QUEERING DATA COLLECTION

GATHERING DATA WITH THE FABULOUS FOLX IN THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

27 September 2023

(Gay) Agenda

What we plan to cover
A very brief history of the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia
Why is it important to think about the queers?
Digging into gender
Intersectionality - a quick introduction
Practical advice – quantitative data
Practical advice – qualitative data

Content warning

- History
- Statistics about issues faced by the LGBTQIA+ community and trans and gender diverse community specifically (e.g. suicide rates, rates of assault etc)

Gender, sex and sexuality

- **Gender** – a person's social and personal identity, as a man, woman, something between or beyond these concepts
- **Sex** – an identity based on primary and secondary sex characteristics
- **Sexuality** – identities, attractions and actions that are sexual and/or romantic

"An individual's gender expression may not conform with their gender identity, just as gender may not correspond with a person's sex assigned at birth or information presented on legal or official documents... Although distinct, concepts of gender and sex rely on each other for meaning."
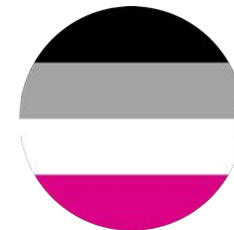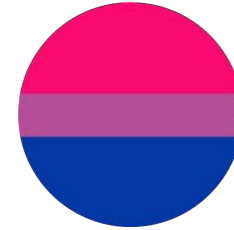
- Guyan (2022)

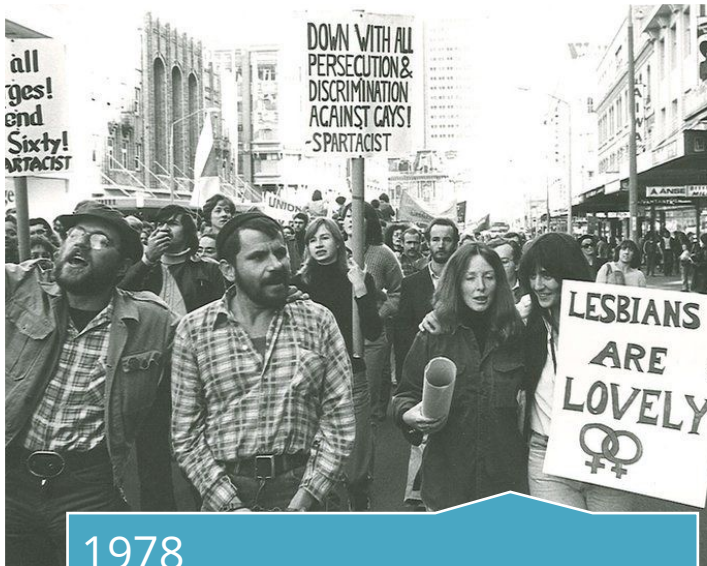Definitions from Guyan (2022)

4

JF

Overview

- Non comprehensive and evolving acronym
  - Lesbian
  - Gay
  - Bisexual
  - Transgender
  - Intersex
  - Queer
  - Asexual
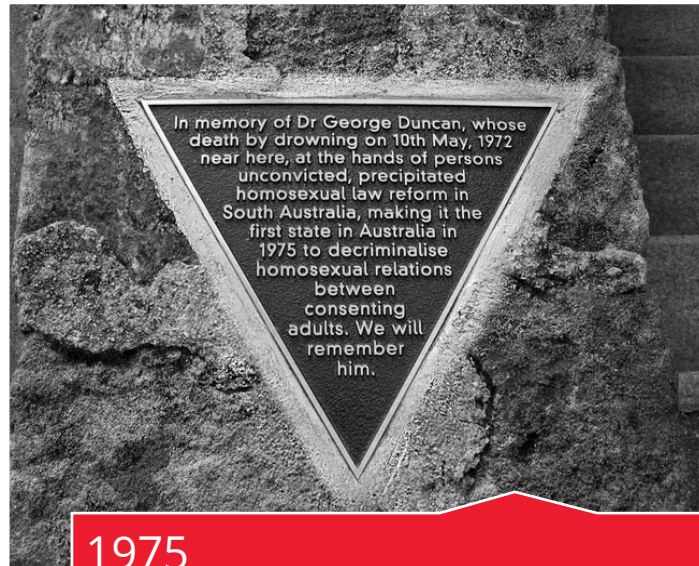 - + (e.g. pansexual, polyamorous, gender queer etc)

History of the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia

1978
- First Mardi Gras parade in Sydney

In memory of Dr George Duncan, whose death by drowning on 10th May, 1972 near here, at the hands of persons unconvicted, precipitated homosexual law reform in South Australia, making it the first state in Australia in 1975 to decriminalise homosexual relations between consenting adults. We will remember him.

