

GUEST EDITORIAL



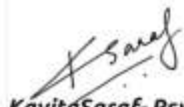
Sexuality: Grey Areas & Diversity.

I take this opportunity to share my understanding, knowledge and spread the same through this newsletter. I truly believe that we need to spread this awareness to each person about the significance of understanding and accepting the LGBTQIA community as a part of our society and not shame them or blame them.

I feel the root of the challenges this community is facing is due to ignorance and lack of awareness amongst us, as "they are only different and not actually difficult". The missing element of it in our basic education system and an effort to include them in our society at every step will remove all the myths and stigmas attached with it. As there are various Mental, physical health challenges the community faces which stems from abandonment, unemployment, lack of support, being in minority, discrimination, right to basic health services, having families and so on.

Therefore, I would ask all the readers to kindly read this newsletter, share it, circulate it and save it. We have tried to cover all the aspects related to them. Hope these articles contribute to your awareness and add to your understanding of them. When you understand the current challenges this community is facing you can at least not add to it, and form an ally ship by shifting your perspective and gracefully accept them for whom they are. For all they want is their basic rights of being respected, accepted and considered and in turn will create a more diverse and loving society for everyone to co-exist.

I am grateful to the DAGMHI 3030 to give me this wonderful opportunity to be the guest editor for this month's issue of Metal health and the LGBTQIA community!



Kavita Saraf - Psychotherapist, Life coach, Soft skill trainer, Nagpur.

DISTRICT GOVERNOR DR. ANAND JHUNJHUNWALA HE WHO LEADS BY EXAMPLE

Soft spoken and a through gentleman, District Governor 3030 Rtn. Dr. Anand Jhunjunwala is a true second-generation Rotarian. His father Ashokji was the Past President of Rotary Club of Khamgaon. His Mother Ashaji was the charter President of the Inner Wheel Club Khamgaon. The life lessons of "Service above self" originates from his grandparents who were freedom fighters.

He is not only easily accessible in spite of being busy but is a man who leads by action! He does what he says! His wife Rtn. Monica is a social activist and Past President of Inner Wheel Club Khamgaon. Their daughter, Khushi who is currently pursuing her BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) is a Rotaractor.

DG Dr. Anand joined the Rotary Club of Khamgaon in 2003 and served as the President in 2010-2011. He is a Major Donor, a Benefactor and a Paul Harris fellow. He is an Ophthalmologist by profession and has held positions in many distinguished bodies and organizations. He graduated from IGGMC Nagpur and post-graduation from GMC, Nagpur. He completed DNB from the prestigious Shri Shankara Netralaya, Chennai.

He is an ardent blood donor who has crossed a century! His passions are bird watching, wildlife photography, travelling, badminton, reading and listening to music. His daily routine includes yoga and walking.

Dr Anand likes the concept of action groups as they give Rotarians a focused opportunity to serve in their areas of interest. Appreciating the work done by DAGMHI in district 3030 he promises full support to the cause to promote the initiative in all the clubs of the District as well as other districts!

His happiness mantra – keep yourself happy!

**-Dr. Aabha Pimprikar
President, DAGMHI.**



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**OTHER HELPLINES AVAILABLE ON:
<https://lgbtqindiaresource.in/helpline/>**

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LGBTQIA+

THE CONCEPT OF



The terms and definitions provided below are guidelines and working definitions; they are not meant to be authoritative or immutable. Different people use these words in different ways depending on various regions, subcultures, countries and other contexts. Use these terms and definitions thoughtfully.

Lesbian: An adjective used to describe women who is enduring physical, sexual, romantic attraction to other women.

Gay: An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, sexual, romantic attractions are to people of the same sex.

Bisexual : An adjective used to describe people who's enduring physical, sexual, romantic attraction to men and women both. Bisexual identity does not require a history or current activity that includes sexual experiences with men and women.

Transgender:

An umbrella term that may include transsexuals, cross dressers, drag queens, drag kings, and other people who transgress the socially constructed confines of gender. As a term of self-identification, it should not be imposed on people. Nevertheless, we may use it descriptively to encompass anyone who falls under this broad definition, whether or not they would describe themselves this way.

