



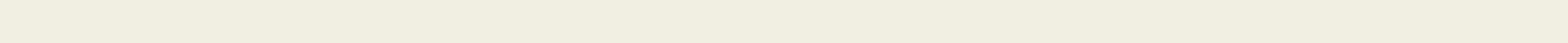
SAFETY IN OUR SCHOOLS KO TE HAUMARU I O TATOOU KURA

An **action kit** for Aotearoa New Zealand schools to address sexual orientation prejudice



NEW ZEALAND AIDS FOUNDATION
TE TUAKAPAPA MATE ABRARAKORE O AOTEAROA





Many people from around the country have contributed to this resource. Special thanks to Karen Nairn, Judie Alison, Simon Harger-Forde, Rachael Le Mesurier, Claire Williams, Jac Lynch, the OUT THERE Project Management Group and the young people/rangatahi who have given their thoughts, ideas and experiences to Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumaru i o tatou kura.

E koekoe te tui, e ketekete te kaka,
e kuku te kereru

The tui sings, the kaka chatters,
the pigeon coos.

Our world is full of diversity, let this
be celebrated and supported....

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Foreword

NZAF

New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF)

E ngā mātāwaka o te motu, tena koutou katoa,
Greetings to all communities.

NZAF wishes to acknowledge the contribution of all our takataapui, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth/rangatahi who have provided guidance at every stage of the development of this action kit. It is youth/rangatahi who recognised that schools need and deserve support and assistance to ensure that they are safe environments for students to learn, to be valued and to grow in order to reach their full potential.

NZAF and Rainbow Youth also wish to thank those schools that have provided leadership through supporting queer youth and ensuring they are warmly welcomed into the fabric of the school community.

All who have been involved in the creation of this resource kit want it to enable teachers, principals and boards of trustees to achieve their goals of providing truly inclusive, safe and compassionate schools for all our young people/rangatahi.

Ngā mihi whanui kia tatou katoa ~ with thanks to all who worked to make this possible.

Rachael Le Mesurier
Executive Director
New Zealand AIDS Foundation



Rainbow Youth



Rainbow Youth is proud to be involved in the Out There Project and to support *Safety in our schools*. Many schools strive to ensure their environment is a safe one for students and staff. This resource provides practical strategies to support sexual and gender diversity.

Rainbow Youth encounters the effects of unsafe environments on queer young people every day and experiences first-hand the negative outcomes. Resources like *Safety in our schools*, and projects such as Out There are invaluable in assisting the work that Rainbow Youth does.

The strategies in *Safety in our schools* represent creative and constructive ways for schools in Aotearoa New Zealand to deal with homophobia and heterosexism. The positive and affirming nature of these strategies comprises practical ways for working with young people and

addresses the isolation that often prevents queer students from fully participating in, and contributing to, school communities.

Schools that provide supportive and nourishing environments for queer students are successful schools. Students whose gender and sexual diversity is cherished and affirmed are students who feel more empowered and who are therefore able to contribute and participate in the school community.

Rainbow Youth would like to acknowledge Amy Donovan for her considerable work and talent in bringing this valuable resource together.

Rainbow Youth Executive Board



Purpose

Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumarua i o tatou kura presents information and strategies to assist Boards of Trustees (BOTs), principals and staff to develop environments for their school communities that are inclusive of sexuality and gender diversity. It is important to understand that some young people/rangatahi in our schools feel unsafe and intimidated. The objective of this kit is to provide practical strategies to enhance school environments so that all students within Aotearoa New Zealand can actively participate and reach their potential – free from sexual-orientation prejudice.

Aotearoa New Zealand research has shown that such prejudice can impact negatively on young people/rangatahi who are, or are perceived to be queer.¹ Increasingly, young people/rangatahi who have gay parents or family members also face this prejudice. Given the predominantly negative status of queer identities in our schools, all young people/rangatahi are a potential target for bullying and harassment.

This action kit uses findings from the Youth2000 study, which involved nearly 10,000 Aotearoa New Zealand secondary-school students. Further analysis of this study's data revealed that 7.8 percent of these young people/rangatahi did not identify as heterosexual. For the first time, we have research that provides us with a profile of

the health and well-being of non-heterosexual young people/rangatahi in our schools.

Young people/rangatahi have so much to contribute to our schools, communities and society. They all deserve to be able to participate fully in every aspect of school life, free from intimidation and bullying. Schools are required to provide safe and supportive environments, and to achieve this there is a need for a resource like *Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumarua i o tatou kura* that provides practical strategies. We hope you find this action kit a useful tool for your school.

Amy Donovan

OUT THERE project coordinator

¹ Fenaughty, J. (2000). *Life on the seesaw: An assessment of suicide risk and resiliency for bisexual and gay male youth in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland.

A word about the language used in this resource



Queer

“Queer” is a reclaimed word that is often used collectively to describe gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, fa’afafine and intersex (GLBTI) identities. While many people use this term, it is acknowledged that it is not the preferred term for everyone. Because of its inclusive nature, however, “queer” will be used in this action kit to encompass all non-heterosexual identities.

An American researcher² reported that many young people today prefer the word “queer”. As one young woman commented:

“I love it [queer] because, in one word, you can refer to the alphabet soup of gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning, heteroflexible, omnisexual, pansexual, and all the other shades of difference in that fluid, changing arena of human sexuality”.

It is important to recognise that the word “queer” is used primarily as an inclusive term to describe the full range of non-heterosexual communities – and not as a specific term for an individual’s particular sexual identity.

Consequently, we would not recommend that school management or staff refer to students as “queer” unless they self-identify as such.

For the purpose of this action kit, “queer” will be used to include those young people/rangatahi

Queer-based prejudice

who are perceived as queer and those who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. “Queer-based prejudice” is discrimination, harm or injury directed at people from a basis of their actual or perceived queer sexuality or gender identity. This prejudice can be explicit, taking forms such as physical abuse and bullying, as well as implicit, in forms such as exclusion or comments that reinforce heterosexual identities as being superior.

Queer-based prejudice has three principal features. First, it is an attitude, an evaluation and a judgement. Second, it is directed at a social grouping and its members. Third, it is negative, involving hostility or dislike. “Queer-based prejudice” is an appropriate concept to acknowledge and use, encompassing as it does, prejudice directed at individuals and groups of people.


² Wolffe, S. (1993). ‘Queer’ definition changes with time. Free Republic: A conservative news forum. < www.209.157.64.200/focus/f-news/1018084/posts#comments > (last accessed 10 July 2004).

How Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumaru i o tatou kura

fits with existing requirements for schools

	Legislation	National Education Goals (1990)	National Administration Guidelines (1990)
<p><i>Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumaru i o tatou kura</i> is an action kit designed to complement existing relevant legislation, strategies, curriculum, professional standards and frameworks for schools, to ensure that it is appropriate for and responsive to the information needs of Aotearoa New Zealand schools.</p> <p>Some of the information below is reprinted with permission from the New Zealand PPTA's resource, <i>Guidelines on affirming diversity of sexualities in the school community</i>. Available from www.ppta.org.nz</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 reinforces everyone's right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds that are prohibited under the Human Rights Act.</i>• <i>The Human Rights Act 1993³ sets out 13 grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, including sexual orientation. A school may breach the Human Rights Act if it allows a school environment to be hostile towards students who are attracted to, or perceived to be attracted to the same sex.</i>	<p>The national educational goals set by the government include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The highest standard of achievement, through programmes, which enable all students to realise their full potential as individuals ...</i>• <i>Equality of educational opportunity for all New Zealanders, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement.</i>	<p>The National Administration Guidelines include the requirement to:</p> <p>Provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students.</p>

³ Unfortunately, at present, the Human Rights Act 1993 does not cover discrimination based on gender identity.



22.9 % of non-heterosexual students report having a significant number of depressive symptoms that are considered to be serious and in need of professional intervention.*

*Le Brun C., Robinson E., Warren H., Watson P.D. (2004) Non-heterosexual Youth - A Profile of their Health and Wellbeing: Data from Youth2000. Auckland: The University of Auckland.