1975
- South Australia was the first state to legalise homosexuality

1982
- First reported case of HIV in Australia

Few more key moments

2004
- Howard government excludes same sex couples from the Marriage act

2010
- NSW changes law to allow same sex couples to adopt

2011
- Gillard government changes legislation - X gender for intersex people & trans ppl select gender w/out medical transition

Last one…

2017
- Same sex marriage legalised in Australia after plebiscite

2020
- South Australia last state to get rid of the 'gay panic' defence

MUCH MORE TO DO
- Trans people still have to have had surgery to change gender in NSW

Challenges that LGBTQIA+ people face

- Alarming rates of **suicide** (30% of LGBTQIA+ people have attempted suicide – compared to 3.2% of general population)
- 85% of the LGBTQIA+ community in NSW have homophobic **abuse, harassment or violence** during their life
- People from the community face **discrimination** and a **lack of representation** in all parts of their life

Proud and strong community

Why is it important to think about these things?

- Queer people are part of every walk of life – so we are in your target cohort

- But often invisible in data

- People from the LGBTQIA+ community have often experienced trauma, have negative experiences with research and evaluation, are concerned about their safety and privacy

- Making better use of the data we have to address research fatigue

Digging more into gender

- "Biological sex"
- Gender
- Really encourage you to do your own research
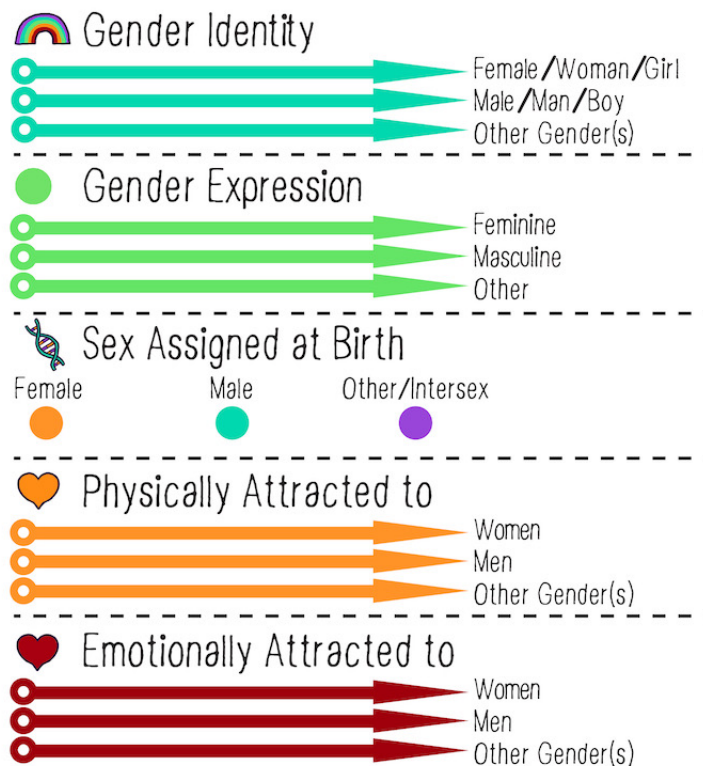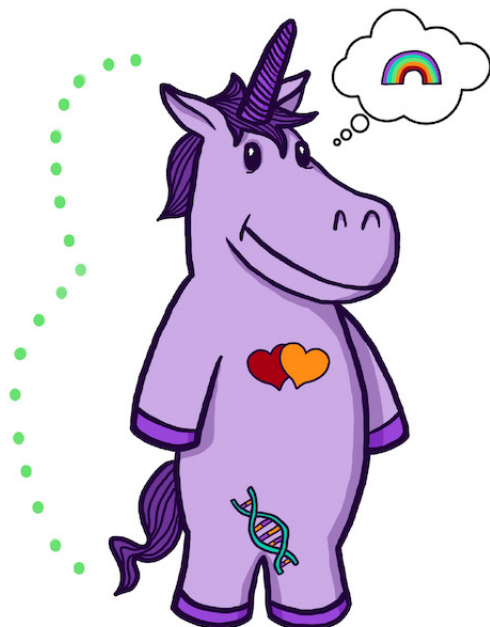
"Biological sex"

X X

female

X Y

male

- Not a solid binary (see for e.g. Swyer syndrome)
- Collection of chromosomal, hormonal and physical characteristics that western medicine general groups into two categories
- Actually huge variety in how that all comes together
- 1.7% of the population have intersex characteristics, the same proportion as have red hair

Gender

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

🌈 Gender Identity
Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
Feminine
Masculine
Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
Female   Male   Other/Intersex

💛 Physically Attracted to
Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

❤️ Emotionally Attracted to
Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

- Transgender/Cisgender
- Non binary/ gender queer, gender non-conforming
- Combination of **identity** and **expression** (masc, androgynous, femme)
- Concept of passing
- Gender identify is very important to people

What trans people face

- Safety is a priority
  - 53% of transgender and gender diverse Australians have been victims of sexual violence or coercion (four times the rate for cisgender people)
  - 61% of transgender people have been assaulted (study from USA)
  - So, for e.g. privacy and confidentiality very important

