A stylized map of New Zealand is positioned on the right side of the slide. The map is colored with a rainbow gradient, transitioning from red at the top (North Island) through orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple at the bottom (South Island). The map is set against a background of a blue sky with white clouds.

Rainbow 101

Elevating Ākonga (Student) Voices

Andrea Trueman

Whitireia Polytechnic
Wellington Institution of Technology

Andrea.Trueman@wandw.ac.nz



This is a safe space
to explore - where
all questions are
valid and relevant.

How and in what way do gender and sexually diverse (LGBTQIA+) students experience the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Aims & Objectives

- To examine the on-campus experiences of LGBTQIA+ students
- To understand how well educators/educational institutions support LGBTQIA+ students
- To identify areas for change to support and enhance positive on-campus experiences
- To make recommendations which inform professional practice among educators

Where to start?

- Individuals belonging to the Rainbow community face a variety of **disparities**, generally due to Western ideals of sex, sexual and gender expectations, discrimination and social exclusion.
- Equally, this group face **heightened levels of risk** including violence, social invisibility, marginalisation, isolation and many other issues accessing support (Clendon & Munns, 2019).





Risk Factors

Individuals belonging to the Rainbow community face higher risk of:

- Stress/Anxiety
- Mental health issues
- Alcoholism
- Drug abuse
- Body dysmorphia
- Eating disorders
- STIs
- Chronic illness
- Cancers



Did you know...

- Prior to 1973 being gay was classified as a pathological mental disorder.

Trust - is a big deal when working with rainbow groups, where do we start?

- Prior to 1986 being a gay male was illegal.
- Presently in New Zealand, conversion therapy is still legal.



Let's start with Language...

Can anyone tell us what LGBTQIA+ stands for?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Lesbian | 9. Non-binary |
| 2. Gay | 10. Gender-fluid |
| 3. Takatāpui | 11. Ally |
| 4. Transgender | 12. Androgynous |
| 5. Bisexual | 13. Questioning |
| 6. Asexual (Ace) | 14. Dead naming |
| 7. Pansexual | 15. Misgendered |
| 8. Intersex | 16. Queer |

A note about 'Queer'...

- Queer is an overarching term often used as an umbrella term for the LGBTQIA+/Rainbow community.
- Queer may be used by someone who hasn't defined their gender/sexuality as one thing or another.
- Queer has been 'reclaimed' by the community as a positive descriptor – taking back the power balance of using the word Queer.
- However, it is not a preferred term for all, and doesn't always sit well culturally.