Transman (or transgender man, or transsexual man): An FTM (female to Male) trans* person. **Transwoman (or transgender woman, or transsexual woman):** An MtF (Male to Female) trans* person.

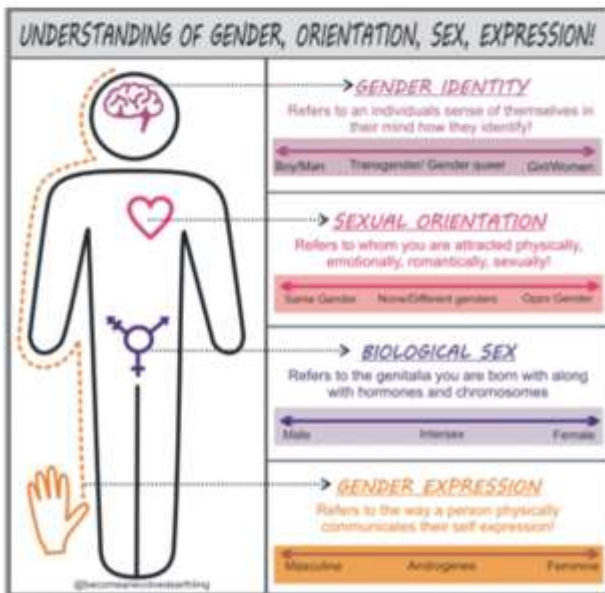
Queer: An umbrella identity term taken by people who do not conform to heterosexual and/or gender binary norms; a reclaimed derogatory slur taken as a political term to unite people who are marginalized because of their non-conformity to dominant gender identities and/or heterosexuality.

Intersex: A group of medical diagnoses describing a person whose anatomy, physiology, and/or chromosome variation differs from cultural ideals of male and female, in terms of external genitalia, internal genitalia, and/or hormone production levels. Intersex individuals are typically assigned as "male" or "female" at birth, and often undergo surgery on their genitals in infancy to force a more culturally acceptable gendered appearance. The intersex movement has challenged the ethics of infant genital surgeries that are not medically necessary, pointing out that many intersex people who undergo such surgery in infancy later report feeling a sense of loss of an essential aspect of them. About 2-4% of all births are intersex to some degree. This is sometimes not evident until puberty.

Ally : Someone who recognizes, understands and confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves (self-awareness and self-exploration) and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, sexual, intersex, and queer people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and trans oppression or genderism are social justice issues.

-Kavita Saraf

Psychotherapist, Life coach, Soft skill trainer, Nagpur.



LGBTQIA+ YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH & PARENTING THEM



Only 1 in 3

LGBTQ youth found their home to be **LGBTQ-affirming.**



LGBTQ teens are **six** times more likely to experience symptoms of **depression** than their heterosexual counterparts.

Multiple factors play a role across the mental health issues in the youth of LGBTQ community from societal rules, stigma, family and peer rejection, harassment, prejudice mind set etc resulting in anxiety, depression, panic attacks, mood disorders, suicidal tendencies.

In India parents are conflicted about their children's LGBTQ+ identity parents believe the best way to help them survive and thrive is to fit them with their heterosexual peers. However, this makes young adolescents feel that their parents want to change who they are. Lack of communication and misunderstanding between parents and their LGBTQ+ children increases family conflict, which is one of the biggest issues. The conversion therapies are banned and yet some parents try as it challenges them and their understanding of what is normal, So parents play a very important role for them to be accepted and find a sense of belonging. Parents have to face their peers and society and are not equipped to handle such issues.

Mental health is not just a fixed state of mind but a continuum. According to NIMHANS data, more than 80 per cent of people do not access care services for a multitude of reasons, ranging from lack of knowledge, stigma and high cost of care. Mental disorders are now among the top leading causes of health burden worldwide, with no evidence of global reduction since 1990. And the lack of awareness or seeking help for mental health ailments is even further lacking in the LGBTQ youth population.

To address this problem a dedicated effort is required to make a difference and Inclusivity should be a part of it. It is important to include members of the LGBTQ+ communities as well as relevant organisations and movements while planning the programme so that it is built with local context.

