

**FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS**



**QUEER
CYPRUS**



1. What is Sexual Orientation?

It refers to the emotional, romantic and physical attraction towards people with specific gender identity/identities.

- **Homosexual:**

A woman or man who is emotionally/sexually attracted to the same sex.

- **Gay:**

It refers to homosexual men. In the Turkish language, although it was initially used to refer to both homosexual women and men, today only homosexual men use the term to express themselves. However, in the English language, the word "gay" is used in daily conversations while referring to both sexes.

- **Lesbian:**

It refers to homosexual women.

- **Bisexual:**

It refers to anyone who is emotionally/sexually attracted to both sexes. Bisexual individuals may not be equally attracted to both sexes and the level of attraction may vary in time. It does not mean being attracted to both a woman and a man at the same time or being in a relationship with two individuals at the same time.

- **Heterosexual:**

It refers to women or men who are emotionally/sexually attracted to the opposite sex. Heterosexuality is automatically and obligatorily the dominant orientation in society. Since heterosexuality is considered the "norm" in society and individuals are accepted as heterosexuals unless otherwise



stated, heterosexual individuals don't feel the need to define themselves as heterosexual.

2. What is Gender Identity?

• **Intersex:**

Individuals who are born with genital organs or reproductive systems that are not considered to be ordinary for females or males.

• **Transgender:**

It is an umbrella term used to describe individuals who do not comply with the dominant and common gender norms associated with the sex they are assigned to at birth. This term refers to the "T" in the English abbreviation "LGBTI".

• **Transsexual:**

It refers to individuals who feel a difference between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity, and identify as individuals from a different sex. This term mainly indicates mental/psychological characteristics. Since individuals may not reflect their inner feelings about being a person from another sex in their appearance, it is not possible to determine a transsexual person based on the way they look. However, transsexuals may seek hormonal or other medical interventions.

• **Cross dresser (Transvestism):**

Is the act of wearing items of clothing and display behaviours commonly associated with the opposite gender within a



particular society. These individuals do not desire to go through gender reassignment and they do not wish to undergo hormonal/surgical treatment to this end.

3. Is it possible for a Transgender person to be Gay/Bisexual?

Sexual orientation and gender identity are two separate terms. Similar to cisgender individuals (people who are not trans), sexual orientation is also diverse in transgender people. Many people automatically assume that transgender individuals are heterosexual and/or homosexual. It is not possible to make such generalizations.

4. What causes Homosexuality?

Similar to heterosexuality, the cause of homosexuality is unknown. However, it has been proven that environmental factors do not have any impact on sexual orientation.

5. Do you think I'm LGBT?

A person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity can't be defined by someone else. The only authority is the individual herself/himself/themselves. One can define their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity as they wish. They are predicated on self-identification. It is also important to note that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity can't be



understood based on their appearance. Additionally, LGBT is an abbreviation for the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex. Therefore, it is not possible for a person to be “LGBT”.

6. Can one’s family cause that person to be Gay or Lesbian?

The way a person has been raised can’t shape their orientation. Orientation is an inner phenomenon. Who we are attracted to can’t be learned or taught.

7. What type of people are LGB?

All types of individuals may be homosexual or bisexual. People from various ages, ethnicities, nationalities, weight, height and socio-economic status may be homosexual or bisexual. Throughout history, homosexual and bisexual individuals have existed, continue to exist and will exist in the future.

8. Is it Sexual Orientation or preference?

Orientation. It is not based on any type of decision-making mechanism. As stated by many mental health associations, orientation is not a choice or preference and can’t be changed. People discover their orientations in time, they do not choose it. Similar to heterosexual persons, homosexual and bisexual



individuals also discover their orientation. Persons' relationships and sexual behaviours may differ from their orientation. Orientation is a characteristic that can't change. Behaviour, on the other hand, may differ.

9. Is Sexual Orientation an illness?

No, it is not an illness! Although homosexuality has been thought to be a disorder in the past, scientific studies have verified that homosexuality is not an illness and it was removed by the World Health Organization from the list of mental disorders in 1990. This decision was officially registered in ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) list in 1992.

10. Can Homosexuality or Bisexuality be treated?

As it is not an illness, it is not something that can be treated! In the past when homosexuality was assumed to be an illness, conversion and aversion therapy techniques were tested many times. As a result individuals were harmed. The use of electroshock in aversion therapy can be given as an example. The American Psychiatric Association has stated that there are no studies which scientifically support these types of treatments and/or therapies.



