# Affirming LGBTIQA+ people with disability

## Slide 1: Affirming LGBTIQA+ people with disability

With Jax Jacki Brown, OAM (they/them)

## Slide 2: Acknowledgement of country

“I’m inside the culture because I’m Aboriginal; I’m outside because I’m gay. I’m inside gay culture because I’m gay, I’m outside because I’m Aboriginal.”-Peter Waples-Crowe

Two images:

* An artwork displaying the naked torso of two people with birds and the rainbow behind them - insideOUT by Ngarigo artist Peter Waples-Crowe
* Image of the logo of First Peoples Disability Network Australia - <https://fpdn.org.au>

## Slide 3: Who am I?

Four images:

* Jax and friends
* Jax, seated in their manual wheelchair wearing rainbow jumper and speaking into a mic
* Jax and their child on Jax's powerchair
* Jax and their partner Anne smiling at camera

## Slide 4: Childhood

A childhood spent in the pursuit of an unattainable ‘normal’ body-at what cost?

The power and influence of the medical model of disability in disabled peoples’ lives and histories

A photo of Jax at 5 years old, standing on their sticks and smiling at the camera

## Slide 5: The social model of disability

Disabled people are not wrong for the world we live in; the world is simply not yet right for us! - Stella Young

Two images:

* A photo US disability rights protest in the 1980's. A group of people including those in wheelchairs and people who are short statured gather under a banner which reads 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere' - Martin Luther King Jr
* A group of people holding signs, Jax is in the front. At a defend our NDIS rally in March 2022, Melbourne.

## Slide 6: Artist and activist-Liz Crow

‘For years now this social model of disability has enabled me to confront, survive and even surmount countless situations of exclusion and discrimination…

It has enabled a vision of ourselves free from the constraints of disability oppression and provided a direction for our commitment to social change.

It has played a central role in promoting disabled peoples’ individual self-worth, collective identity and political organisation. I don’t think it is an exaggeration to say that the social model has saved lives.’

Artist and activist-Liz Crow

Black and white photo of Artist and activist Liz Crow in her wheelchair wearing a disability pride shirt

## Slide 7: The politics of pashing

A photo of Jax and Anne kissing on a crowded street. Anne is sitting on Jax's lap and kissing them

## Slide 8: Sexuality

‘Sexuality is often the source of our deepest oppression; it is also often the source of our deepest pain.

 It’s easier for us to talk about— and formulate strategies for changing discrimination in employment, education, and housing than to talk about our exclusion from sexuality and reproduction.’

Writer and educator - Anne Finger

## Slide 9: Reproductive rights

Photo of a giant marble statue of Alison Lapper Pregnant Tafalgar Square – by Marc Quinn, 2005

## Slide 10: Sexuality and intellectual disability

‘Individuals with intellectual disabilities’ sexual needs were ignored; their sexual behavior was punished; they were randomly sterilized; they were closeted in their homes or isolated in large institutions, segregated by sex to prevent them from reproducing. In fact, they were actually oppressed largely because of their sexuality’.

(Gill, Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency, 2015)

Image of the front cover of Michael Gill’s book ‘Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency’. The words Already Doing It are over a condom packet which is open.

## Slide 11: Sexuality and minority groups

‘Gay men and lesbians, gender queer and gender nonconforming persons, racial minority populations, poor people, and disabled people are often discouraged to reproduce for fear that they cannot, will not, or should not contribute to the future of the human race’.

(Gill, Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency, 2015)

‘Robert McRuer argues that crip/queer perspectives can challenge assumptions about which bodies are able to inhabit and lay claim to normative conceptions of agency, family, and ultimately, identity’.

(Gill, Already Doing It: Intellectual Disability and Sexual Agency, 2015)

## Slide 12: Challenges facing LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities in Australia

In the last 12 months LGBTIQA+ people with disability had experienced the following rates of harassment or assault based on their sexuality or gender identity: 52.7% had experienced verbal abuse, 15.0% physical abuse and 31.7% sexual abuse.