Professional Standards (1998)

The Professional Standards for Teachers⁴ requires that teachers:

Demonstrate expertise and refined strategies in the development and maintenance of environments that enhance learning by recognising and catering for the learning needs of a diversity of students.

Acting with respect towards all students, including those who are queer, is part of meeting national education goals, standards and requirements.

Curriculum (1999)

Three of the four Aims of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum⁵ are directly relevant to the affirmation of a diversity of sexualities and gender identities.

The aims are for students to:

- A. *Develop the knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes needed to maintain and enhance personal health and physical development*
- C. *Develop understandings, skills and attitudes that enhance interactions and relationships with other people*
- D. *Participate in creating healthy communities and environments by taking responsible and critical action.*

The descriptor for “relationships with other people” makes direct reference to sexual orientation:

Students also develop the knowledge and interpersonal skills to enable them to interact sensitively with other people. They learn to evaluate the impact that social and cultural factors have on relationships, in particular, the impacts of stereotyping and of discrimination against individuals on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, age, economic background, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs or different abilities.

Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (2002)

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) is based on a positive youth-development approach. One of the key principles of a youth-development approach is acknowledging the importance of young people/rangatahi being connected. Typically, the more settings there are where young people/rangatahi feel welcomed, valued and understood, the better. The first aim of the YDSA is that:

All young people/rangatahi have opportunities to establish positive connections to their key social environments.

The YDSA also identifies young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as a group with specific issues, including:

- *Discrimination and harassment in schools*
- *Access to support groups and programmes.*

The YDSA provides a framework to help identify the actions that schools can take to support the positive development of young people/rangatahi within the school environment. The YDSA is obtainable through the Ministry of Youth Development’s website www.myd.govt.nz

⁴ Supplement 1 of the Interim Secondary Teachers’ Collective Agreement.

⁵ Ministry of Education. (1999). *Health and physical education in the New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, NZ: Learning Media.



Youth Health: A Guide to Action (2002)

Youth health: A guide to action identifies the risks associated with the lifestyles of young people/rangatahi that may make them particularly vulnerable to mental and physical health problems. Its first goal is a safe, more supportive environment for New Zealand's young people/rangatahi.

The guide to action identifies the specific health issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people/rangatahi. Further, it identifies that the primary need of this group of young people/rangatahi as being "... support. Teachers, school counsellors and school-based health professionals are likely to be the first to identify pressure points for these young people/rangatahi".

The guide specifies that it is important for schools to acknowledge and respond to the needs of those young people/rangatahi who are perceived to be different in ways such as their sexual identity. *Youth health: A guide to action (2002)* is available through the Ministry of Health website www.moh.govt.nz

In our Hands: New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (1998)

This strategy has been developed to assist non-government agencies and communities, such as schools, to develop processes for the prevention of suicide and for the assessment of their communities' support for young people at risk. The strategy includes several objectives to progress the achievement of this goal, the most relevant to schools being:

- *Support for families/whanau to increase the well-being of their young people/rangatahi*
- *Promotion of opportunities to enable young people/rangatahi to develop and affirm their own identity*
- *Support for initiatives that address social inequality, discrimination and abuse where they impact on young people/rangatahi.*

This strategy is available through the Ministry of Youth Development website www.myd.govt.nz

Health-promoting Schools

Many schools in Aotearoa New Zealand have implemented the World Health Organization's (WHO) health-promoting schools model. Health-promoting schools (HPS) are schools that display, in everything they say and do, support for, and commitment to enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral well-being/hauora of the school community. The rationale for HPS is that health promotion enhances the well-being/hauora of individual students as well as the social climate in the school, and enables students to achieve better learning outcomes.

This model, with its focus on holistic well-being/hauora and supportive environments for students, provides an excellent framework for addressing issues of social justice, discrimination, and sexual and gender diversity within the school community. For more information, please refer to the Health-promoting Schools website: www.hps.org.nz

OUT THERE and the Youth2000 study



The Youth2000 study was instigated by the University of Auckland's Adolescent Health Research Group and involved nearly 10,000 students. The study gathered a wide range of data on all aspects of the participants' lives, including physical health, emotional health, family life, friends and community life.

Of particular interest to OUT THERE was the study data pertaining to students' same-sex attractions. After discussions with the Adolescent Health Research Group, a further investigation of the data was commissioned by OUT THERE. The sample of young people/rangatahi included those students who responded as being attracted to the same sex, both sexes, neither sex or not sure.⁶

This is the first such analysis carried out in Aotearoa New Zealand, and consequently presents an invaluable opportunity to focus on the well-being/hauora of same-sex-attracted young people/rangatahi within our society. Aotearoa New Zealand has a valuable body of qualitative research on queer youth within the education system. The additional Youth2000 study provides complementary data from a large national sample. Creating a profile of these students will allow for the development of evidence-based, health-promotion strategies and provide a rationale for policies and practices that promote the inclusion of queer young

people/rangatahi within schools and the wider community.

Refer to www.outthere.org.nz for a downloadable version of the full Youth2000 research report: *Non-heterosexual youth: A profile of their health and well-being*.

A summary sheet of the key findings can also be obtained from OUT THERE outthere@nzaf.org.nz or the New Zealand AIDS Foundation info@nzaf.org.nz

⁶ "Neither" and "not sure" responses were included in the non-heterosexual sample because they did not identify as being heterosexual. It is possible that young people/rangatahi selecting these options did so because they were reluctant to identify as being attracted to the same sex owing to the associated stigma. The possibility also exists that the students identifying as "unsure" may later develop attraction for the same sex or both sexes.

Young people/ rangatahi speak

The views of queer young people/rangatahi were integral in the development of this action kit, and from the outset the ideas of non-heterosexual young people/rangatahi were sought (via an email questionnaire) and incorporated. It was important that this resource provide young people/rangatahi with an opportunity to voice their experiences of being queer within the Aotearoa New Zealand education system. Additional feedback was gained in relation to two questions:

1. *What is/was challenging about being queer in an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school?*
2. *How could schools be more supportive of queer identities?*

Responses to the first question are identified below. The responses to the second question are incorporated into the section on developing and maintaining a safe and supportive school learning environment.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of respondents identified their schooling experience as challenging, and outlined a number of reasons for this. Their comments provide a powerful and complementary voice to the statistics gathered from further analysis of the Youth2000 study data, commissioned by OUT THERE.

Importantly, this record of students' voices allows them to communicate their experiences of being queer within an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school.

Survey responses are identified by "yps" (young people/rangatahi speak).⁷

"My school was a small country high school. Everything was homophobic and I didn't even trust my school counsellor to tell her. In school I felt I couldn't tell anyone cos even most of my friends turned on me. I was scared that the teachers would treat me different to the other students" (Sarah, 22; yps).

"There was no gay presence" (Kelvin, 20; yps).

"The bullying, the name-calling – even association with gay people can lead to bullying"
(Hugh, 16; yps).

"The institutionalised heterosexism – the assumption that all students are straight"
(Lewis, 21; yps).



⁷ The majority of young people/rangatahi who responded to the email questionnaire requested that their real name be used in this resource.

"The biggest thing for me was before I had properly 'come out' the word had gotten out and the boys thought it was the best thing to happen to our school. Because of how the boys reacted all the girls decided that being a bisexual was in and tried cracking because I had been labelled the school 'lesbian'. This was crazy because I didn't properly get to address how I felt about being queer before I was labelled queer and people assumed me to be an expert on the topic" (Kiritapu, 20, yps).

"The social isolation, the lack of understanding and knowledge" (John, 23; yps).

"I couldn't be myself to anyone"
(Andrew, 21; yps).

"The ever-present prejudice – most people don't even think about it. It is hard to know who is really homophobic, who is ignorant and who is doing it just because everyone else is doing it. Hard to tell who will be ok with knowing about your sexuality and who will reject you because of it – particularly when you are thinking of coming out to your friends at school because once you are out ... well. The risk of harassment ... for example, there's a guy who gets hassled all the time because people think he is gay – they call him 'gay [boy's name]' to his face and throw things at him and general bullyish stuff" (Jessie, 17; yps).