11. What type of methods were used in the past?

- **Aversion Therapy:** Alleged “therapy” which takes place by using homosexual stimulants with electroshock or substances causing nausea.
- **Orgasmic Reconditioning:** Alleged “therapy” which takes place by using heterosexual stimulants and encouraging the person to masturbate.
- **Use of hormones:** Allegedly “curing” homosexuality by using oestrogen or testosterone.
- **Conversion Therapy:** Allegedly “curing” homosexual men who don't adopt a gay lifestyle based on homophobic stereotypes.

12. How many gay people are there in Cyprus?

Such studies are not conducted in the past years because the statistics lead to labelling. Therefore, Queer Cyprus Association does not support such studies and opposes such practices of grouping and/or labelling.

13. How do I understand whether I am a Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual?

Orientation is not about existing or non-existing behaviour. This is related to long term emotions, interactions and the way you define yourself. Also, no one can tell you what your orientation is. You are the only authority.



14. Should I come out to my family and friends?

Coming out to family members and friends is an important decision. The answer to this question can't simply be "you should" or "you shouldn't". If you decide to come out, you must be sure that you will not experience physical or psychological pressure. If you are unsure about your family members' or friends' reactions, or if you are indecisive about coming out in general, the best thing to do is to consult a psychologist.

15. My child came out to me as Gay/Bisexual/Trans. What should I do?

First of all, it is important to note that your child, who has come out as gay, bisexual or trans, is still the same child whose sexual orientation/gender identity you were not aware of. You may think of this as additional information about your child. If your child has shared this information with you, keep in mind that this is an important step for her/him/them. Learning information about your child's sexual orientation or gender identity will help you accept the situation. We would also like to note that many parents have a false impression that this may change or that it is an illness. Being homosexual, bisexual and transgender is not an illness and can't be changed.



16. My family does not understand me, what should I do?

Parents who find out that their child is lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans may experience a grief process. They experience the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance in their own way. At this point, it is important not to be impatient and persistent towards your parents in terms of them understanding and becoming knowledgeable about the situation. In order to ensure that your parents experience this process in a more healthy way and to make sure that you are affected in the least way you may consult a psychologist.

17. Someone I met on the Internet has asked for an image of me. Should I send it?

In this case, there is a possibility that the person will try to abuse you or bully you online. Especially if you have only interacted with this person online, it is best not to share too much personal information and not to send an image of yourself.

18. I like someone who is from the same sex. What should I do?

Being attracted to someone is a healthy situation. It would not be right for us to direct you about what to do. However,



you may experience negative reactions due to existing bias towards homosexuality. You may call Solidarity Line of Queer Cyprus Association to get further information from 0542 858 5847.

19. I want to have a partner, can you help me?

We can't provide assistance to you for finding a partner. However, if you are feeling lonely in your social life, you can follow our Facebook page and you are welcome to participate in our activities.

20. Is Homosexuality or Bisexuality a sin in Islam?

We would like to remind you that Islam is the religion of tolerance. According to this faith, God does not create people in a wrong way and gay, bisexual and trans people are all created by God. In the original Quran, the people of Lut refer to attempts to have relations without consent and people being sexually assaulted. There are a lot of false claims and information which have been taken from misinterpretations of the religion. No one is a sinner for loving someone, if the other person also has consent.



For additional information:

Interview, "Kuran Eşcinselliğe Karşı Değil"

(The Quran is not Against Homosexuality):

<http://kaosgl.org/sayfa.php?id=13033>;

Article, "İslam ve Eşcinsel Olmak" (Islam and Being Gay):

<http://www.kaosgl.com/sayfa.php?id=2442>



21. Can Trans people have children?

Yes, they can. Even if they undergo gender reassignment surgery, they can freeze their eggs or sperm at the beginning of their gender reassignment process and they can have children.



22. Is there a possibility that I won't be able to grow a beard, even if I do use hormones?

It is highly possible that your beard will start to grow after taking hormones under the supervision of a medical doctor. If your facial hair does not start to grow, you may consult your doctor.

23. When should I start using hormones?

It is important to consult a medical doctor before taking any action and take the hormones under the supervision of the doctor.

24. I would like to find out if I have been infected with any Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). How can I find out?

