



**LGBTQ+ and of Factsheet &**

Faith is an many LGBTQ+ the idea, that keep that LGBTQ+ people cannot possibly belong within faith communities has been deeply damaging.

**Faith**

**Allyship**

important part of people’s lives. But being perpetuated,

Faith has this almost unparalleled ability to bring people from all walks of life together in the name of love. LGBTQ+ people of faith need to be respected and included in their faith communities, just as they need respect and acceptance in wider society.

**Can LGBTQ+ and faith identities co-exist?**

Faith can often be a sensitive subject, with some LGBTQ+ individuals feeling ostracized whilst others still hold strong faith, and see it as just as much a part of them as being LGBTQ+. So whilst there can be a clash, and some decide to leave their faith community, other find a way to bring the two together to co-exist.

*‘A lot of people say you cant be gay and Muslim, like it’s a choice. Islam is a very accepting religion and its foundations are based on peace, befriending and supporting each other’.*

*‘I have heard that God has known me before I was even born, my queerness is not news to him; being my whole, authentic self is vital to being in relationship with God; I am wholly and fully loved, unconditionally’.*

*‘Although there have been really tough times, by accepting that all parts of me – even my sexuality – reflect the image of God, I have began to feel so much more alive and whole’.*

**What is intersectionality?**

Intersectionality, first coined in the late 1980s by the academic and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw, is the idea that we have many different identities – such as gender, race and faith – which are all interconnected.

It is often used to discuss the systematic oppression of different groups of people and how these oppressions link together – such as racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, classism and xenophobia.

Intersectionality is the concept that all these issues are connected and often occur in tandem with one another. For example, a gay white women is aware of how their gender and sexual orientation intersect, however, we must note that race is yet another intersectional, and not a negligible one. In most cases, race is highly visible, apparent from birth, and connected to cultural identity and family affiliation.

**LGBTQ+ and of faith experiences**

There’s a question of acceptance on both sides – in terms of how a faith community accepts a person from the LGBTQ+ community and also how the LGBTQ+ community accepts a person of faith.

Many LGBTQ+ individuals feel they can not be safely 'open' as a person of faith in the LGBTQ+ community, and vice versa, leading to a sense of invisibility and isolation.

- One in eight LGBTQ+ people of faith (12%) have experienced discrimination and poor treatment from other LGBTQ+ people in their local LGBTQ+ community because of their faith. This includes almost one in ten LGBTQ+ people of Christian faith (9%) and one in five LGBTQ+ people of other faiths, including Islam, Sikhism and Judaism (21%).
- A third of lesbian, gay and bi people of faith (32%) aren't open with anyone in their faith community about their sexual orientation.
- One in four trans people of faith (25%) aren't open about who they are in their faith community.
- One two in five LGBTQ+ people of faith (39%) think their faith community is welcoming of lesbian, gay and bi people.
- Just one in four LGBTQ+ people of faith (25%) think their faith community is welcoming of trans people
- A tghird (34%) said they would be reluctant to report faith-based hate crime in their LGBTQ+ community for fear of alienating them.

### Common Microaggressions

Common microaggressions LGBTQ+ and of faith people experience from friendship groups, families and communities include:

- You can't be LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief
- Being LGBTQ+ is against your faith / religion / belief
- Being LGBTQ+ is a Western thing
- Being LGBTQ+ is not in our culture
- Our people don't do that

Many had heard that it's 'forbidden' or 'sinful'. These experiences can lead LGBTQ+ individuals to feel frustrated, confused, ashamed, upset and conflicted.

### Being an ally

**Listen** – to LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief people with openness and a willingness to feel uncomfortable about the realities of your own power and privilege

**Support** – find ways to support LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief, from facilitating a discussion in your teams about being LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief, to simply donating to LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief focussed charities and initiatives.

**Showcase** – it's important that, wherever possible, LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief role models are given an appropriate platform to be seen, heard and meaningfully celebrated.