-Dr. Pritam Chandak

Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Nagpur.

LGBTQIA+

MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

How can one be physically attracted to the people of same sex or how can be interested in both the sex? We all might have come across such questions daily and these questions might have not made any difference in our lives but they are known to affect the LGBTQ community greatly. It requires courage to be different and accept the way you are. The prolonged fight to survive under the social stigma, discrimination and prejudice make them more vulnerable to various mental health concerns as compared to the heterosexuals.

Researchers have found that LGBTQ youth are 1.75 times more prone to **depression and anxiety**, the reason being the bullying they face at schools and the lack of acceptance and rejection from the society leads to the feelings of loneliness and hopelessness among them. According to The Trevor Project, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ young people it was found that the LGBTQ community is 3 times more prone to **substance use disorder, affective disorder and suicidal thoughts** when compared to the heterosexual community and is even more for bisexual and transgender communities. Tran's people



usually struggle with **Gender dysphoria** where they do not identify with their body or they feel different within and this dissonance creates dysphoria. On the other Bisexuals are seen as predators and their character is questioned causing them great **distress**. LGBTQ

communities commonly suffer from '**minority stress**' which is the stress of living in unfriendly environments as minorities.

Back in 1960s, homosexuality was considered as a mental disorder and it took almost two decades for WHO to accept homosexuality as normal. The government of India ruled out section 377 on September 6, 2018 but it did not help much, the community continues to face rejection from the society thereby leading to **mental health struggles**.

Let's help the LGBTQ community combat mental health issues so that they can lead normal lives too by making therapy accessible to them along with owning ally ship and just being mindful about the dos and don'ts we can have a more inclusive community. LGBTQ

community uses rainbow as their colour signifying how meaningful coexistence can make the world a beautiful place for all. Let us normalise LGBTQ!

-Sakshi Kothari
M.A. Psychology, Nagpur.

PERSONAL STORY - ACCEPTANCE IS A JOURNEY



This is a story of a 32 year old gay man –Akassh from Delhi! He has this unique perspective and shares these two practices will take any queer person a long way and become a better queer person!

1. When you come out as queer, do it for yourself and not because you seek acceptance from others. Seeking constant acceptance from others is a sure shot set up for disappointment as every other person will process it according to their awareness and understanding of the queer community and you would have to come out to every new person u come across. Until they are coming from a respectful space, some mistakes of mislabelling can be ok.

2. Next, when you expect other to be an ally you need to demonstrate the same ally ship for others too. Practice what you preach, and people see actions not words, when others are called out for being fat, dark skinned, a particular caste, short and so on you be an ally and support and play an active role. It not about being an activist and loud but it comes from a place of conviction and understanding others challenges too.

He is a social activist for LGBTQ community, an entrepreneur and has a thriving business as a jewellery designer and is a lovely warm and humble person too.

He has his own set of traumas as being a queer in India has its own set of challenges to face. He deals with uncertainty and non-acceptance as being a married gay couple in India is not legal. He has had struggled with eating disorder as he felt very lonely on his journey of self discovery and his internal struggles, He has history of sexual abuse as a teen and so has to deal with certain distressing triggers of trauma. Nevertheless, this is all what does not define him as he looks with into change and work upon and not outside for others to be whom he expects them to be! The idea is to have a harmonious place for everyone to be and express themselves as authentic as they are.

You can follow him on instagram @ akasskaggarwalofficial

-As narrated to Kavita Saraf.



"Trauma is experienced as a daily micro aggression, such as homophobia, transphobia, bullying, and time spent in the closet. Any person who has experienced the closet has known shame — and shame itself is trauma."

LGBTQIA+

SAARTHI TRUST

Name Inspired by role of Krishna in Arjuna's life!

This trust was started in 2006 by Anand Chandrani to support the LGBTQ community in their various challenges and to create a sense of belonging amongst them! The idea of starting this trust was out of his own wish to see the change in the society as he came out as a gay person in 1994 at the age of 19 in front of his mother. After coming out, in some time his mother accepted him gracefully as she was keen on her child's happiness!

