

# LGBT+ History Month Newsletter

## Hello and welcome to this jam-packed LGBT+ newsletter.

February marks LGBT+ History Month in the UK, where we take the time to learn about LGBT+ issues and history, particularly things that might have been missing before. This month we also want to look to the future to see how we can make the world a more open and equal place for all.

There is a long history of punishing people who are LGBT+ and while we have come a long way, there is still a lot of inequality across the world. For example, the UK makes up only one of the 29 countries around the world with marriage equality, compared to 72 where being trans or having a non-heterosexual relationship is punished. Even then, the law in the UK only changed to allow marriage equality in 2014. There is still a lot of work to be done.

In our newsletter we wanted to show the history of LGBT+ people and communities from the past to the present, including progress that has been made and the hard battles that have been fought along the way. Along with this timeline, we've included an LGBT+ book club, myth-busting article, a look at gender, wellbeing tips and much more!

## We believe *“No-one is equal until everyone is equal”*

None of this could be done without the amazing work of Creative Support's incredible **LGBT+ Network**, and we want to highlight this community of open-minded and lovely people who meet on a regular basis.



creative SUPPORT

LGBT+ Network

Stonewall DIVERSITY CAMPUS

We're here primarily to support LGBT+ staff, but are open to all – we don't require anyone to identify themselves as LGBT+ to support our work, so allies (anyone who wants to help support the LGBT+ community) and people who are questioning are welcome too. Our ultimate goal is to make sure that our working environment is friendly and supportive for everyone.

If you would like to learn more about the network, including information on how to join, please email:

[lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk)

Please be assured that all emails that go to the LGBT+ Network inbox are treated with absolute confidence.

# Major Moments in LGBT+ History

LGBT+ rights may seem like a new issue to those unfamiliar with the history, but being LGBT+ is nothing new. The timeline below highlights some key dates throughout LGBT+ history.

- 1395** Eleanor/John Rykener is arrested in London, and is found to have identified as both male and female at different times. This is one of the earliest examples of gender nonconformity in British history.
- 1533** King Henry VIII passes a law, making all gay activity punishable by death.
- 1732** The term, 'lesbian', enters the English language as a descriptor of same sex relations between women.
- 1835** On the 27th November 1835, the last two men to be executed for being gay in England are James Pratt and John Smith.
- 1951** Roberta Cowell makes history as the first known British trans woman to undergo gender-reassignment surgery.
- 1957** The Wolfenden Report is published, paving the way for future LGBT+ rights and policy changes.
- 1967** The 'Sexual Offences Act' decriminalises homosexual acts between two men, but only where both are aged 21 or above.
- 1969** The Stonewall Riots start on 28th June 1969 in New York, kicking off the modern LGBT+ civil rights movement as we understand it today. This is generally considered the world's first Pride march.
- 1972** The first official UK Gay Pride Rally takes place in London on the 1st July 1972 to coincide with the Stonewall Riots' anniversary.
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- 1981** On 12th December 1981, a 49-year old gay man becomes the first recorded person in the UK to die from an AIDS-related illness.
- 1988** Section 28 is put into British law, banning the "promotion" by local authorities (including schools) of LGBT+ lifestyles as an acceptable substitute for 'traditional family values'.
- 1992** The WHO finally declassifies same-sex attraction as a mental illness.
- 1999** Gwendolyn Ann Smith, a trans woman, founded the Transgender Day of Remembrance after the murder of Rita Hester.
- 2000 - 2003** Section 28 is repealed in Scotland in 2000. After some challenges from the House of Lords, England, Wales and Northern Ireland follow suit in 2003.
- 2004** Civil partnerships are legalised in the UK for same-sex couples. A poll published earlier this year showed that 63% of Brits supported this.
- 2013** The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act is introduced and comes into effect the following year, with the first same-sex marriages taking place on 29th March 2014.
- 2017** The "Alan Turing Law" is passed in England and Wales, pardoning men who were cautioned or convicted under historical legislation.
- 2020-2021** A private member's bill to add an 'X' gender marker to British passports for non-binary people is brought to the House of Commons. It will be further debated this year.

# Mental Health and Wellbeing tips and resources

While anybody can experience difficulties with their mental health at any time in their lives, studies have shown that LGBT+ people are significantly more likely to be affected.