The language must be culturally safe too - MVPFAFF



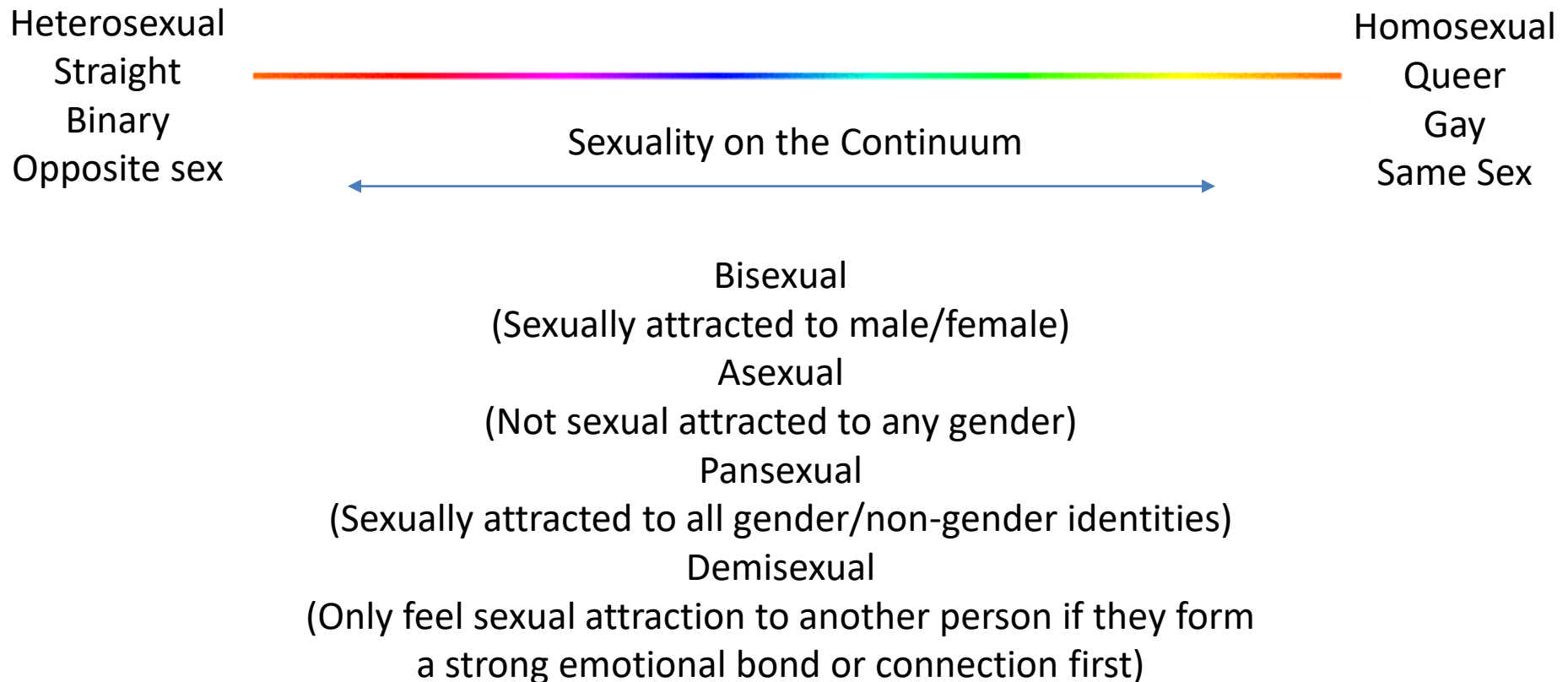
- **Māhū** in Tahiti and Hawai'i.
- **Vaka sa lewa lewa** in Fiji.
- **Palopa** in Papua New Guinea.
- **Fa'afafine** in Samoa and American Samoa.
- **Akava'ine** in the Cook Islands.
- **Fakaleiti or leiti** in the Kingdom of Tonga.
- **Fakafefine** in Niue.

What exactly is Sex, Sexuality and Gender?



Sexuality

It's all about the 'Chemistry'...



Gender

It's all about how you 'feel' about 'who' you are...
a sense of 'self expression' which might not match with biology.

