

Sexual and gender diversity



Definition

Individuals whose sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual behaviors, or physical appearance do not conform to certain sociocultural norms regarding sexuality and gender.

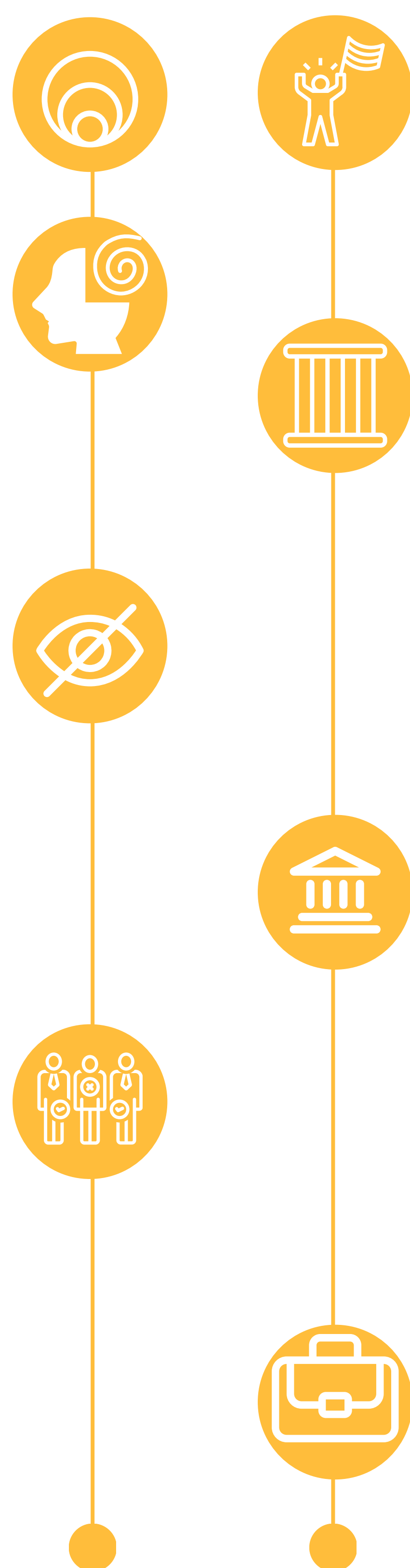
This includes, among others, homosexual, bisexual, transgender, and non-binary individuals.

Why adapt your approach?

Experiences of discrimination related to belonging to multiple minority groups (LGBTQIA+, ethnocultural and/or racialized individuals, migrants, etc.) may interact and cause distress.

Potential challenges

- Experiencing stigma due to **intersecting marginalized identities**.
- **Internalization** of stigmatizing attitudes
- **Stress** related to not conforming to the gender and sexual norms of their ethnocultural community
- For safety reasons, it is **necessary for them to hide** their sexual orientation or gender identity
- **Experiences of rejection** from their family, ethnocultural community, and/or the host society
- **Absence or loss** of social support
- **Discrimination**, violence, or harassment related to sexual orientation or gender identity/expression
- **Fear of persecution** due to their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, which may lead them to seek asylum



Post-migration context

- **Pressure to disclose** their sexual orientation or gender identity as part of the asylum process
- **Detention** of transgender asylum applicants in facilities that do not align with their gender identity
- **Distrust** toward services and institutions due to negative past experiences
- **Difficulty accessing** health care, social services, and gender-affirming care
- **Difficulty accessing** procedures to change their name and gender marker (loss of official documents, conditions related to migration status, etc.)
- **Difficulty accessing** housing or employment

Recommended practices

The practices recommended when working with all individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities also apply to those from ethnocultural minority and/or racialized communities or those with experiences of forced migration. The following additional considerations should be taken into account.

Offer a safe and inclusive environment that demonstrates openness to sexual and gender diversity (e.g., inclusive vocabulary, posters, etc.). An individual may be accustomed to concealing this part of their identity and may feel stigmatized.

Respect the pace at which an individual discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity. They may choose to keep their sexual orientation or gender identity confidential, as this can be a sensitive or taboo subject.

Ask the individual how they prefer to be addressed (e.g., first name and pronouns). This allows those who cannot legally change their name or gender marker to use their chosen name and pronouns.

Respect the language the individual uses and how they understand their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. These concepts vary across countries, cultures, and individuals.

Avoid stereotyping a culture by presuming that it has a positive or negative attitude toward sexual and gender diversity. It is best to ask the individual directly about their own experiences.

Keep in mind that the coming-out process may unfold differently than expected. For example, the asylum process often requires individuals to disclose and substantiate their sexual orientation or gender identity, which can be stressful. This may also compel an individual to express their identity according to cultural norms that are unfamiliar to them. The transition from concealment to expression and acceptance is non-linear.

Understand the intersectionality of different aspects of a person's identity (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, migration status, social class, age, disability).

Highlight the person's resilience. Explore their coping strategies and work on developing others.

Facilitate and encourage the development of a support network to reduce isolation. The individual might be reluctant to get involved with LGBTQIA+ organizations for fear of being rejected by their ethnocultural community. On the other hand, they might be reluctant to interact with their ethnocultural community for fear of being stigmatized because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Inform the individual of their rights and, if they wish, help them assert those rights.

Be familiar and develop partnerships with organizations for individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities to facilitate referrals.

Identify various resources based on the person's needs (e.g., online, in person, based on migration status, etc.).

To learn more:

[Individuals of Sexual Diversity and Gender Plurality](#) (MSSS) [only available in French]

[Guide for Service Providers Who Work with Trans+ and Non-Binary Migrants and Refugees](#) (AGIR Montréal)



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