"I felt like I didn't belong. I was bullied and spat on" (Phil, 22; yps).

"Staff attitudes: being told that I couldn't use the toilets because my gender was unclear; staff refusing to use the correct name and pronouns – despite warnings from management that they could be accused of discrimination" (Maria, 19, genderqueer; yps).

"Teachers saying homosexuality is wrong"
(Bryden, 17; yps).

"Not having anyone that I could talk to. I was so unsure about being gay. It wasn't spoken about in health classes or anywhere. That is why it took so many years of hating who I was, cos I didn't know who I was. I find people put down or talk down to things/issues that they don't know anything about or just don't understand" (Marama, 22; yps).

The majority of queer young people/rangatahi who responded to the email questionnaire emphasised the need for schools to provide role models, resources, social support groups and inclusive education.

Positive experiences

Although a number of the respondents focused on the challenges of New Zealand secondary-school environments, not all reported experiences were negative:

"I am bisexual and have got no hassles. People know my sexual orientation. A few years ago there was a 'Q-club' for lesbians and we have a few Rainbow members"
(Female student, girls school).⁸

The Youth2000 report found that 85.9 percent of non-heterosexual students stated that they felt "ok" about school or that "they liked it", and the majority (75.5 percent) of students also felt that they were part of the school.

⁸ Nairn, K. and Smith, A. (2003). Taking students seriously: Their rights to be safe at school. *Gender and Education*, 15 (1), pp. 133–149.

About one-third of non-heterosexual students reported that it was unlikely, or they were unsure of their chances of living to the age of 25.*



*Le Brun C., Robinson E., Warren H., Watson P.D. (2004) Non-heterosexual Youth - A Profile of their Health and Wellbeing: Data from Youth2000. Auckland: The University of Auckland.



The impact of inadequate support for queer students

Quality teaching

Schools must maintain awareness of situations and issues where there is potential risk. Not supporting GLBTI students may expose schools to significant risk and impact negatively on young people. Important issues to consider are:

- *Legal obligations. Schools have legal obligations to protect all students. Consequently, schools may face legal proceedings should a non-heterosexual or queer young person feel that they were discriminated against within a school environment and not supported by staff and school management.*
- *Students' well-being/hauora. Considerable research and a number of ministry documents identify the role schools can play in supporting queer students. While such support can enhance the resiliency of queer young people/rangatahi, a lack of support may compromise their health and well-being.*
- *Academic outcomes. It is well documented that well-being is a major factor in students' academic outcomes. Schools that support the well-being of queer students, by developing the skills of teachers to accommodate sexual and gender diversity in the classroom, will also foster students' academic attainment. Such an approach is in line with "quality teaching".*

The Ministry of Education's best-evidence synthesis on quality teaching for diverse students shows that the way subjects are taught in the classroom is the most important factor in students' outcomes. Quality teaching (QT) influences the quality of student participation, involvement and achievement. One of the characteristics of QT is that "quality teaching facilitates the learning of diverse students and raises achievement (including social outcomes) for all learners".⁹

Ultimately, quality teaching is about capitalising on students' diversity in order to improve their academic success. In this framework, diversity is seen in a positive light as a means to improve educational attainment. For teachers to provide quality teaching it is important that they conceptualise diversity as including the sexuality and gender diversity of their students.

⁹ Alton-lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.

Prejudice in schools



Prejudice towards queer young people/rangatahi is apparent in many New Zealand schools. It is fuelled by heterosexism, which is the presumption that all people are, and should be, heterosexual. Heterosexism is the belief – stated or implied – that heterosexuality is superior (theologically, morally, socially, emotionally, behaviourally and/or in some other way) to queer sexualities and diverse gender identities.

Queer-based prejudice is a personal and professional issue that can have a serious and detrimental impact on students' feelings of self-worth and their well-being/hauora. It can:

- *Distract a student from study and work*
- *Result in absenteeism and truancy*
- *Impact negatively on school or job performance*
- *Damage personal and work relationships*
- *Affect morale, and physical and mental health.*

The impact of queer-based prejudice can be extensive and can affect all aspects of a student's life. The lack of public and private support can lead students who experience such prejudice to feel isolated, lonely, depressed and sometimes, in extreme situations, suicidal.

“Sometimes I would be at home saying I was sick when I wasn't but then I would become physically sick at the thought of going to school” (Male high school student).¹⁰

A 1999 national study of 821 students and 438 staff by Nairn and Smith (2003) on the safety of queer students found that only 5 percent of the student respondents and 8 percent of the staff respondents thought that lesbian/gay/bisexual students would feel safe at their school.

“If they felt safe everyone would know they were lesbian/bisexual ... ” (Girls' high school student).¹¹

This quote illustrates how non-heterosexual young people/ rangatahi often remain invisible in our schools out of fear for their own safety. Young people/rangatahi constantly monitor, control and condone each other's behaviour. Many males have a very narrowly defined range of acceptable masculine behaviour.

“I got called a gay for writing poetry – because I am a boy”

(Male student, co-educational school).¹²

Reminders of the unacceptability of queer identities and attractions are constant in the form of teasing, insults and bullying. Of concern is that the word “gay” has become synonymous with

anything that is stupid or bad. This is one form of prejudice that predominantly goes unchallenged, as Morgan comments:

“The way ‘gay’ has negative connotations and you hear it all the time at school” (Morgan, 18; yps).

Not surprisingly, queer-based prejudice can compromise the health and well-being/hauora of young people/rangatahi. The fear of being subjected to queer-based prejudice is a powerful force that can prevent GLBTI or questioning young people/rangatahi from making and acting upon decisions about their health. The fear of a negative response can deter queer youth from talking to, and confiding in professionals – such as public-health nurses and school counsellors – about issues that may be impacting negatively on their well-being/hauora.

¹⁰ Nairn, K. and Smith, A. (2003). Taking students seriously: Their rights to be safe at school. *Gender and Education*, 15 (1), pp. 133–149.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

Addressing queer-based prejudice



The power of language

“Prejudice, stereotyping, ignorance and sheer discomfort with the topic of queer sexualities and identities have a large part to play in addressing associated issues”.¹³

Given the complexities around the issue of queer identities, it is understandable that many teachers and schools often struggle in addressing queer-based prejudice.

The most important response to queer-based prejudice is to acknowledge it and then do something about it. At the simplest level this involves:

- *Not assuming the whole world is heterosexual*
- *Not assuming that heterosexuality is superior to any other sexuality*
- *Not supporting prejudice by remaining silent*
- *Not assuming that sexuality issues are similar to gender identity issues.*

When students make racial slurs, most teachers have an appropriate response in their repertoires. When sexual or gender orientation issues are brought up, however, teachers are often unsure how to respond to the situation. The voices of the two students below highlight the importance for teachers to address the derogatory use of the word “gay”.

“‘Gay’ as a derogatory term can get you down eventually too” (Jessie, 17; yps).

“The hardest part was when people would use words like ‘gay’ and ‘homo’ to mean bad. For example, I hate that saying, ‘it was gay’. I found this even harder to deal with than outright homophobia because while such usage is not a personal attack, it implies that it is bad to be gay” (Dan, 18; yps).

Teachers have an obligation to educate students on all forms of prejudice.



Case study: A student in your class comments that a drawing is “gay”.

It is important, as the teacher, that you help the student say what they really mean – rather than simply just condemning the student for making the comment. The following dialogue will illustrate.

Teacher: “When you say the picture is ‘gay’, what do you mean?”

Jane: “I don’t know?”

Teacher: “Is there something that you don’t like about the picture that makes you call it gay?”

Jane: “It’s weird”.

Teacher: “So, why did you say that the picture was ‘gay’ instead of weird?”

Jane: “I don’t know”.

At this point it is also important for the teacher to clarify.

