



# Mood disorders in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBTQ) communities

## What this fact sheet covers:

- Vulnerability to depression for GLBTQ individuals

## Introduction

Coming to terms with sexual orientation and gender identity, when combined with experiences of homophobia and transphobia (that can involve public insult, verbal abuse, explicit threats and physical assault) can develop greater vulnerability to depression for GLBTQ individuals.

## Key points to remember

Recent research by Suicide Prevention Australia (2009) shows an association between discrimination and violence against GLBTQ communities, and increased risk for suicide and self-harm.

The report details alarming statistics about the significantly higher rate of attempted suicide in same-sex attracted individuals.

Within the GLBTQ communities, there is also a concern that negative body image issues, prejudice and more frequent drug and alcohol use are contributing to poorer mental health. Other factors, such as issues of disclosure, lack of recognition of relationships, ongoing self-censorship and modification of behaviour (i.e. avoiding public displays of affection). However, as with any community group, other factors such as stigma, 'minority stress', substance misuse, lack of support and socio-economic problems are also involved in increasing vulnerability to depression.

It is important for GLBTQ individuals to foster protective factors such as self-esteem, social and family support networks, and inclusive communities, as well recognising symptoms of depression in order to seek help early.

## Where to get more information

- The Black Dog Institute [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)
- Australian federation of AIDS organisations (AFAO)
- Beyondblue: "Fact Sheet 40: Depression and anxiety in gay , lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (GLBTI) [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- Coming Out Australia [www.comingout.com.au](http://www.comingout.com.au)
- Freedom Centre [www.freedom.org.au](http://www.freedom.org.au)
- Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria [www.glhv.org.au](http://www.glhv.org.au)
- Organisation Intersex International [www.oii australia.com](http://www.oii australia.com)
- The Gender Centre [www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)
- Transgender Victoria [www.transgendervictoria.com](http://www.transgendervictoria.com)
- Twenty 10 a place to be you [www.twenty10.org.au](http://www.twenty10.org.au)



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DON'T BE SAD. BE GAY.

Reference: [www.suicidepreventionaust.org](http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org) – 'Suicide Prevention Australia (august 2009) Position Statement – suicide and self-harm among Gay, Lesbian, bisexual and Transgender communities'

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