

# Health

Access to health is considered a fundamental right across the world. Yet data shows us that overall, LGBTI health is poorer than that of the rest of the population.

## [Health](#)

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Part of the problem is that most policymakers and healthcare practitioners do not prioritise LGBTI-relevant health issues. A significant lack of systematic data only exacerbates this.

With that in mind, ILGA-Europe works towards securing effective legal protection for LGBTI people against any form of discrimination in the healthcare sector. Part of that task includes striving to strengthen European legislation and policies by building policy makers' knowledge around LGBTI people's health. We also work to prevent trans people from being psychopathologised because they are trans.

Together with our member organisations, who work on national levels, we identify good practices and try to operationalise them. We also support and assist with litigation cases in the European courts, and thoroughly collect data on discrimination and violence that LGBTI people face in healthcare settings.

To make an impact around all of those points, we embrace a number of strategies. For example, we support medical and ethical bodies in developing guidance and policies – and work to develop international human rights standards with the EU and Council of Europe. When violations happen, we ensure that they are well-documented by national and international bodies.

Overall, our work to improve LGBTI health centres around a few focus areas: equal access to healthcare, LGBTI health, HIV/AIDS and mental health. Across almost all focus areas, we collaborate with health-focused NGOs to ensure LGBTI awareness and inclusion, support national policy development processes and develop international human rights standards.

Here is how we work with each of these focus areas:

1. [Equal access to healthcare](#)
2. [LGBTI health](#)
3. [HIV and AIDS](#)
4. [Mental health](#)

## **Equal access to healthcare**

Equal access to healthcare includes advocating for thorough data collection about the discrimination and violence that LGBTI people face in healthcare settings. It also entails adequately training healthcare providers and medical students to prioritise LGBTI-relevant care.

At ILGA-Europe, we specifically work to ensure equal access to healthcare by developing and disseminating inclusive, human rights-based healthcare training materials.

## **LGBTI health**

When we talk about LGBTI health, we mean advocating for a few things. First of all, we demand full implementation of the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11). We also advocate for healthcare practitioners to have access to and awareness around human rights-based medical guidelines, medical education and standards of care. Last but not least, we work to increase funding to LGBTI-specific healthcare projects.

How do we do this? In short, we provide support across all those points – from ICD-11 implementation to the creation of human rights-based medical guidelines.

## **HIV and AIDS**

Across Europe, HIV transmission rates among men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans people (trans women in particular) remains high. Diverse factors explain why – like ongoing discrimination and stigma against LGBTI people, which can lead to low self-esteem and late diagnoses. Moreover, sexual and relationship education for young people across Europe is subpar – which poses a major problem to effectively tackling HIV.

With that in mind, ILGA-Europe advocates for LGBTI-relevant healthcare programming to combat the HIV and AIDS epidemic – with a focus on the most marginalised groups. We also work to secure funding for inclusive programming from sustainable government sources, and to disaggregate data on the grounds of SOGIESC.

Primarily, we do this by collaborating with health-focused NGOs to ensure LGBTI awareness and inclusion – and by developing relevant messaging. We also participate in the Nobody Left Outside initiative and support national policy development processes.

## **Mental health**

Stigma and discrimination negatively impact LGBTI people's mental health. This is illustrated by the concept of 'minority stress' – a psychological distress that comes from experiences of marginalisation, discrimination and stigmatisation. Minority stress can lead to increased risk of suicidal behaviour, self-harm or depression.

To ensure better mental health for LGBTI people, ILGA-Europe advocates for including LGBTI-specific issues in mental health law and policy. We also advocate for disaggregating data on the grounds of SOGIESC.

On a practical level, we work towards these goals by collaborating with NGOs focusing on mental health to ensure LGBTI awareness and inclusion in their programming and work. We also promote our members' work around LGBTI mental health.

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