Teacher: “‘Gay’ is a word that is used to describe a group of people who are attracted to people of the same sex. When you use that name to mean ‘weird’ it hurts their feelings. How would you feel if somebody used your name to mean ‘weird’? How would that make you feel if someone said, ‘that picture is so ‘Jane’?”

Further, when teachers hear students using words like “faggot”, “dyke” and “poofter”, they should respond as they would to any discriminatory language – name it, claim it and stop it:

Name it. The use of such homophobic language is discriminatory and entirely inappropriate.

Claim it. That is not permitted in this classroom (or school) because it is highly disrespectful and offensive.

Stop it. I don’t want to hear that language again and if I do ... (state the consequences).

To assist teachers in responding to these situations, it is paramount that policies and processes exist for dealing with any students, teachers, other staff or parent helpers who display queer-based prejudice.



Developing and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment



Acknowledging sexuality and gender diversity is a positive way to address the issue of queer-based prejudice. Education experiences that affirm the sexuality and gender diversity of students have the potential to have a positive effect on the educational opportunities and outcomes for these students, and to improve many aspects of their well-being/hauora.¹⁴

This section is in two parts. The first focuses on strategies within the classroom, and the second focuses on strategies for the whole school.

In the classroom

- Establish classroom guidelines about name-calling and link these to established anti-bullying policies.
- Address all name-calling immediately.
- Take advantage of “teachable moments”; for example, when a student calls another student “gay” in class.
- Make no assumptions about students’ sexuality or gender identity and that of their families/whanau.
- Educate by using correct terminology, but reiterate to young people/rangatahi that identities are self-chosen and should not be imposed on people.

- Make certain that students, including those with impairments, are exposed to accurate information about queer identities.
- Display positive visuals and role models.
- Encourage teachers to set project/essay topics that involve some aspect of queer culture relevant to the particular topic. For example, history: the Homosexual Law Reform Bill 1986; art history: Leonardo da Vinci; English: Dare, Truth or Promise by New Zealand writer Paula Boock.
- Ensure that HIV / AIDS is aligned with an unsafe behaviour, sexual or otherwise, and not with a sexual identity.
- Allow young people/rangatahi to self-identify and respect their choices – rather than just assigning them an identity that they may not wish to be labelled with.
- Provide educational opportunities for students to learn about queer identities and to reflect critically on the issues that impact on queer identities and families/whanau.
- Talk with other educators and school counsellors about how they support queer students in the classroom.

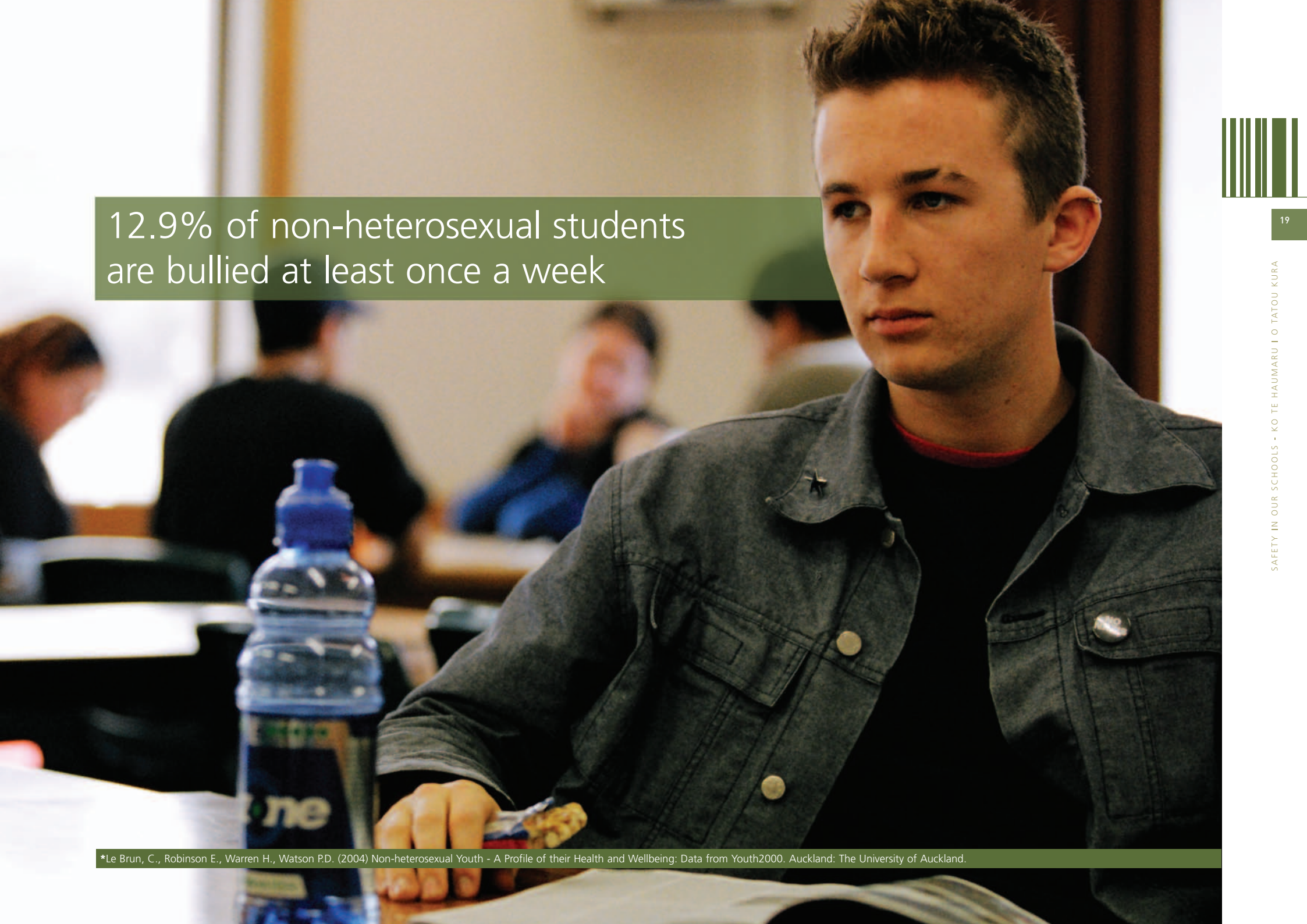
For the whole school

The classroom is not the only place in which safety is an issue. A whole-school approach requires action beyond the implementation of the formal curriculum within a classroom. It also means ensuring that policies, guidelines, procedures and practices reinforce the messages students learn through curriculum content. It is important to consider the whole school environment and to determine ways to make it a safe place for all students.

Schools need to:

- Provide curriculum and schooling experiences that value, acknowledge and respect diverse queer identities and the diversity of families/whanau.
- Provide curriculum and schooling experiences that value, acknowledge and respect multiple masculinities and femininities.
- Challenge the assumption that all students are heterosexual.

“More often than not it’s the straight kids that need to know it is ok to be gay – more so than the gay kids themselves” (Sarah, 22; yps).



12.9% of non-heterosexual students
are bullied at least once a week



*Le Brun, C., Robinson E., Warren H., Watson P.D. (2004) Non-heterosexual Youth - A Profile of their Health and Wellbeing: Data from Youth2000. Auckland: The University of Auckland.



This can be achieved by:

- *The management and staff working to increase the visibility of queer issues and identities within a school.*

“The issue of prejudice against gay people tends to be largely ignored at my school, despite it being ever present. So it would be nice to have some pamphlets on organisations like Rainbow Youth and to have some proper teaching in health; perhaps, someone coming and giving presentations to the teachers and students would be useful?” (Jessie, 17).

- *School management taking a public lead in supporting the sexuality and gender diversity of its students.*

“We need school management change where they begin to acknowledge and support queer issues and students” (Andrew, 21).