(Writing Themselves In 4: The Health and Wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia, 2021)

* Higher rates of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
* Living at the intersection of multiple systems of disadvantage: Ableism/homophobia/biphobia/transphobia/intersexphobia
* Family members and support workers often not being affirming of our sexual or gender identities
* NDIS is not LGBTIQA+ responsive or supportive

Image of the front cover of the Writing Themselves In 4: the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia

## Slide 13: Pronouns: Why they matter and how to use them

Gendered pronouns:

* he/him/his
* she/her/hers

Gender neutral pronouns:

* they/them/theirs
* Ze/zir/zirs

gender neutral pronouns are generally used by non-binary or gender fluid folks

* A person’s pronouns may change over time. Someone might use she/they pronouns but later use they/them so it’s good to gently check-in with the person if you are unsure
* Get into the habit of introducing yourself using your pronouns:

**‘Hi, my name is ….and my pronouns are…’’**

**“Can I ask what your pronouns are?’’**

* Have your pronouns in your email signature and beside your name on zoom/teams
* Wear a pronoun badge with your pronouns on it

Image of pronoun badges which say she/her, him/him, they/them

## Slide 14: Practical ways you can be affirming of LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities

* Gender is not a binary but a spectrum
* 80% of disabilities are invisible
* Be across what the different letters in LGBTIQA+ stand for and what the issues are
* Take a person centred approach and mirror the language the person is using about themself
* Celebrate significant days such as: IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple Day, Trans Day of Visibility, Intersex Awareness Day, IDPwD
* Make sure there is space on forms for people to write their preferred name as well as legal name and an open text box for gender
* Maintain confidentiality i.e. if they have only told you about their sexuality or gender identity don’t share this information with others

## Slide 15: Practical ways you can be affirming of LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities

* Check in directly about what pronouns someone would like you to use in different contexts
* Always use the name the person wants to be called even if their legal name might be different
* If you misgender someone apologise politely
* Don’t assume someone is in an opposite sex relationship
* Don’t make assumptions about a person’s gender identity based on how they look or how their voice sounds
* Invest in LGBTIQA+, disability, First Nations, CALD trainings which are designed and delivered by people with lived experience

## Slide 16: Eli Clare

‘Pride works in direct opposition to internalized oppression. The latter provides a fertile ground for shame, denial, self-hatred, and fear. The former encourages anger, strength, and joy.

To transform self-hatred into pride is a fundamental act of resistance.’ (emphasis added)

- Trans, queer disabled writer, Eli Clare

## Slide 17: Thank you!

Image of the Disability Pride Flag - a charcoal grey flag with a diagonal band from the top left to the bottom right corner, made up of five parallel stripes in red, gold, pale grey, blue, and green

Image of the progress flag - the rainbow flag with an addition of a brown and black, and blue pink and white colours in triangle lines to signify the inclusion of trans people and first nations, black and brown people of colour.

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## Slide 18: Resources to support LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities

Rainbow Rights: Self-advocacy: A group run by and for LGBTIQA+ people with intellectual disabilities - [https://rainbowrights.com.au](https://rainbowrights.com.au/)

Spectrum Intersections: LGBTIQA+ Neurodiverse  peer group - [https://www.spectrumintersections.org](https://www.spectrumintersections.org/)

Rainbow Inclusion: A website for LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities - [https://rainbowinclusion.org.au](https://rainbowinclusion.org.au/)

Our Rainbow Lives Website - <https://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/projects/our-rainbow-lives/>

Thorne Harbour Health and Inclusion Melbourne-LGBTIQA+ disability NDIS resources - <https://thorneharbour.org/lgbti-health/disability/disability-resources/>

Sexuality, Education, Counselling and Consultancy Agency (WA) (not LGBTIQA+ specific) - [www.secca.org.au](http://www.secca.org.au/)

### Research about LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities

[The Everyday Experiences of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) People Living with Disability Report, 2018](https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/media/pages/research-resources/the-everyday-experiences-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-lgbti-people-living-with-disability/1242611313-1605661766/the-everyday-experiences-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-lgbti-people-living-with-disability.pdf)

[More than Ticking a Box: LGBTIQA+ People with Disability Talking about their Lives Report, 2021](https://iht.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/153/2021/03/More-than-ticking-a-box-uploadfile.pdf)

An image of the rainbow pride flag with the addition of the black and brown stripes at the top overlaid with the accessibility symbol for wheelchair user, Neurodiversity, Deaf or hard of hearing and blind/vision impaired