The only way to find out is to get tested. In the northern part of Cyprus, anyone can get tested for HIV for free at Dr. Burhan Nalbantoglu Hospital; tests for other STD's are free for individuals with health insurance. In addition, you may also get



tested for various STD's for a fee in private laboratories, hospital or health centers. HIV tests are conducted anonymously at Dr. Burhan Nalbantoglu Hospital and other private institutions. Also in order to be informed about safe sex, we recommend you read "Information Guide for HIV Protection & Prevention" created collectively by the Queer Cyprus Association, Aids for Solidarity and Accept LGBT Cyprus. You can obtain the manual free of charge from the Queer Cyprus Association offices or online at the Queer Cyprus Association website.

See:

<http://www.queercyprus.org/en/information-guide-for-hiv-protection-prevention/>

25. Is being Gay a crime in the northern part of Cyprus?

No, it isn't. Anal sexual intercourse was considered to be "an unnatural offence" and involved a penalty until 2014. With the amendment made on January 27, 2014, this was annulled and penalties are no longer imposed.

26. Can Gay people get married in the northern part of Cyprus?

Same sex marriage is not recognized by the legal framework in the northern part of Cyprus.



27 . Why are Gay Men so obsessed about Sex?

It is important to note that there are no scientific studies that prove this claim. Previous studies (Solomon et al., 2005) showcase that there is no difference between gay and heterosexual men.

28. Have all Homosexuals been abused as children?

No, this is only a myth within the society. It is one of the many false claims on homosexuality. There is no relationship between homosexuality and abuse. Abuse can't be categorized as one of the reasons of homosexuality. Therefore, people do not become gay due to the abuse they have experienced.

29. Is Homosexuality or Bisexuality something to aspire?

No, people do not become gay or bisexual with encouragement. Environmental factors do not have an impact on an individual's sexual orientation. Just like heterosexuality; homosexuality and bisexuality are also innate.



30. My Boyfriend/Girlfriend is threatening to expose me.

What should I do?

We do not have standard answers for these cases. Each case should be evaluated on its own facts and circumstances. Therefore, if you are facing this type of an issue, you may consult the Queer Cyprus Association. By doing so, we will be able to refer you to necessary legal and psychological support.

31. What did I do wrong?

Why is my child like this?

To start with, it is important to remember that sexual orientation or gender identity is not a price, a fault or a crime. It is not related to the way you have raised your child. In other words, if your child is lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex, this is not caused by you, your behaviour or environmental factors. If you would like to seek psychological support, you may consult the Queer Cyprus Association in order to be assisted on how to contact professionals.

32. What should I do if my family finds out and kicks me out of the house?

Unfortunately, in the northern part of Cyprus, an LGBTI+ shelter does not exist. However, for alternative solutions you may contact our association and obtain information and support



on this topic. As the Queer Cyprus Association, we will try to assist you to the best of our abilities in deciding on the next steps to take.

33. I do not want to do military service. What can I do? (I do not want to disclose that I am Gay/ Bisexual/ Trans.)

A legal process which can solve this situation does not exist in the island. People in the northern part of Cyprus, tend to continue their education or, if they have the opportunity to go abroad, they tend to work and live in a foreign country.

Legal Process:

First of all, you need to go to the health unit of the recruitment office (asal şube). Then, you need to obtain a psychiatrist/ psychologist report stating that you are homosexual and/or trans and have a personality test. These should be submitted to the relevant units within the administration on the roll-call date with a statement indicating that you are not fit for military service. Upon approval, you will be referred to the medical board. Prior to the meeting of the medical board, you will be referred to a psychiatrist at the Urban Health Centre



located at the Domuzcular Point in order to complete the personality test once again. If the psychiatrist at the Urban Health Centre located at the Domuzcular Point is satisfied, the process ends with the relevant documents being submitted to the authorities.

If the psychiatrist is not satisfied, you will be referred to Barış Psychiatric Hospital. After the process there, you need to submit an application to the recruitment unit (asal şube) with the relevant documents. You also need to take the documents submitted to the recruitment unit to the “district governorship” for approval. Upon approval, you need to visit a psychiatrist at Barış Psychiatric Hospital once again. Finally, you need to appear before the medical board with all the relevant documentation.

34. I am being bullied.

What can I do?