- Very high rates of self harm and suicide
  - Transgender young people are 15x more likely to attempt suicide
  - 48% of trans young people have attempted suicide
  - Trauma informed as a starting point

- Representation and generalisation

- Disclosure and self-identification

How to be respectful

- Don't assume, ask.
- Listen to how they self describe and follow their lead
- Be aware of the things that trans people face
- Educate yourself in relation to your role/ sector

Some gender related terms/ things to avoid using

Avoid	Instead	Why?
Born a woman, born a man	Assigned female at birth, assigned male at birth (AFAB, AMAB)	Really oversimplifies and disrespects the person's true gender
Preferred pronoun	Pronouns	They aren't just a matter of preference
Transsexual	Transgender	Historical usage and inaccurate
Using someone's previous name (dead name)	Use the name they use	Can cause a lot of pain and dysphoria
Asking about a person's transition choices	Listen respectfully if they choose to volunteer	It's extremely personal and can be unsafe to share
Over apologising or making a big deal about it when you get it wrong	Simple "sorry" or "Whoops" and correct yourself	To avoid that person feeling like they have to make you feel better

Quick intro to intersectionality

- Intersectionality recognizes that people's experiences of oppression and privilege are shaped by multiple identities, including ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, religion, and other factors.

Practical advice – quantitative data collection

"Data is not reality. Data is a record of the social world mediated through decisions made about what or whom to include and exclude. Queer data is not a passive reflection of the social world, but is a productive force that, when handled correctly, can strengthen the efforts of researchers, practitioners and activists to create conditions that enable LGBTQ people to lead full, authentic lives."

- Guyan (2022)

JF

Challenges to queer quant data collection

- Invisibility, e.g.
  - # of same-sex couples living together in census = # of queer couples
  - collapsing trans experiences into LGBTQIA+ experiences
- 'Straightwashing', e.g.
  - removing non-binary reporting categories in the census
- Poor definitions/categories, e.g.
  - Sexual health data on sex with 'same-sex', 'both sexes', 'opposite sex'
- Conflation of identities, e.g.
  - 'catch all' transgender categories alongside 'man' and 'woman'
- Comparability, e.g.
  - "gay", "men who have sex with men", "same-sex attracted"

JF

Ask the right question(s)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	INTERSEX STATUS
How do you describe your sexual orientation? ☐ Straight (heterosexual) ☐ Gay or lesbian ☐ Bisexual ☐ I use a different term (please specify) ☐ Don't know ☐ Prefer not to answer * Researchers may include additional sexualities when appropriate. In these cases, people may identify as multiple identities (such as bisexual and queer), so allowing for multiple selections should be considered.	Were you born with a variation of sex characteristics (sometimes called 'intersex')? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐ Prefer not to answer * Researchers conducting research with people born with a variation of sex characteristics should consult intersex-led organisations such as Intersex Human Rights Australia.

GENDER	
How do you describe your gender? ☐ Man or male ☐ Woman or female ☐ Non-binary ☐ I use a different term (please specify) ☐ Prefer not to answer * Research that is exclusively for trans populations may include additional gender variables when appropriate. In these cases, research participants may select more than one gender variable, so allowing for multiple selections should be considered. For indicators that are specific to trans research, visit the Researchers page on ACON's TransHub.	At birth, you were recorded as: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Another term (please specify) ☐ Prefer not to answer (inclusion optional)

From ACON Recommended Community Indicators for Research

Avoid making assumptions

Avoid invasive questions

JF

Practical advice – qualitative data collection

Signal your safety

Get someone from the community to review your processes and documents

Be clear about your inclusion criteria

Include signifiers/ statements (pronouns, rainbow flag icon, a statement)

Email signatures

Use pronouns when you introduce yourself

Be extra clear about privacy and data confidentiality

Provide safety and empowerment

Planning

- Take time to consider and education yourself on how queer people relate to your evaluation and check your assumptions
- If more likely to recruit queer people – consider involving queer people in the project
- Make sure your materials (recruitment materials, data collection tools) are safe and inclusive (check your language and assumptions)
- Consider how you can be trauma-responsive
- Plan your team to be inclusive (ethics)

Data collection

- For evaluations that are more likely to include queer people OR where queer people might find the process particularly challenging - offer people the opportunity to be interviewed by someone from the LGBTQIA+ community
- Be very careful about privacy and confidentially
- Be trauma responsive

Findings

- If you collect data, you should use it!
- Queer specific findings – consider involving people from queer communities in interpretation and reporting
- Be trauma responsive

Queering your data collection

- Identify language
- Use new approaches
- Address lack of trust – history of data as a tool of social control
- Embrace intersectionality

JF

Read more!

- ACON (2017). *Discussion Paper: Effective and Meaningful Inclusion of Trans and Gender Diverse People in HIV Prevention*.

- Guyan (2022). *Queer Data*, Bloomsbury.

- Rainbow Health Victoria (2021). *Research Matters: Trans and gender diverse health and wellbeing*.

- Transhub (2021). *Researchers*.

JF