Later as Anandji when he went to Mumbai to seek his peers he came across **Humsafar Trust** which was India's first LGBTQ support group. He became a member of the group and felt that he had a place to belong. After seeing that he wanted to bring this kind of a group to Nagpur, so after a lot of thinking, research he was determined to develop a group in Nagpur too. Finally he started this trust with a lot of courage and conviction! However, the journey was not as simple as he had to provision for a place, people to work and funds to support too. He applied for grants with the government where there were acceptance issues but eventually it came through. As they work on several issues like helping them get basic Ration card, Aadhar card, Pan Card, supporting them and counseling for discrimination, abandonment, stigma, abuse, rapes, and lack of employment.

He realized the most important yet the most neglected part for this community after basic food, clothing and shelter was health care services. They deprived of it at various levels and due to the stigmas and ridicule they lived in closets and suffered in silence. He felt even after the Act 377, however they were out of the criminal category, their journey of claiming basic constitutional rights is on. Be it getting married as homosexuals, adoption rights, having joint accounts and securities, having rights as heterosexual partners and autonomy has still to be redeemed.

They being a minority and a marginalized community getting equality, respect and acceptance at various levels continue their and their trusts journey with a hope to make a difference each day!

-As narrated to Kavita Saraf

ALLY - THE 'A' IN LGBTQIA+



Always ask others...

**WHAT ARE
YOUR
PRONOUNS?**

She/her

They/Them

He/Him

And many
more!

My name is...
My pronouns are...

An ally is someone who is not a member of an under-represented group but who support that group and takes action. Through the power of ally ship, each of us can create an equitable, inclusive safe space around us where everyone feels valued, seen, heard and are able to thrive. So, how can you be a good ally?
By knowing the DO'S and DONT'S and practicing them!

1. Be open to learn, listen and educate yourself!

Be curious, read books, publications, listen to podcasts, talk to people who identify as LGBTQIA. You can even follow some people who identify as one of them and get a sense of what it is like to live like them.

2. Support the LGBTQIA+ community and be there!

If people ask you questions about the community or for your opinion on an issue, Have an opinion but try to not impose it on anyone and let them develop their own. Support can be seen by wearing a simple badge, attending a pride parade or helping someone to come out.

3. Talk, share and encourage others to be an ally, too.

The great thing about being an ally for one group of people is that it can open your eyes to be an ally for everyone. People do not fit into just one box. 'Intersectionality' is a term used to describe all the different identities or social categorisations a person has.

4. Do not assume and do not judge them!

Never assume everyone around you is straight /cis gender, nor that they are queer based on how they look. It is better to ask them their pronouns and how they would like to be addressed. Give people around you the space to be their authentic selves and do not judge them on basis of their unique choices they make.

5. Do not use offensive and derogatory terms.

Some of the language usages are ignorant and some are deliberate. However, homophobic language does not just reinforce negative perceptions of gay people but also leads to a general intolerance of being different. At the same time hate, crime is also very common like bullying, vandalism, isolating and it all affects their self esteem too.

-Ken Saraf

LGBTQ COMMUNITY & LEGAL RIGHTS

The legal rights for LGBT community have evolved rapidly in last few years; however, these citizens are still facing difficulties. They don't have many legal protections including same sex marriage. Major breakthrough came through NALSA (National Legal Service Authority) judgement on 14 April 2014. This judgement gave a clear identity to the transgenders as 'third gender' offering the community some of the fundamental rights. Few years later, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 was passed by the Indian Parliament to provide protection of rights of the transgender community, their welfare & associated issues. Section 18 of this Act stipulates punishment for forced or bonded labour, abuse of any form, denial of access to public places, denial of right to reside.

Whoever is found guilty of these, 'shall be punishable with imprisonment & fine'. This act imposed some conditions on the community which they opposed legally & the decision is awaited. The community yet have not been adequately provided with their basic rights like livelihood generation.

The Government & we as society should try to provide them equal rights.

Please remember Gender is physical - cannot be chosen. Bias & discrimination is created by society.

-Dillshad Muzawar Advocate

Member Transgender Welfare Board, Maharashtra Government