONE** - a friend, family member, counsellor or doctor. See the 'Resources' section (page 34) for contacts of people who could help.

"I went through a bad time of being really sad and down. But it is a process. Go get help to work it out. I'm much better now. I have learnt a lot, know myself and know where I stand. You come out the other side stronger and feel proud."

T 20 years old

“Two things work for me. One: Get out there and get involved. Two: Self talk. When I’m down, lonely or feel weird, I remind myself that being gay is normal, that I am good and things will get better.”

J 18 years old



“Get involved and be seen. Go to rallies, marches, help the community and you will see you’re not alone and meet lots of people too.”

D 18 years old

“I chat to friends online. I don’t feel so alone and can talk about everything. Heaps of people want to help out.”

A 15 years old

Worried

about a friend?

Some signs that suggest a problem could be ...

- Drinking, using or out of it more often.
- Having lifestyle hassles. For example fighting more with people who care, avoiding friends, missing work/school/uni, money hassles, getting in trouble with the law.
- Drinking or using to the point of getting sick and/or passing out.
- Not looking as good, being sick more often and having hangovers.
- Doing some worrying things, like fighting, drink or drug driving or having unprotected sex.
- Using alone and being secretive.
- Needing to use more and more alcohol or other drugs to get drunk or high.
- A gut feeling that something is wrong.

See the 'RESOURCES' (page 34) for some support services who can help, and places you can contact for more tips to help a friend.



It's not easy to know what to do if you are worried about a friend or someone you know. Some tips:

- Talk about your concerns. Be prepared. Put yourself in their shoes. How would you like to be approached about a problem? Talk about why you're worried rather than criticising or arguing. The goal is to let them know you're worried and see if there are ways to help.
- Start with an "I". "I'm really worried about you", "I'm afraid you're going to get kicked out."
- Listen. If your friend opens up, try not to judge them or tell them what to do. Sometimes just talking and listening can really help. Talk about the good and less good things about their drug use. Remember they are using for a reason.
- Talk with them about their alcohol and drug use by asking about the areas of their life it might be affecting (eg friends, work).
- Try not to talk about it when either of you has been using or drinking.
- Maintain your friendship. Spend time together, have fun, and do the normal things you like to do.
- You might need to tell someone if you are worried about your friend or think they might hurt themselves or someone else.



**Look out for your
mates & others in the
community.**

Overdose

Overdose occurs when someone takes too much of a drug (including alcohol) or a bad combination of drugs. This amount is more than what their body can handle and is different for different people.

Signs of an overdose can be:

- Stumbling and falling over, passing out, falling asleep, collapsing
- Vomiting, feeling very hot or cold, severe headaches
- Clammy, pale, bluish coloured skin
- Becoming very confused or irrational

If you can't wake someone up, it means that they are unconscious.

1. Call an ambulance straight away. Don't waste time and do not leave them alone.
2. Roll them onto their side. Open their mouth to clear away any vomit. If the person is not breathing immediately begin CPR.
3. When the ambulance gets there, tell them exactly what the person has been taking. Ambulance officers are there to help. This information could save your friend's life.

Ambos don't have to call the police unless they're in danger themselves, someone dies, or there are other non-drug crimes such as violence or theft involved. The person's safety is more important than being worried about getting in trouble.

"I attend a support group. It has been a great way to talk with people about stuff and make friends."

T 17 years old



Seeking Help



In order to get the best help possible you need to be open and honest about everything , including alcohol and drug use and your sexual orientation. Doctors, nurses and any other health care professionals need to know anything that can affect your health.

- If you haven't already informed your doctor that you are LGBT (or that you have had sex with same sex partners) it is time to fill them in. Tell them you think it is important that you are open and honest about your identity. Drop subtle hints like "him" or "her" when talking about partners.
- Let your doctor or health care person know about your substance use. Drop some hints, for example "I drink and sometimes use other stuff". They will then ask more questions to find out more.
- Bear in mind it's usually pretty rare for you to receive a negative reaction from a doctor. They are professionals who are dedicated to your health and well being. Try not to worry too much about their reaction; it's very likely you are not their only or their first LGBT patient nor first person who they have met who uses drugs. They should respect your honesty.
- Consider an LGBT and/or alcohol and drug specialist service. Look for signs that show it's LGBT friendly (eg flags, magazines, ad's in the street press or on LGBT sites, etc). Many organisations and medical centres advertise being LGBT friendly, some services are exclusively for LGBT people, and many staff in these places are LGBT themselves.