Bullying is one of the problems faced by LGBTI+. There are other persons that face similar situations. We would like you to know that you are not alone. If you’re being bullied, you are not to be blamed for it. We do not have standard answers



for these cases. Each case should be evaluated on its own facts and circumstances. Therefore, if you are facing this type of issue, you may consult the Queer Cyprus Association. By doing so, we will be able to refer you to necessary legal and psychological support.

35. I have been Sexually assaulted. What should I do?

In the northern part of Cyprus, an assault is considered to be a crime regardless of the victim's sex, gender identity and sexual orientation. If you face such a situation, you have the right to take legal action. It is also recommended that you seek psychological support. We are able to refer you to access necessary legal and psychological support.

36. Is it natural for me to masturbate?

Masturbation is a natural process like other sexual behaviour. Causing acne, insanity and infertility are a few myths about masturbation; however, none of them have any scientific basis. On the contrary, masturbation helps people discover their own bodies and is an important element of having a healthy sex life.



37. I am not attracted to neither sex. Am I abnormal?

This is not an abnormality. Not having any attraction is just as natural as being attracted to people from various sexes. As people are free to be attracted to others, they also have the freedom not to be attracted as well.

38. Do Lesbians have sex?

Like all sexually active individuals, lesbians also have sex. This is completely related to an individual's will and desire. As a result of the patriarchal system, people assume that sex can't take place without a penis. However, this is an invalid perception which is formed by the false information within the society.

39. My parents have become suspicious. What can I do?

There exists no clear answer to this question. The person's individual state and family structure should be taken into consideration in order to prepare an action plan. If the person has decided to come out based on his/her/their own freewill, he/she/they should consider the aforementioned conditions and if possible seek psychological support in order to experience this process in a healthy way. For more information you may contact the Queer Cyprus Association. By doing so, we can direct you to the support you feel that you need.



40. Can I get fired due to my Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity?

No. In none of the legal texts applicable in private or in public sector there exists any statements indicating sexual orientations other than heterosexuality, transitioning periods or gender reassignment treatments as grounds to terminate employment contracts. In fact, people who have experienced discrimination or abuse at workplaces due to the reasons listed above can take legal action. For detailed information, you may contact the Queer Cyprus Association.

41. How is the Gender Reassignment Process in the Northern Part of Cyprus?

First of all, you may consult a psychiatrist working in private or public sector. Based on the report you obtain from the psychiatrist, you must consult with an endocrinology specialist. For legal gender recognition, you need to submit a report documenting the gender reassignment surgery that shall also entail surgical intervention performed on genitalia together with the document obtained from the surgeon(s) that undertook the surgery to the hospital administrator working at the "financial and technical department" of Dr. Burhan Nalbantoglu Hospital. At this phase you also need to declare your preferred name to



be used after legal gender reassignment. The report will be evaluated by the medical board consisting of three medical doctors who may request to perform a medical examination. If the medical board gives an approval, the name change will also be indicated on the approval report. After receiving the approval from the Medical Board, a payment equal to 1/20 of the minimum wage must be submitted to the local body responsible for finance. Finally, documents consisting of surgical report, approval report obtained from the Board, birth certificate, photocopy of ID, receipt of payment to the local body responsible for finance must be submitted to the registry office located in the building of the local body responsible for internal affairs, together with the completed form that can be collected from the registry office. Subsequently, a change can be made in one's name and gender in the registry.

As Queer Cyprus Association, we do not agree with the current interpretation of the Article 33 on "correction of registry based on errors or changes to gender" in the legal text on registration of births and deaths; in order to fulfil the requirement for "a physical change impacting sex", a person is obliged to have undergone a full gender reassignment surgery. We believe that mandatory surgery being a prerequisite for legal gender



assignment and the fact that names can only be changed during legal gender reassignment, after surgical intervention, amount to a violation of human rights. Ultimately, surgical interventions are related to an individual's health and should not pose an obstacle to updating legal information. In line with international standards and human rights, as Queer Cyprus Association we continue to advocate that changes to name and gender should solely be based on a person's statement.

42. My psychologist is trying to "cure" me. What should I do?

Conversion therapies are methods which were used in the past, however they are not valid. Homosexuality is not an illness therefore, it does not have any treatment. The best solution would be to consult a therapist who performs healthy and proper sessions. For advice, you may call our helpline or contact the Queer Cyprus Association.



NOTE:

For Contact:



kuirkibris.org



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