Around 25% of the whole population will experience a significant mental health problem in their lives, compared to more than 40% of LGBT+ people. This can be down to a number of factors, such as discrimination and prejudice amongst others.

We've pulled together some health and wellbeing tips and techniques that may help with day-to-day issues, along with a list of LGBT+ organisations who offer more tailored help and advice.

## Take a break or slow down

It can often be difficult to do either of these things, but giving your brain a breather is really important. Taking five minutes in the morning to do a bit of deep breathing or meditation before you start work can give you a clean and calm slate to start the day off with.

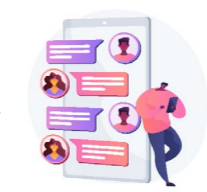
## Try to get outside at least once a day

This may seem incredibly basic, but this can be a bit of a challenge at times. Try getting out, even if just going outside and breathing in some fresh air for a few minutes. If the weather's nice, why not sit in the sunshine and enjoy your lunch.



## Keep in touch with friends and family

Yes we're living in a pandemic, but we're also living in a pandemic in the 21st century. We may all be getting a bit fed up with Zoom, but writing an email to a friend you haven't spoken to in a while, or sending them a funny selfie, can keep the connection flowing and, if needed, help you to reconnect with someone.



## If you're struggling at work, talk to your line manager or HR

You should never suffer in silence, and speaking through an issue with a trusted colleague or senior will mean that actions can be put in place to help you through any difficulties. People are here to help and listen, no matter how trivial you may think it seems.

## Speak with a professional

There are lots of organisations out there who offer counselling and therapy for people who are LGBT+ and will help you with any issues you're having with 100% confidentiality. Below we've rounded up a few organisations that can offer help and advice

## Resources

**African Rainbow Family:** Support for LGBT+ People of African Heritage including Refugees and wider Black and Asian Minority Ethnic Groups [africanrainbowfamily.org/](http://africanrainbowfamily.org/) / [info@africanrainbowfamily.org](mailto:info@africanrainbowfamily.org) / 07711285567

**Consortium:** Provide an extensive directory of local LGBT+ groups who can provide tailored support. [consortium.lgbt](http://consortium.lgbt)

**Health Assured:** Creative Support's 24/7 employee assistance programme which offers all of our staff telephone and online support for all of life's problems and provides emotional support. 0800 030 5182

**Hidayah:** A volunteer-led organisation with projects and activities developed for the needs of LGBT+ Muslims. [hidayahlgbt.com/](http://hidayahlgbt.com/) / [info@hidayahlgbt.co.uk](mailto:info@hidayahlgbt.co.uk)

**LGBT Foundation:** A national charity delivering advice, support and information services to LGBT+ communities. [lgbt.foundation](http://lgbt.foundation) / 0345 3 30 30 30

**MindOut:** LGBT+ mental health service providing information, resources, and advice, along with a free instant messenger service. [mindout.org.uk](http://mindout.org.uk)

**Switchboard:** LGBT+ helpline, ran between 10am-10pm everyday via webchat, phone call, and email. [switchboard.lgbt](http://switchboard.lgbt) / 0300 330 0630 / [chris@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:chris@switchboard.lgbt)

**Stonewall UK:** Resources and a local directory of LGBT+ inclusive services. [stonewall.org.uk](http://stonewall.org.uk)



## LGBT+ Book Club

We've pulled together some of our favourite LGBT+ books and made a book club! We've included a range of genres, including fiction, sci-fi, young adult, graphic novels, and non-fiction so there should be something for everyone! Some of the books have Trigger Warnings (TW)