Often, when LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief speak up about their experiences, they are met with doubts, challenges and defensiveness. It cannot always be the responsibility of LGBTQ+ and of faith / religion / belief to educate others, so it's important that allies educate themselves, by doing research and listening to these voices whenever possible. When someone tries to explain why

something is incorrect or offensive, it's crucial not to become defensive – own your mistakes, biases and privileges and believe us when we say it impacts us.



Miriam Margolyes    Stephen Fry    Dan Levy    Evan Rachel Wood    Ben Platt    Matt Lucas

### Faith-based groups and organisations

All over the UK and the world, there are religious, faith and belief groups, congregations and communities who are LGBTQ+ welcoming and inclusive. Some of these are LGBTQ+ specific and some are open and welcoming to everyone, no matter what your identity is.

- [Diverse Church](#) is a supportive community of over 600 LGBTQ+ Christians in the UK and Ireland. They aim to be a pastoral/mission resource for the wider church so that LGBTQ+ people do not give up God or life.
- [Hidayah's](#) mission is to provide support and welfare for LGBTQ+ Muslims and promote social justice and education about the Muslim LGBTQ+ community to counter discrimination, prejudice and injustice.
- [House of Rainbow \(HOR\)](#) fosters relationships among Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ) individuals, people of faith and allies in order to create a safer and more inclusive community.
- [Humanists UK](#) campaign for equality, diversity, particularly relating to sexual orientation and identity – both in the UK and internationally.
- [Imaan](#) is a national LGBTQ+ Muslim charity
- [Keshet UK's](#) vision is a world where no one is forced to choose between their LGBTQ+ and Jewish identity. They are the only charity in the UK working with Jewish schools, youth and young adult organisations, synagogues, and wider community organisations to become more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people through education and training.
- [Quest](#) exists to provide pastoral support to LGBTQ+ Catholics.
- [Rainbow Pagans UK and Ireland](#) is an association of LGBTQ+ Pagan groups and individuals in the UK and Ireland.
- [Sarbat](#) is an international organisation for LGBTQ+ Sikhs.
- [The Gathering](#) is an inclusive church for all, where people from the LGBTQIA+ community (and their allies) can talk about and share their Christian faith.

### Resources

Skill Boosters – [An introduction to intersectionality](#)

[Skill Boosters – Inclusive Allyship](#)



Skill Boosters – [Alex's lived experience](#), a British Indian lesbian who is a practicing Catholic

Skill Boosters – [Mia's lived experience](#), a British lesbian with Hindu and Muslim parents

Skill Boosters – [Andrew's lived experience](#), discusses the intersection of religion and sexuality

Stonewall – [Home and Communities Report](#)

The Proud Trust – [Faith in Yourself](#)

Independent – [Muslim, Jews and Christians on being LGBT and believing in God](#)

## Glossary

**LGBTQ+** - acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace.

**Religion** – some people use this word to refer to a particular tradition, such as Christianity or Islam. We're using this word to mean religious practice broadly, such as to talk about the things that people do that we associate with religion, like communal worship, prayer and following specific teachings.

**Faith** – this word is often used as an alternative to 'religion'. This is because 'faith' has less of a sense of being rigid and defined, so it's sometimes easier to identify with.

**Belief** – this word can be used both to mean belief in a particular religious tradition or set of teachings, but also to talk about what people think about things more generally. For example, you could say 'I have Hindu beliefs', and you'd be talking about beliefs coming from the Hindu tradition. However, you could ask 'what beliefs do you have about the Torah?', and you'd be asking about what someone thinks about the Torah – many Jews have different beliefs about the Torah and all those beliefs are Jewish beliefs.

**Queer** – a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBTQ+ community (racism, sexism, ableism etc). Although some LGBTQ+ people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who embraced it

**Trans** – an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Intersex** – a term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as female, male or non-binary.

Stonewall Glossary of terms can be found [here](#)