For examples of best practice from Aotearoa New Zealand schools refer to the PPTA's guidelines on affirming diversity of sexualities in the school community at www.ppta.org.nz

- *Scheduling professional development for all staff around:

 - *The legal obligations of the school and staff to create a supportive environment for queer students*
 - *The issues impacting upon these young people/rangatahi*
 - *Practical strategies to create supportive environments.**
- *Ensuring school mission statements are inclusive of queer young people/rangatahi.*
- *Ensuring that the school has clear processes in place for addressing sexuality and gender-based bullying, which all students are aware of and encouraged to abide by. Young people/rangatahi need to know who they can go to if:

 - *They want support for their sexuality and/or gender identity and need to talk confidentially*
 - *They are being bullied or are concerned about any bullying they witness.**

“I would like to see the following up on bullying cases and the acknowledgment of the implication of homophobia” (Julie, 20; yps).

- *Obtaining and displaying posters from queer services and youth organisations that promote acceptance and inclusion of queer identities.*
- *Including books and resources in the school library and counsellor's office on issues relating to queer students and queer families/whanau.*
- *Reviewing school forms for sensitivity to diverse family structures.*
- *Informing staff of the importance of not making assumptions about the family structure of students.*
- *Publicly supporting students' efforts to create diversity groups/same-sex alliances (refer to the section later in this action kit on diversity groups).*

“Having a group meeting at lunchtimes, talks at school assemblies, counsellors who openly acknowledge their support of queer young people would have been so valuable” (Hugh, 15; yps).



Specific strategies to support the cultural diversity of queer students are:

- *Providing students with non-heterosexual role models from different cultures*
- *Ensuring that teachers have an understanding of culturally appropriate queer terminology, for example, takataapui and fa'afafine*
- *Providing professional development for teachers that discusses the implications a queer identity may have for students from different cultures*
- *Displaying the works of GLBTI authors from different cultures in the school library.*

Most important is that students are provided with differing cultural representations and images of queer people. This ensures that students, specifically queer students, are able to see a number of different ways to be queer. It allows them to see that there is not just one image and/or stereotype that they have to adhere to.

Contact the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, Rainbow Youth or Out There for further information.



Benefits of an inclusive school environment



This section identifies the benefits of a queer-inclusive school environment. These benefits also provide useful responses to the opposition that you may face from parents, school management and other teachers when addressing this issue in your school.

For students, queer-inclusive policies and procedures can:

- *Assist to provide an environment free from sexuality and gender prejudice, where students feel physically and emotionally safe. Such an environment will support students' academic performance and well-being/hauora.*
- *Result in a reduction in absenteeism/truancy. Students experiencing queer-based prejudice will experience policies and processes to support them, which will enable them to feel comfortable in the school environment and more likely to attend.*
- *Ensure students are aware of both national and local queer youth organisations and groups.*

For staff, queer-inclusive policies and procedures can:

- *Create a more harmonious school environment, thus increasing job satisfaction and the quality of teaching.*
- *Provide a process for staff to use that ensures any complaints between students are dealt with fairly, confidentially and without bias.*
- *Increase safety for queer teachers and make for a more pleasant work environment.*



For Boards of Trustees, queer-inclusive policies and procedures can:

- *Reduce or remove the liability of the employer should a case proceed under the Human Rights Act or the Employment Contracts Act because of queer-based bullying or harassment within a school.*
- *Demonstrate to students, parents and the wider community that the school is committed to providing a positive learning environment, free from queer-based harassment and bullying, and thereby committed to enhancing the public image of the school.*
- *Reduce absenteeism and increase job satisfaction for staff and reduce costs related to sickness and other leave.*

For the school community, queer-inclusive policies and procedures can:

- *Increase general awareness and help to avoid the occurrence of any incidences of queer-related bullying and harassment.*
- *Increase the morale of students. A more positive school environment may result in higher productivity and higher academic outcomes.*



Responding to the challenges and myths that schools might face when supporting queer youth

Despite the current legislation, research, and literature that support measures to create supportive school environments for queer students, there may be challenges from members of staff, students and the community. This section aims to provide schools with strategies to address concerns, based on religious conservatism, which the school community may face when supporting queer young people/rangatahi.

Religious conservatism

Sadly, queer identities are often perceived as in conflict with religion, especially with Christianity. This presents particular challenges for some educators and school managers in addressing issues of sexual and gender diversity in their classrooms and schools. It is important to consider the points below in regard to religion and queer identities.

- *Religion and queer identities are not mutually exclusive, and there are many Christian churches that are welcoming and inclusive of queer people.*

- *The content in the Bible can be distorted. For example, what is often not quoted by people condemning homosexuality is that homosexual behaviour is seen as equivalent to:*

- *Eating the fat of cattle, sheep and goats*
- *Planting a field with two, different sorts of seed*
- *Wearing clothing woven from both wool and cotton*
- *Eating rabbits.*

It was not only homosexuality that was punishable by death, so too was adultery, having sex with a woman during her period and cursing your parents.

- *We all have beliefs and values that may need to be put aside in the best interests of the young people/rangatahi we are working with.*
- *Religion is about love, understanding and an appreciation of difference.*

The above points are useful ways to respond to challenges from those students and parents whose objection to inclusive education for queer students is based on a religious perspective. It is imperative that, despite challenges, teachers persevere and provide inclusive education for all students.

Queer-friendly churches in Aotearoa/ New Zealand

- All Saints Metropolitan Community Church (CHCH) ~ www.allsaintsrainbow.net.nz
- Dunedin Methodist Parish ~ www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz
- Auckland Community Church ~ www.aucklandcommunitychurch.org.nz
- St. Andrews on The Terrace (WGTM) ~ www.standrews.org.nz

**Myth: Talking about sexual orientation will promote homosexuality**

People cannot “catch” a sexuality or gender identity, and they cannot be recruited by being around queer people or by being taught by queer teachers. Neither does talking to young people about sexuality issues encourage them into a gay or lesbian lifestyle choice any more than sex education encourages them into promiscuity.

Myth: Same-sex activity for young people is just an adolescent phase

Although it is true that many heterosexual adolescents may have feelings of attraction to the same sex, it is also true that many adolescents who later identify as gay or lesbian are heterosexually active. While activity with, and feelings towards the same sex may be regarded as transitory for many young people, this should be viewed alongside the reality that same-sex attracted youth exist and are often acutely aware of their sexual feelings early in adolescence.

Myth: Children of gay people are more likely to be gay themselves

Research shows that children of queer parents are no more or no less likely to identify as queer later in life.

Myth: Homosexuality can be cured

The notion that queer identities and behaviour can be “cured” is based on the assumption that it is an illness. Historically, homosexuality was included as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association until 1974 when it was removed as a diagnosis (although this has not prevented certain groups from claiming that a homosexual identity can and should be modified). To attempt to “cure” an individual's queer identity or behaviour runs the risk of damaging the psychological integrity of the individual.

Myth: Sexual abuse causes homosexuality

There is no evidence that abused children are more likely to develop a queer identity. This is a statistical fact.

Myth: Homosexuality or transgender people did not exist prior to the arrival of Europeans in the eighteenth century

Before European arrival there were, among Maori, people who were attracted to the same sex and transgender people who lived with varying degrees of acceptance by their whanau, hapu and iwi.

The word used by those Maori identifying as “queer” has been taken from a korero about same-sex attraction of two males. Although the korero does not explicitly indicate that they were same-sex lovers, there was clearly an intense friendship and spiritual bond. This friendship was accepted by their whanau and hapu. Today the word “takataapui” means “an intimate companion of the same sex”, and the modern meaning can include a sexual relationship as well.

Intersex and transgender questioning youth

Intersex and transgender¹⁵ students may present issues that are challenging for schools to address. Such issues are often shrouded by confusion and misinformation and result in inadequate outcomes for intersex and transgender/questioning students. Unfortunately, there is little research on intersex and transgender students within Aotearoa New Zealand. An American study found that transgender students face severe discrimination and harassment in schools, with 89.5 percent of transgender students reporting that they felt unsafe in school.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, transgender students were shown to be at higher risk of dropping out of school and were over-represented in statistics on self-destructive behaviour.