1. **Trans Britain** edited by Christine Burns (TW: Homophobia, violence)
2. **Felix Ever After** by Kacen Callender (TW: Racism, homophobia, transphobia)
3. **A Single Man** by Christopher Isherwood. Fiction (TW: Death, suicidal ideation, unwanted sexual advances, grief)
4. **Ancillary Justice** by Anne Leckie (TW: War, violence, gender dysphoria, death)
5. **Queer: A Graphic History** by Meg John Barker and Jules Schele (TW: Homophobia, transphobia, violence, assault)
6. **Gender Queer** by Maia Kobabe (TW: Homophobia, references to sexual themes, contains some graphic images)
7. **Gender Trouble** by Judith Butler (TW: Homophobia, sexism, transphobia)
8. **Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda** by Becky Albertalli (TW: Homophobia)
9. **Proud** by Juno Dawson (TW: Homophobia, transphobia)
10. **The Glamour Boys: The Secret Story of the Rebels who Fought for Britain to Defeat Hitler** by Chris Bryant (TW: Homophobia, war, death)
11. **The Henna Wars** by Adiba Jaigirdar (TW: Islamophobia, homophobia, internalized homophobia)
12. **Drag: The Complete Story** by Simon Doonan (TW: Homophobia, transphobia, racism)
13. **Conundrum** by Jan Morris (TW: Gender dysphoria, medical procedures, homophobia, transphobia)
14. **Soft on Soft** by Mina Waheed (TW: References to parental death, panic attacks, acephobia)
15. **Middlesex** by Jeffrey Eugenides (TW: Intersex prejudice and offensive terminology, gender dysphoria, racism, incest, death, homophobia, medical procedures, injury)

### Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe

*'I chose this book because it is one of my favourite pieces of LGBT+ art and I think it will resonate with anybody who has ever felt different or like an outsider. This book validated so many gender-queer feelings that I have experienced throughout my lifetime and even if you haven't had similar experiences to Maia, you will still be able to empathise with their journey to self-discovery. Plus, who doesn't love a book with pictures?! - Hazel*



### Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli

*I read this book in January of this year, having seen the film in 2018, and I have to say that while the book is still aimed at a teen/young adult readership, the book certainly seems a bit more adult in nature. At times the film, 'Love, Simon', did shy away from some of these more mature aspects, presumably to appeal to a more mainstream audience, but the original book is braver in discussing some of the more intimate parts of discovering one's sexuality.*

*I wish this book – and its film adaptation, for that matter – had existed when I was still struggling with my own sexuality. Even now though, it is a heartwarming read as a gay man, and it gives hope that, broadly speaking, things are getting better, and younger generations are feeling more comfortable about being their authentic selves. – Luke*



## Get Involved at your service

If you want to get involved in LGBT+ History Month at your service or any time of year, there are some ideas below to get you started!

### Host a book club or film night

Read and explore a book from the LGBT+ book club or pick a film (there are lots of 'best' lists online for interesting LGBT+ films). After the film have a question and answering session.

### Discussion on the timeline

Explore how things have changed/what still needs to be done – are you surprised by anything on the timeline? You could create your own timeline and include inspirational people who have helped change history.

### Host a Quiz

Quizzes are a fun way to engage in the bigger picture of the LGBT+ experience. Click the link [bit.ly/2Nxjb6X](https://bit.ly/2Nxjb6X) to download our LGBT+ History Month quiz

### Myth Busting

Do you have any questions to ask the LGBT+ Network? Then write them down and email them to [lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk)

### Do you have a story you would like to share?

We're really keen to hear from staff and service users alike, so if you want to share your stories, opinions, facts, etc. then please get in touch

### Visit LGBT+ History Month website for more ideas

They have loads of resources and events that are happening throughout the year [lgbtlushistorymonth.co.uk](https://lgbtlushistorymonth.co.uk)

### Did you know that August is Pride month?

You can research local events taking place over the summer or let us know how you think this can be celebrated?

Email [marketing@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:marketing@creativesupport.co.uk) with your ideas and how you've been celebrating LGBT+ history month

## Snippets of your stories

*"Getting an undercut didn't stop people from assuming that I'm straight, but I'm glad that it didn't. If it had, my fears would have been confirmed: that femininity and queerness are mutually exclusive. Instead it taught me a lesson. It taught me that yes, I can change my appearance in an effort make people see "the real" me, but it's a waste of time if the things that I do feel inauthentic to who I am as a person and how I feel comfortable presenting. So I let it grow out. The locks which were once shaved short now sit in soft curls at the nape of my neck, constantly falling out of my pony tail and reminding me that I can change my appearance if I want to, but my appearance doesn't dictate my identity."*  
- Hazel

