Whatever words you use...

You're Awesome!
KIA ORA!

The I’m Local Project is run by RainbowYOUTH to help young queer, intersex & gender diverse kiwis feel supported and valued by their local communities.

We’re sending this super simple comic guide to sexuality and gender all around Aotearoa to help explain the basics to anyone who wants to learn. This guide is designed to cover the basics, so if you’ve got more questions after reading it, that’s okay! There’s heaps more info on our website, and through the other services listed at the back of this booklet.

RainbowYOUTH (est. 1989) is a national charitable organisation based in Aotearoa, New Zealand that works to support queer and gender diverse young people aged 27 and under.

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A QUICK GUIDE TO
SEXUAL ORIENTATION,
SEX, AND
GENDER
IDENTITY*

* A super simple comic guide

SEXUAL ORIENTATION
IS ALL ABOUT
WHO YOU'RE INTO

It's one umbrella term used to describe sexuality & gender/sex identities.

It could be who you feel romantic, sexual, or curious towards...

Most people think of sexuality as a continuum.

Gay/Lesbian:
If you’re one gender and you’re attracted to that same gender you might be gay or lesbian.

Straight:
If you’re one gender and you’re attracted to people who are a different gender you might be straight.

Bisexual/Pansexual:
If you’re attracted to people of the same gender and people with different gender or genders to you, you might be bisexual or pansexual.

Then there’d be people all the way along.
Some people are pretty set in their place, 
And other people move along the continuum at different times.

Ask me next week!

I'm a girl who likes girls!

And it's WAY more complex than just that!

Which is one reason why spectrums aren't the be all and end all.

We can break down sexuality a little further...

So on one spectrum someone might be in one place...

I like menfolk romantically.

And I'm into ladies in a romantic way.
and on the other they might be in a different place entirely

I sleep with ladies, and sometimes with guys too!

I’m not into anyone sexually

Sexual orientation words are all about who you like

gay
straight
bisexual
lesbian
pansexual
omnisexual

Or aren’t on any continuums at all!

These last 2 take into account that there’s more than 2 genders, leading us into

Gender/sex can be thought of as continuums too, in lots of ways.

There’s the physical stuff—the words that the medical system uses to define people.

Sex

Bodies

Vagina
XX Chromosome
Oestrogen
FEMALE

Ambiguous Genitals, XXY, Mosaic Chromosome
INTERSEX

Penis
XY Chromosome
Testosterone
MALE
Intersex is an umbrella term that is used to describe people born with variations of internal and/or external sex anatomy. Our bodies can't be classified as typically male or female.*

*we got this definition from the wonderful folk at InterACT

I didn't know that I was intersex until my body changed at puberty.

Other people decided to change my body when I was a little kid.

Being intersex is *almost* as common as having red hair.

I chose to change my body when I grew up.

And we're all different.

my diagnosis is important to me.

Don't label me as a medical condition.

Don't label me as a medical condition.

check out our extra resource for more info.

DIAGNOSES
And not everyone’s gender identity matches with what the medical definitions err... define...

Gender Identity is all about who you are, and how you identify, regardless of the medical stuff:

- Woman
- Gender Queer/ Androgynous/ Bigendered/ Non-gendered
- Man

So, when we think about this spectrum there are some words that get associated with others.

Here, let’s add some words in.
GENDER IDENTITY

Woman
People down this end might use words like ‘girl’, ‘woman’, ‘lady’ or ‘sister’.
For most people down this end you would use pronouns like ‘She’ or ‘Her’.

Gender Queer/Androgynous
Bigendered or Non-Gendered
People here may use words like Gender Queer, Androgynous, Bigendered or Non-gendered. This might be because:
- They feel like neither a man nor a woman,
- They identify as both, or
- Their gender identity is fluid and changes.

Use gender-neutral words like ‘person’.
Ask people what pronoun they prefer and be aware it may change. Some people prefer ‘he’ or ‘she’ while others may ask you to use ‘they’ or new pronouns like ‘Zhe’ or ‘Hir’.

Transgender and transsexual people can be found at all parts of this continuum

Man
People down this end might use words like ‘boy’, ‘man’, ‘bro’ or ‘dude’.
For most people down this end you would use pronouns like ‘He’ or ‘His’.

Some people move from one end to the other

I’m a woman, but the doctor assigned me male at birth. I am a transwoman.

I’m just me. You can call me genderqueer.

I identify as a man; I was told I was female but now live as a guy. I’m a transguy.

Or to the middle.

Gender Queer/ Androgynous/
Bigendered/ Non-Gendered

Plus, the cool thing about this spectrum is that there are plenty of ways to travel.*

*This is often referred to as transitioning.
Some people change their names and pronouns, or dress differently. ‘He’ for me!

Some people change parts of their body. Feminine to me is wearing pink laces in my shoes!

And others just know that who they are doesn’t match what society assumes. My cat brings out my feminine side.

Plus! There’s Gender Expression too! We love showing off our femininity!

Which is all about how you express your masculinity or femininity—and we all do it in different ways...

Using spectrums is just ONE way to think about gender, sex and sexuality. There’re HEAPS of other ways too!
I use takātapui to describe myself as a Māori guy who has relationships with guys.

I'm tangata ira tane and takātapui: a Māori man who was born in a female body.

I am a proud Samoan and fa'afafine. A fa'afafine identity refers to a third gender in Samoan terms. There have been fa'afafine in my family and that's how I know I belonged.

But, whatever words you use, and wherever you are on any of the spectrums (or whichever model you use), and wherever, or however you travel, remember—

You're Awesome!

The End.
HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS

Intersex Youth Aotearoa
Online
Share information, find support, network & improve the visibility of intersex youth.
Email: intersexyouthaotearoa@gmail.com
Web: intersexyouthaotearoa.wordpress.com

Mental Health Foundation
Nationwide (Auckland Based)
Towards a society where everyone enjoys positive mental health and well-being.
Email: info@mentalhealth.org.nz   Web: mentalhealth.org.nz

OUTLine
Nationwide (Auckland Based)
Free & confidential rainbow counselling & referral. Face-to-face, by phone or online.
Phone: 0800 688 5463   Web: outline.org.nz
Hours: Mon-Fri (9am-9pm), Sun-Sat (6pm-9pm)

Tīwhanawhana Trust
Wellington
For takatāpui to “tell our stories, build our community and leave a legacy”.
Email: tiwhanawhana.com@gmail.com   Web: tiwhanawhana.com

Youthline
Nationwide
Need to support or want to talk? Youthline works with young people, their families and those supporting them.
Phone: 0800 376 633   FreeTxt: 234
Web: youthline.co.nz

Lifeline Aotearoa
Nationwide
Free 24/7 Suicide Hotline
Phone: 0800 543 354

To find a local group, visit imlocal.co.nz
FIND YOUR LOCAL

Visit the I’m Local Project’s website to find a region-by-region directory of all the queer and gender diverse specific groups around Aotearoa.

Pick your region.
Find your whānau!

imlocal.co.nz

This comic was created by Sam Orchard.
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