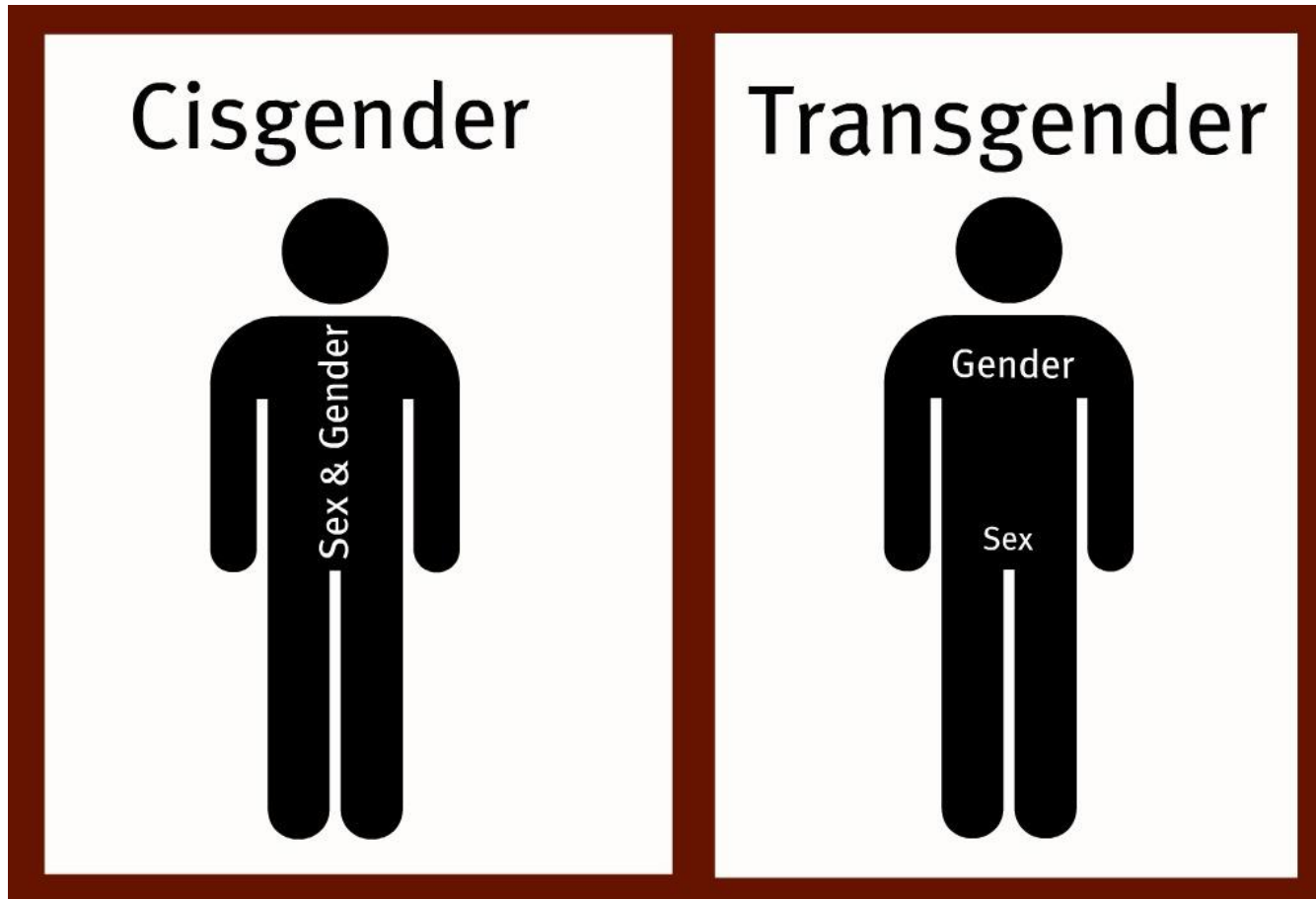
I feel like a
female,
woman,
lady, girl



I feel like a
male, man,
boy

I don't feel I align with either female or male
*Or I align with both/all genders, or it is changeable...

What does Cisgender mean?

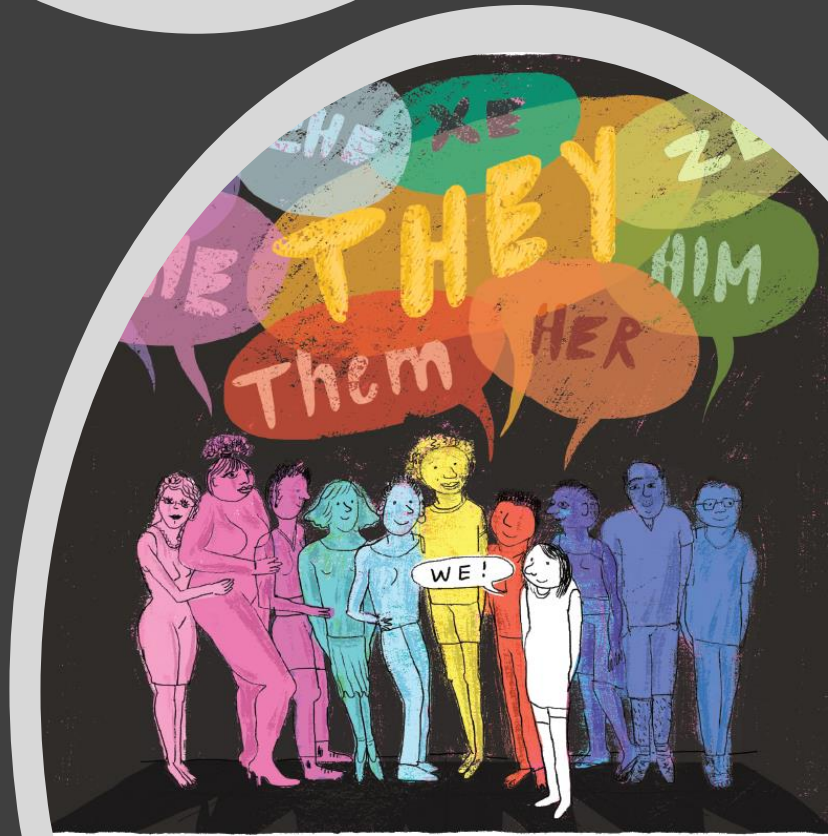


Assigned as 'female', identify as a female
i.e. sex and gender expression match.