The American Transgender Law Center's¹⁷ two main recommendations on ways of supporting intersex and transgender/questioning students are for schools to:

- *Ensure that the school anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies encompass intersex and transgender/questioning students – and enforce these policies meaningfully.*
- *Educate all educators, managers, counsellors and students about intersex and transgender youth issues.*

Below are some specific recommendations to assist schools in creating supportive school environments for intersex and transgender/questioning students. Importantly, schools can support these young people/rangatahi by ensuring that teachers have an understanding of the issues and that there is a designated safe space in the school for students. Additionally, the visibility of a contact person (who may or may not be the school counsellor) is important for students.

Use correct names/pronouns – according to student self-identification

Issue: Frequently, intersex and transgender/questioning students are not recognised by the appropriate pronouns or names. Students having their gender recognised and validated is important for their well-being/hauora. As anyone can imagine, it is extremely hurtful to be called by a name or pronoun that one does not want, and to do so displays a lack of respect on the part of the speaker. It invalidates a person's identity and the result can be detrimental to well-being/hauora.

Recommendation: Intersex and transgender/questioning students have the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity. This should be regardless

of whether the student has legally changed names. Intentionally addressing a student by the incorrect name or pronoun and refusing to respect a student's gender identity is a form of discrimination.

Toilet accessibility

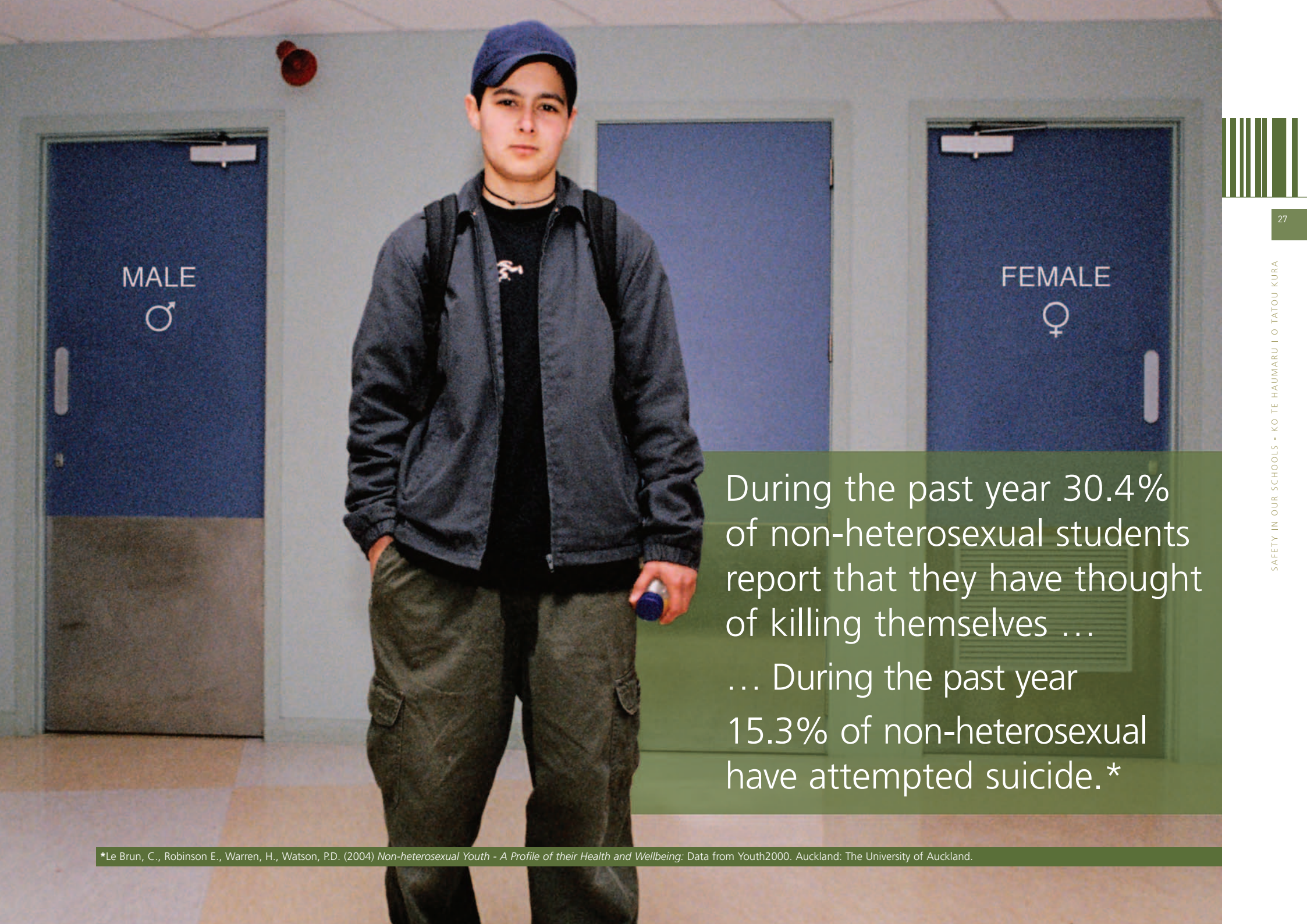
Issue: Many intersex and transgender/questioning students do not have appropriate access to toilets. Some are told to use the toilet that does not correspond to their gender identity, and many are harassed because they are perceived as being sufficiently and stereotypically feminine or masculine. For intersex, transgender and questioning people the lack of safe toilet access is "the most frequent form of discrimination faced, but the least acknowledged by policy makers".¹⁸

Recommendation: All students have a right to safe and appropriate toilet facilities. This includes the right to use a toilet that corresponds to a student's gender identity, regardless of the student's sex that was assigned at birth. Where possible, schools should provide an easily accessible, unisex single stall toilet for use by any student who desires increased privacy – whatever the underlying reason might be. Use of a unisex toilet, however, should always be a matter of choice for a student.

¹⁵ There are a number of identities people use to identify themselves that come under the umbrella of "transgender", and not everyone agrees on what is appropriate descriptive language in discussion. Therefore, it is essential to reiterate the importance of young people self-identifying.

¹⁶ Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN). (2001). *National climate survey*. www.glsen.com
¹⁷ These recommendations are reprinted with permission from the American Transgender Law Center <www.transgenderlawcenter.com>

¹⁸ Virago, S. (2002). A San Francisco Human Rights Commission LGBT committee meeting, 24 September.



During the past year 30.4% of non-heterosexual students report that they have thought of killing themselves ...
... During the past year 15.3% of non-heterosexual have attempted suicide.*

*Le Brun, C., Robinson E., Warren, H., Watson, P.D. (2004) *Non-heterosexual Youth - A Profile of their Health and Wellbeing*: Data from Youth2000. Auckland: The University of Auckland.



Changing room accessibility

Issue: Intersex and transgender/questioning students may also face difficulties in changing room facilities. Gender-non-conforming students will often be harassed –whether in the male or female changing rooms.

Recommendation: Intersex and transgender/questioning students who want to use the changing room corresponding to their gender identity must be accommodated in a way that meets the students' needs. Such accommodation can include:

- *Use of a private area within the changing room*
- *Use of the locker room before or after the other students*
- *Use of a nearby private area.*

It is not acceptable to deny a student the opportunity of physical education (PE), either through not allowing the student to have PE or by forcing the student to have PE outside the assigned class time. Requiring transgender, intersex or gender-non-conforming students to use changing rooms according to sex assigned at birth is potentially very damaging for their well-being/hauora.

Access to sports teams and physical education classes

Issue: Some intersex and transgender/questioning students are required to become part of sports teams that do not fit their gender identity. This is yet one more way in which intersex and transgender/questioning students can have their identities invalidated. Being told repeatedly that one's self-perception is invalid can be extremely damaging to a young person's well-being/hauora.

Recommendation: Generally, students should be permitted to participate in gender-segregated sports and PE class activities in accordance with the students' gender identity. In some situations, legitimate questions about fairness in sporting competitions will need to be resolved on a case-by-case basis. But this exception should not apply to participation in PE classes where the activities are recreational rather than competitive.