"Drugs and drinking has really affected me. I go to counselling regularly and talk about things. At times I have had too much stress and relapsed, but I am getting better at coping ... Counselling has really helped me with this."
J 18 years old

Resources & Support

OPEN DOORS YOUTH SERVICE

Open Doors Youth Service provides counselling and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and their families, as well as information for young people, families and other service providers .

(07) 3257 7660 www.opendoors.net.au

QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES (QAHC)

QAHC promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Queenslanders.

Brisbane and South East QLD	(07) 3017 1777
Cairns and North QLD	(07) 4041 5451
Sunnie Coast and Central QLD	(07) 5451 1118
Men's Health Line	1800 155 141
www.qahc.org.au	



GAY + LESBIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION (GLWA)

GLWA is an anonymous LGBT information and confidential phone counselling service operating every evening from 7pm-10pm.

(07) 3017 1717 or 1800 184 527 www.glwa.org.au

HOT HOUSE (ALCOHOL + DRUG SERVICE)

Hot House (Youth Community Team) provides alcohol and other drug counselling and support for young people (under 25) and for significant others.

(07) 3878 3911 or check out Google Maps 'Hot House Brisbane'

ALCOHOL + DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE (ADIS)

24 hour telephone counselling, information and referral service for young people, adults and significant others. They can tell you about services and places to go for help anywhere in QLD.

1800 177 833

Information contained in this resource is intended as a general guide only. Although every effort was made at time of printing to ensure the accuracy of the information, Queensland Health and Open Doors accepts no responsibility for changes in service details or information contained. This resource is not a substitute for treatment or counselling, and it is recommended that prior to making any decisions based on the information in this resource you should obtain independent professional advice. Some contents of this resource has been sourced from young peoples experiences, QAHC, Australian Drug Foundation / Drug Clearing House, and ACON.

SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS

For clinic details near you

1800 155 141 (QAHC) or www.health.qld.gov.au/sexhealth

REACH OUT

Reach Out is a website that provides information on drug use, mental health, sexuality and coming out for young people

[Http://au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

KIDS HELP LINE

Kids Help Line is a 24 hour telephone counselling service for young people (under 25). Counsellors are available to talk about a variety of issues, including substance use, sexuality and other concerns or questions.

1800 55 1800 www.kidshelp.com.au

LEGAL AID

Provides legal information, advice and representation for disadvantaged people on most issues. Advice can be given via phone, face to face or from a Duty Lawyer in some courts.

1300 65 11 88 www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMISSION QUEENSLAND

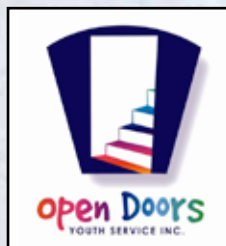
An independent statutory authority established under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. Core business is to receive and deal with complaints of discrimination and to promote human rights in Queensland. Offices in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.

1300 130 670 www.adcq.qld.gov.au





Hot House (Youth Community Team) Alcohol & Drug Service, Metro North Health Service District, is a youth specific alcohol & drug counselling service. Based in Brisbane, the team of allied health staff provide counselling & support to young people (under 25) & significant others. The team provides state-wide training & consultation & liaison services with other agencies, as well as conducts research & participates in health promotion projects. **Phone 07 3878 3911**



Open Doors Youth Service supports, values and celebrates young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, and those who have a diverse sexuality and/or gender identity aged under 24 and their families within Queensland. Open Doors Youth Service exists in order to build resilience in young people with diverse genders and/or sexualities through facilitating opportunities to receive support that meets their identified needs, to connect to community in a safe, social space, and to have positive relationships in their lives. "Pride for life". **www.opendoors.net.au**

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