*"Keep strong, don't ignore praise, but filter out all bullying and abuse. They don't deserve the good feelings they get when they know they have hurt you. Hold your head up - you are worth something, and you mean a lot to someone even if it is someone you are yet to meet."*  
- Emlyn

*"As much as being an out non binary person is a challenge, I feel more comfortable being myself than I ever was beforehand. It's increased my confidence to no end, because I know in my mind that this is who I am, and it is wonderful to finally have a name for it."*  
- Abby

### Want to read more?

These quotes are from full articles from staff and service users from Creative Support, who explore their own personal journeys to acceptance, love, and triumph. These honest and inspirational articles show the power of the individual, and the strength that comes from understanding. Thank you so much to our contributors for telling us their stories, which can be found by visiting [www.creativesupport.co.uk/lgbt-history-month-our-stories/](https://www.creativesupport.co.uk/lgbt-history-month-our-stories/)

# The Gender Spectrum

In our society, the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used to describe whether someone is a 'man' or a 'woman'. There is an assumption that someone's genitals decides what gender they are, but this is not the case.

Gender and sexuality are not the same, and shouldn't be used as swappable terms. Sexuality refers to people's sexual orientation, such as heterosexual and homosexual, whereas gender refers to traits which we assume somebody to have based on their birth sex. For example, someone born with female genitals will be considered to be a **woman** and will be expected to do more 'female' things in life. This might mean we expect them to be nurturing, gentle, and 'girly'. We also might expect them to present themselves in a certain way, such as with long hair or wearing makeup.

In reality though a person's gender doesn't always match the sex that they were born with. Some people identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth, and feel comfortable presenting that way. Some people are **intersex**, which means that they were born with genetic or physical characteristics that don't match just male or female. For others their gender may be different to their biological sex and could be somewhere between **male** and **female**, or it could be fluid in between the two.

The term 'gender spectrum' explains this world between male and female. It may help to think of the spectrum as a sliding scale with male at one end and female at the other. People who identify with their birth gender are called '**cisgender**' and means that they will be at one end of the scale or another. Some people don't associate with any part of the spectrum, they are **agender**.

Someone who identifies with the opposite gender to their birth gender may identify as **transgender**. The 'T' in LGBT+ stands for **trans** or **trans\***. The asterisk here acts as an umbrella

for all non-cisgender people and not just trans men or trans women. This is because some people don't sit at either end of the spectrum and fall somewhere in-between.

Someone who doesn't sit at either end of the spectrum, but somewhere in between, is non-binary. For example, someone who is **non-binary** is neither male or female, and can be found anywhere on the spectrum that they feels fits best. Somebody may also use the term '**genderqueer**' to describe this.

Somebody who is non-binary may present themselves as a mixture of male and female genders, or they may choose to present in a way which aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth. It's a common assumption that non-binary people have to appear androgynous, but there is no right or wrong way to be non-binary. The way that someone dresses doesn't always show their gender, and you can't tell someone's gender just by looking at them.

Someone who is **genderfluid** is also considered non-binary, but their gender isn't 'fixed' at one point on the spectrum and can change over time. Courtney Act, the winner of Big Brother UK in 2018, is genderfluid.

In some cultures, a **third gender** is part of standard gender expression. In Native American and First Nation Canadian culture, for example, people who identify outside of male and female are known as 'two spirit' in English. Other cultures, such as the Chambri tribe in Papua New Guinea have completely reversed gender roles to our own.

When somebody realises that they don't identify with their birth gender, they may make some changes in their life in order to feel more comfortable. This might include changing their names or their **pronouns**.

People who sit closer to the female end of the spectrum may choose to use the pronouns

'**she/her/hers**', whereas people who identify closer to the male end may choose to use '**he/him/his**'. For people who identify across the spectrum, or outside of it, they may use gender neutral pronouns. The most common gender neutral pronouns are 'they/them/theirs', but some people may also use '**xe**', '**ze**', '**sie**', '**c**', and '**ey**'. People may also choose gender neutral titles (instead of Mr, Mrs or Miss) such as '**Mx**' or choose not to use them at all. People who are not cisgender may also change their name so that it closer aligns with their gender.