Assigned as 'male', but may express a
female gender identity or vice versa.

Pronouns, what are they?

- Pronouns demonstrate ownership of Gender Identity
- Acknowledging chosen pronouns creates a welcoming space for transgender / gender diverse people
- Everyone makes mistakes - working to acknowledge and use someone's pronouns is important
- If someone else makes a mistake gently correct them.



Findings from across Aotearoa

Negatives

- Overtly heterocentric campus environment (Binary focused)
- Lack of consultation or awareness, inclusive language, rainbow related training, appropriate support, rainbow policy, neutral toilet facilities
- Poor visibility/representation for LGBTQIA+ on campus
- Outdated administration systems alienating students
- Misgendering and Deadnaming (calling previous name/gender)
- Zero cultural acknowledgement embedded in Rainbow Support.

Positives

- Some tutors were good with language and don't assume
- Some campuses have visible rainbow representatives
- One third of providers had an LGBTQIA+ counsellor/health care
- One third of providers had safe gender-neutral toilets
- Peer support for LGBTQIA+ students was available at most
- Some campuses had safe rainbow groups/events.



Ākonga Voice

I have faced a lot of discrimination.

They [provider] don't even know who we are on campus.

It was almost like I had a tag on my back.

When you are working with a marginalised community you can't expect them all to put their hands up, they won't, it's not how it works.

I volunteer heaps to get students to see me. Just because I am visibly queer and Māori, it's like, visibility is f***ing everything.

For a full year, I kept it hidden [sexuality] which was very awkward when people asked if I had a boyfriend.

It has been very negative [coming out as non-binary], there was no support for the queer community and no safety net.

There's a big, diverse range of people and sexualities and genders out there.

I felt like if they knew about me... that I would lose respect.

There was definitely a hand full of students that didn't believe that trans people existed or that they should be treated differently.



Now what?

Try using more gender-neutral terms

“they/them”

“person”

“pregnant person”

“parental leave”

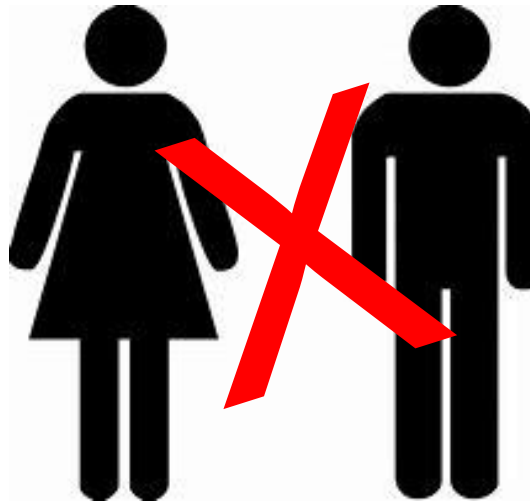
“parent”

“partner”

“siblings”



Neutral **Visual** Language Also Helps



TOILETS

Winner....



What can Tertiary Institutions do?

1

Provide consistent, up-to-date education and training for educators.

2

Institution-wide evaluation reviewing facilities and administration (forms) in consultation with rainbow students/staff.

3

Use of inclusive language, imagery and examples across campus correspondence and resources.

4

Safe, visible rainbow support, counselling and related events/groups.



What can you do?

- Don't assume, there's lots to learn
- Provide a safe space for the rainbow community
- Ask about pronouns and preferred names
- Challenge phobia/inappropriate language around you
- Neutralise the language you use
- Think about what is taken for granted i.e., having a representative bathroom and going 'safely'
- Get to know any Rainbow Champions in your workplace or become one.



Who can help?

- Vibe
- Tranzform
- Rainbow Youth
- Rainbow Wellington (Rainbow Your Location)
- InsideOut
- Tiwhanawhana Foundation
- Takatapui.nz
- You, Me, Us
- Intersex Trust
- Evolve
- Piki





thank you

Aroha ki te tangata,
Ahakoa ko wai te tangata.

Love people,
in spite of who they are.