

# RAINBOW READY RUGBY



TOP TIPS FOR CLUBS AND UNIONS  
NEW ZEALAND RUGBY AND PRIDE PLEDGE



*Let's get rainbow ready! Rugby is for everyone. You can help diversity to thrive in the game by supporting, celebrating and including our LGBTTQIA+ players and whānau.*

*This quick 'top tips' guide is for players, coaches, staff, volunteers or anyone wanting to be a better rainbow ally, both on and off the field.*

## **BASIC RAINBOW DEFINITIONS**

- **RAINBOW:** an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities.
- **LGBTTQIA+:** stands for lesbian, gay, transgender, takatāpui, queer, intersex & asexual.
- **LESBIAN:** a woman who is attracted to other women.
- **GAY:** a man who is attracted to other men. Sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to rainbow communities as a whole.
- **BISEXUAL:** a person who is attracted to more than one gender (eg. men and women).
- **TRANSGENDER:** an umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Often shortened to trans.
- **TAKATĀPUI:** an umbrella term for Māori who identify with diverse genders and sexualities.
- **QUEER:** An umbrella term for gender & sexual identities that are outside social norms. Queer is a reclaimed term with formerly derogatory connotation, and should not be used unless a person identifies that way.
- **INTERSEX:** A person who is born with genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that are not typically 'male' or 'female'. Intersex people have a diversity of bodies and identities.
- **ASEXUAL:** a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to people. Sometimes shortened to ace.
- **NON-BINARY:** a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female.
- **QUESTIONING:** a person who does not know whether they might be rainbow/is not sure how they identify.

## PRONOUNS

Pronouns are the words we use to refer to someone when not using their name, and they are typically gendered. Some examples of pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs (gender neutral singular pronoun) and ia (gender neutral, te reo māori). Many people use a combination of pronouns and are comfortable with both she and they, for example.

- Pronoun Tips

- It's okay to ask! Asking is always preferable to getting it wrong, and you can never know someone's pronouns just by looking at them
- Offer yours first, eg. 'I'm Bob, I use he/him pronouns', to open up the conversation.
- Use they/them if unsure or as your default.

Using the correct pronouns for a person is essential. Changing your language habits can be tricky, but stick with it, and it'll get easier!

## COMING OUT

You can support people around you in the rugby community to feel safe to come out by creating a safe and inclusive culture first. You can do this by;

- Being mindful of language and avoiding sexist or homophobic slurs like 'you throw like a girl', 'sissy', or 'that's gay'.
- Celebrating all kinds of gender expression.
- Being kind! Being positive and awesome will make you a safe person to come out to.

How can you support a mate when they come out? Here are some helpful things to say:

- That's awesome! I'm stoked you could tell me and I think it is great.
- Are you telling other people? I won't tell anyone if you don't want me to.
- Are you seeing anyone? I'd love to meet them if you are!
- You are not alone. There is a whole community out there, it gets easier.
- Do you have good support? I might not be an expert but I'm always here to talk to.

## FEELING UNSAFE?

A young person you know might be feeling mentally or physically unsafe as the result of homo, trans or bi phobic bullying or hostility in your club or community. How can you help make your space safer for them?

- **Stand up** - if you hear or see any bullying, no matter how seemingly small, make sure to let your crew know that is isn't acceptable and why.
- **Make your values visible** - be loud about your support of rainbow people and your Pride Pledge status, both visually and in your verbal and written communications. This will help your whānau to feel safer about coming forward with problems.
- **Believe them** - whether a young person comes to you with an admission of bullying, or an identity disclosure, it's important to believe them! What they're experiencing is real. Telling someone is scary, your validation will mean a lot.
- **Prevention is better than cure** - make sure your team has done some Rainbow Awareness Training to help build empathy and an understanding of appropriateness.
- **Other support** - there's great resources out there for young rainbow and questioning people. Find the local queer network in your area and, as a first response, OutLine provides great comfort and advice.

## WHAT NEXT?

- **Stay educated** - Do your own research, further your own education and stay up to date.
- **Stick with it** - you're going to make some mistakes as an ally! We're all continually learning and growing. Stick with it, stay open to correction and possibility.
- **Stay active** - being a good rainbow ally means using your voice to make positive change. How can you be a good ally today? Keep up the great work!

*For more helpful resources, check out the 'Newsletters & Resources' page of the Pride Pledge website.*