If somebody asks you to use a different name or pronouns to refer to them, it might feel difficult at first, but it is very important to respect and use the words they have asked you to use. When you use somebody's old name, it is called 'dead naming'. If someone has changed their name it means that they don't feel comfortable with their old name being used. It also means, you may 'out' somebody without their consent, meaning that you might share that they are trans\* without their permission.

If you accidentally use someone's dead name or old pronouns in a conversation then correct yourself and move on. If they correct you, you may want to apologise to them but then carry on your conversation as normal.

## Glossary

**Intersex** - Someone who was born with genetic and/or physical characteristics that don't clearly map onto either male or female

**Cisgender** - Someone who identifies with their birth gender

**Agender** - Someone who doesn't associate with any gender and exists outside the gender spectrum

**Transgender/trans/trans\*** - People who don't identify with their birth gender are trans, although some non-binary people prefer not to be termed as trans. Trans\* is the encompassing umbrella for all non-cisgender people.

**Non-binary** - Someone who is neither male or female, and sits somewhere on the gender spectrum that they feel best represents them. Genderqueer is another term someone may use instead of non-binary.

**Genderfluid** - Someone who is genderfluid is also considered non-binary, but their gender isn't fixed at one point on the spectrum and can change over time.

**Third gender** - In some cultures around the world, a third gender is part of standard gender expression with their own roles and characteristics in their society

**Dead name/Deadnaming** - This is when someone changes their name to more closely align with their gender, and someone refers to them as their old, or 'dead' name.

## Important Things to Remember

**Because we are taught that gender and sex are the same thing, learning about the gender spectrum can feel overwhelming. It is okay if you don't get everything right at first, but the most important things to remember are:**

1. Gender is not the same as sex
2. You can exist at any point on the gender spectrum and express that in whatever way feels natural to you
3. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to be trans, non-binary or gender fluid
4. You need to respect people's pronouns and use a different name if they ask you to
5. If somebody corrects you for making a mistake, thank them and move on
6. Every form of gender expression is beautiful, valid, and worthy of respect



# LGBT+ Assumptions and Myth Busting

There are lots of assumptions and stereotypes out there about people in the LGBT+ community so we thought we'd do a bit of myth-busting and share a little bit of background about why these assumptions are not the case!

## 'Being trans/gender-fluid/non-binary is a new thing'

Absolutely not! Trans\* people have existed since the beginning of human history under various names and identifiers. In some cultures around the world, including India and within Native American history, 'third gender' or 'two-spirit' people are an intrinsic part of society with our concept of gender nowadays being a very Western idea.

## 'Lesbians have short hair and if you have short hair you're a lesbian'

People can express themselves however they feel comfortable, or how they want to present themselves to society. Some lesbians have short hair, some lesbians have long hair, and some lesbians have no hair; and all are equally beautiful and it doesn't diminish their sexuality.

## 'LGBT+ people aren't religious'

While some religions are outwardly against LGBT+ people, there are various interpretations of religious texts that don't view homosexuality as a sin. Ultimately though, belief is a very personal thing and there are lots of LGBT+ people who are also religious - the two don't have to be opposing!

## 'LGBT+ people have equality nowadays because they can get married'

I'm afraid not. Unfortunately this isn't the case, and there are still many countries around the world where LGBT+ people face persecution, and in some cases the death penalty, for their sexual orientation and their gender. In the UK, we still have a long way to go to have equality, with equal marriage being just one of the steps along the way.

## 'Being LGBT+ means you can't have children'

People can choose to have children no matter their sexual orientation through lots of means, including adoption, surrogacy, IVF, and more. People LGBT+ will also not stop you from being a fantastic parent- think about single-parent families - not having a mum or a dad doesn't stop you from growing up to be a wonderful and well-rounded person, so why should this be any different for LGBT+ families?

## 'Being Trans\* means having surgery'

Some trans\* people decide to have surgery and some people don't. Also, having or not having surgery doesn't make you any less or any more trans\*- each person's transition will be a personal journey and involve different things.

If you have ever wanted to ask a question to someone from the LGBT+ community then please send it [lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk). We'll try to answer as many as we can. There are no silly questions, but please remember to be kind!

If you are a Creative Support staff member and would like to get involved with the LGBT+ network please email [lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk](mailto:lgbt.network@creativesupport.co.uk)