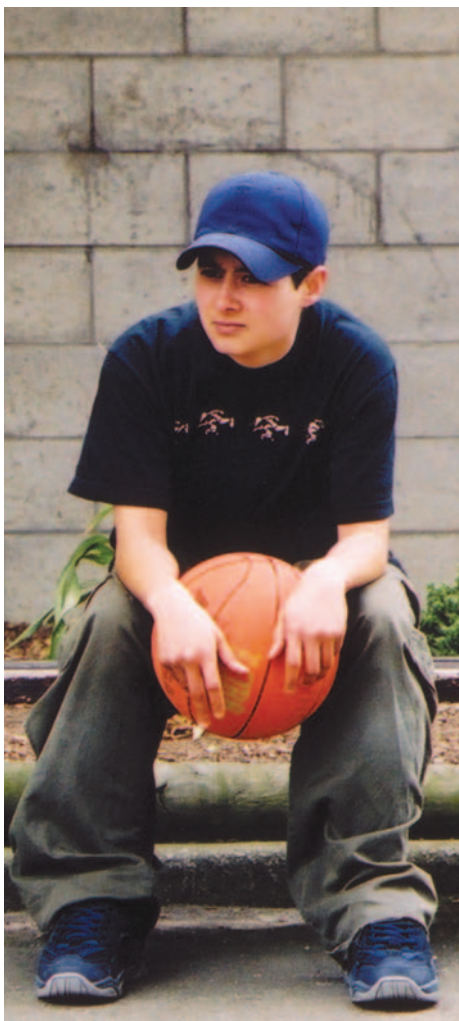
Gender segregation in other areas

The following recommendations cover the main areas where students may find themselves segregated by gender. They do not identify and address all possible circumstances. As a general rule, any time students are segregated by gender (such as classroom discussion, field trip or support/counselling group), students must be permitted to participate in accordance with their gender identity.

Inappropriate uniforms

Issue: Some students are required to wear clothing that is inconsistent with their gender identity.

Recommendation: School management and staff should respect the right of the student to dress in accordance with the student's gender identity. Furthermore, students should not have to choose between male and female uniforms. Some students are most comfortable in clothing that is not clearly male or female, or is a combination of the two.



Unsupportive families/whanau

Issue: Some intersex and transgender students are not openly so at home because of safety reasons or reasons of privacy.

Recommendation: A school should avoid disclosing a student's intersex or transgender identity to the student's parents, where possible, without having first obtained the student's consent.

Role models and access to accurate information

Issue: Often intersex and transgender students may feel that they are alone in the world because there are very few role models for them in schools. Books in schools that talk about the lives of intersex and transgender people are scarce.

Recommendation: Schools should have books on intersex and transgender people. Schools should make sure that everyone is aware that there is a great range of human gender diversity.

A fitting conclusion to this section is found in the following comment from a self-identified, genderqueer young person about the support received from their high school.

"Allowing transgender students to 'blend in' in their new gender. For example, Logan Park High School put me on the school roll as a female; the official position was that I was a girl, and if people didn't like it then they could go to another school" (Maria, yps).

This response, by the management at Logan Park High School is highly commendable. By accommodating Maria's wishes to live as a female within the school community they have validated her identity. Such a response by school management plays a vital role in ensuring the well-being/hauora of students who are addressing issues around gender identity.

Check out the [Out There website](#) or [Contact the New Zealand AIDS Foundation](#) for more information.



Diversity groups



Diversity groups, also known as pride groups or gay/straight alliances, are student-organised school groups that aim to create a safe, welcoming and accepting school environment for all youth – regardless of sexual or gender identity. These groups aim to provide a social, safe and supportive environment for queer students, as well as for those who are perceived as queer, those who are questioning of their identity, or children of queer families/whanau. Such groups may allow queer and heterosexual students to cooperate in addressing issues that affect all students, including harassment, discrimination and bullying stemming from queer-based prejudice. It is important to remember that queer-based prejudice impacts on all students, and that many heterosexual young people/rangatahi have been hurt by this type of prejudice being directed either at them as an individual or at one of their friends or family. Diversity groups assist students to build coalitions and supportive school communities to make schools safer for all students.

Several of the young people/rangatahi who contributed to *Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumarua i o tatou kura* identified that to have had access to a social support group would have been useful.

“A student support group, maybe combined with different high schools, would have given me a lot of help” (Kelvin, 20; yps).

Rangitoto College PRIDE group

The PRIDE group was set up at Rangitoto College in early 2003 to foster understanding and respect for students of all sexual and gender identities. The group chose the name “PRIDE” to express the feeling experienced when students feel comfortable with themselves and confident about their identity – whatever it may be.

The Guidance Department supports PRIDE and can see the value of having this group at school. The PRIDE noticeboard sits alongside other sporting, cultural and activity group noticeboards. PRIDE advertises fundraising sausage sizzles, receives an annual review in the college magazine and publishes notices of meetings in the daily notices. These all contribute to an ongoing awareness of sexual and gender identity issues for both students and staff.

Students have expressed the importance of being part of a group that celebrates all sexualities and gender identities and the feeling of safety, knowing that the school supports this group. In addition, there is the wonderful sense of knowing that there are other gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students in the school.

Head of Guidance
Rangitoto College



The value of such groups cannot be underestimated:

“School’s Out [a Wellington queer youth group] was such a lifesaver!!!” (Bryden, 17; yps).

This comment highlights the importance of social support groups for a number of young people/rangatahi. Having safe spaces where queer and questioning young people/rangatahi can be themselves is invaluable. The benefits of belonging to a high school, gay–straight alliance or equivalent have been documented in research and include increased self-esteem and resilience.¹⁹

For more information on pride groups and gay–straight alliances, please refer to the GSA Network at www.gsa.org and the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN) website at www.glsen.org or contact OUT THERE.



¹⁹ Lee, C. (2002). The impact of belonging to a high school gay–straight alliance. *High School Journal*, 85(3), pp.13–27.

Conclusion

All young people/rangatahi have the right to live free of bullying and discrimination. OUT THERE hopes that *Safety in our schools ~ Ko te haumaru i o tatou kura* will provide the impetus for schools to implement some of the suggested initiatives and strategies. Our young people/rangatahi are our future, and we have a responsibility to assist them in reaching their potential by providing them with the best opportunities.

“And when any of us confront the ugly face of homophobia, it is surely our duty in the new millennium to reject it – to reject the homophobic jokes, the contemptuous put-downs and the inequality”. Hon Justice Michael Kirby, Justice of the High Court of Australia, 2000.

Schools have an important role to play in this issue, and we wish you all the best in implementing changes in your school to make it inclusive of all gender identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Fourteen percent of non-heterosexual students reported that they had missed school once or more than once because they were afraid that someone might hurt, tease or bully them.*



*Le Brun, C., Robinson, E., Warren, H., Watson, P.D. (2004) *Non-heterosexual Youth - A Profile of their Health and Wellbeing*: Data from Youth2000. Auckland: The University of Auckland.

Out There

Vision

The development of Aotearoa New Zealand communities that support and celebrate the sexuality and gender diversity of young people/rangatahi, enhancing their health and well-being/hauora.

OUT THERE is a Joint National Queer Youth Development Project of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation and Rainbow Youth. The aim of OUT THERE is to enhance the well-being/hauora of queer youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. OUT THERE is endeavouring to combat inequality and discrimination through the development of environments that are safe and supportive of young people/rangatahi – irrespective of their sexuality or gender identity. Such environments will be of benefit to all young people/rangatahi who experience the impact of queer-based prejudice.

OUT THERE is active in:

- *Information-resource development*
- *Education and training*
- *Advocacy and consultancy*
- *Research*
- *Community development.*



For more information please contact
OUT THERE:

PO Box 9247, Marion Square, Wellington
Awhina Centre, Level 3, 27 Dixon Street,
Wellington

Email: outthere@nzaf.org.nz

Website: www.outthere.org.nz



New Zealand AIDS Foundation

Rainbow Youth



The New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF) grew out of initiatives by the New Zealand gay community in the mid-1980s. It is a community-based organisation that provides:

- *Health promotion*
- *Free HIV testing*
- *Counselling and support services to people of all sexuality and gender identities*
- *Policy advice*
- *Research*
- *Information services.*

NZAF is a registered charitable trust. We welcome donations to help us reduce HIV transmission and support people living with HIV / AIDS.

Contact details

31–35 Hargreaves St, Ponsonby, Auckland.

PO Box 6663, Wellesley St, Auckland.

Phone: (09) 303 3124 Fax: (09) 309 3149

Email: contact@nzaf.org.nz

Website: www.nzaf.org.nz

Rainbow Youth is an Auckland-based organisation providing support, contact, information, advocacy and education for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine youth.

The strategic vision of Rainbow Youth is to create a society in which all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine young people/rangatahi feel cherished and supported. Rainbow Youth is working towards this through the provision of:

- *Education in schools*
- *Support in the form of social support groups*
- *Referrals to agencies*
- *Events*
- *Advocacy*
- *A voice for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine young people/ rangatahi in order to promote equality and acceptance in Aotearoa.*

Contact details

281 Karangahape Road, Newton, Auckland.

PO Box 5426, Wellesley Street, Auckland.

Phone: (09) 376 4155 Fax: (09) 368 5596

Email: info@rainbowyouth.org.nz Website:

www.rainbowyouth.org.nz



Glossary

This is a quick reference for some of the words used in this resource. Remember that people defy labels, and not everyone will choose to fit into a definition, label or box – no matter how large we make it. Self-identification is particularly important and empowering for young people/rangatahi.

Bisexual. Someone who can be emotionally and physically attracted to both females and males.

Fa'afafine. A Samoan term that describes males living as females. Some Samoan gay men may take on this term, because it is an identity that incorporates a cultural dimension; these men are typically more feminine.

Gay. Someone who is primarily attracted to people of the same sex. The term “gay” is predominantly, but not exclusively, a term used by males.

Gender. A social construct based on a group of emotional and psychological characteristics that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other. Gender can be understood to have several components, including gender identity, gender expression and gender role.

Gender Identity. The inner sense of being a man, male, a woman, female, both, neither, butch, femme or another configuration of gender. Gender identity usually matches with

one's physical appearance but sometimes does not. Gender identity includes one's sense of self and the image that one presents to the world.

Genderqueer. An identity used by people who reject the traditional two-gender model. There are different ways of being genderqueer, and it is an evolving concept. Some believe they are a little of both traditional genders or feel they have no gender at all. Others believe that gender is a social construct, and choose not to adhere to that construct. This term can (but does not necessarily) include any transgender person.

Homophobia. The fear and hatred of, or irrational and distorted view of homosexuality or perceived homosexuality.

Intersex. A person born with an anatomy or physiology that differs from cultural ideas about male or female. Intersex people may be born with “ambiguous genitalia” and/or experience hormone-production levels that vary from those of culturally “ideal” females and males.

Lesbian. A female who is predominantly both emotionally and physically attracted to other females.

LGBTI. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex.

Passing. A term used to describe being seen as the sex that is different from the sex at birth.

Queer. A reclaimed word that is used collectively to describe gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, fa'afafine and intersex identities. While many people use this term, it is acknowledged that it is not the preferred term for everybody. “Queer” is useful as an umbrella term to identify the diverse range of identities that are not heterosexual or do not conform to gender stereotypes.

Queer-based prejudice. Sexuality and gender prejudice referring to all negative attitudes towards a person or people based on sexual or gender orientation, identity or behaviour.

Takataapui. A traditional Maori term that means intimate companion of the same sex. Many Maori use this term because it acknowledges both cultural and sexual identity. “Takataapui wahine” refers to females and “takataapui tane” to males.

Transgender. An umbrella term that describes someone expressing characteristics that do not correspond with those traditionally ascribed to the person's sex. Just because someone is transgender does not mean that they want to have gender reassignment.

Transsexual. A transsexual is someone who has had an operation to become the opposite sex from that which they were born.

Additional Resources

Organisations

New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA)

PPTA is the professional association that represents teachers in secondary schools. One of its goals is to promote equitable access to good quality state education for all young people/rangatahi in New Zealand.

Level 5, 60 Willis St, Wellington.

PO Box 2119, Wellington.

Phone: (04) 384 1988 Fax: (04) 382 8763

gensec@ppta.org.nz

www.ppta.org.nz

New Zealand Association for Adolescent Health and Development (NZA AHD)

NZA AHD is a national network organisation for people who work with young people/rangatahi (those aged from 12 to 25). NZA AHD was founded in 1989 specifically to promote adolescent health and development.

www.nzaahd.org.nz

Agender

Agender is a national network offering social support and information in the area of gender identity.

www.agender.org.nz



Queer youth social support groups

Rainbow Youth provides an array of support groups for young people/rangatahi and parents.
www.rainbowyouth.org.nz

There are a number of other queer youth groups around the country, but because of the changing nature of social support groups, please contact OUT THERE or Rainbow Youth for information on active groups in your area.

Websites

The websites below are useful sources of information.

Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
www.glsen.org

National organisation campaigning to end anti-gay bias in American high schools. Resources for gay-straight alliances, including transgender issues.

GSA Network
www.gsanetwork.org

An American youth-led organisation that empowers youth fighting homophobia and transphobia through gay-straight alliances.

OutProud
www.outproud.org

OutProud, The national American coalition for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, provides advocacy, information, resources and support.

Email lists

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nztransguys/>

An email discussion and contact group for people born or living in Aotearoa New Zealand, and assigned as "female" or "intersex" at birth, but who identify outside those terms, including, but not limited to: transgender, transsexual, female to male, whakatane and so forth.

Books

Snook, I. (2003). *The ethical teacher*. Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore Press.

Tasker, G. (ed.) (2001). *Social and ethical issues in sexuality education: A resource for health teachers of Year 12 and 13 students*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Christchurch College of Education.

How does your school measure up?

This checklist suggests questions that may help in promoting discussion about whether your school environment is supportive of queer students and queer families / whanau. If you feel that your school doesn't measure up, talk with colleagues, school management, the Board of Trustees or the PPTA about implementing some of the strategies identified in this action kit.

- Do school curricula incorporate and acknowledge queer identities and issues?
- Do teachers, counsellors and staff receive professional development training on queer youth issues?
- Are queer students visible in the school environment? Are these students generally supported by their peers? Their teachers?
- Do policies and processes exist for addressing homophobic bullying, harassment and derogatory use of language?
- Are there visible, positive messages/signals about queer identities in your school? For example, a queer youth, social support group, posters, inclusive health education?

Contact OUT THERE, NZAF or Rainbow Youth for assistance, training and support.





"This resource is great. It builds on the PPTA Guidelines on Affirming Diversity of Sexualities in the School Community, produced in 2001, and moves in another direction, incorporating vividly the voices of students as well as recent research evidence. There are a lot of very practical suggestions for ways that schools can manage situations like the presence of a transgender or gender non-conforming student. PPTA is very happy to endorse this resource".



"NZAHD supports people who work with young people/rangatahi and seeks to advance the positive youth development across sectors. Young people/rangatahi's positive connection to their school environment is integral to positive youth development. NZAHD is committed to creating opportunities to support those who work in schools to encourage supportive and inclusive environments for all young people/rangatahi – for queer young people/rangatahi this will require specific effort to counter homophobia in schools. NZAHD affirms OUT THERE! for Safety in Our Schools – this is a brilliant resource that sets the current situation in context well, and challenges us through good examples and the thoughts of young people/rangatahi to take action and make our schools better places for queer young people/rangatahi."

Simon Harger-Forde, National President, NZAHD (New Zealand Association for Adolescent Health & Development).



For more information please contact **OUT THERE:**
PO Box 9247, Marion Square, Wellington, Awhina Centre, Level 3, 27 Dixon Street, Wellington
Email: outthere@nzaf.org.nz Website: www.outthere.org.nz

