

FAMILY PLANNING NSW SEXUALITY AND GENDER POLICY



POLICY STATEMENT

Family Planning NSW (FPNSW) is committed to promoting a holistic approach to reproductive and sexual health and therefore recognises that health issues must be addressed within the broader context of sexuality and gender.

Sexuality is an inherent and indivisible part of being human. It is central to individual identity and a fundamental aspect of intimacy and communication between people. Sexuality is understood to be composed of three distinct constructs: attraction (romantic or sexual feelings towards others), behaviour (sexual activity) and sexual identity (personal and societal identity).¹

Shaped by a combination of biological, psychological, social, economic, political and cultural factors, sexuality is characterised by considerable diversity and is typically expressed by the way people experience and express themselves sexually.² When practised in relationships of mutual respect and consent, it is an important source of human expression and happiness and contributes to one's overall reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing.

Sexuality cannot be understood without reference to gender. The term 'gender' refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics, while the term 'gender identity' refers to a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender.³ A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their biological sex.³ Gender is typically reflected in society by a person's outward expression including demeanour, behaviour, communication and overall presentation.⁴

Gender inequality, including gender based violence and gender norms, affect the experience of sexuality and sexual behaviour and can therefore affect reproductive and sexual health.

Implementation of this policy will promote achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including:

- SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4 – Quality Education
- SDG 5 – Gender Equality
- SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

SCOPE

All Family Planning NSW.

POLICY DETAILS

Family Planning NSW recognises that:

- reproductive and sexual health is characterised not merely by the absence of disease and illness. It can be enhanced by encouraging the development of sexual relationships and practices that are informed by an understanding of sexuality, gender, mutual rights, responsibilities and pleasures
- the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁵, affirms the human rights of all people to decide freely in all matters related to their sexuality, including reproductive and sexual health, without coercion, discrimination and violence, and with respect for others. This encompasses people's right to explore their own sexuality free from shame, fear and guilt
- everyone has the right to define their own gender identity, including the way an individual chooses to define or identify themselves
- reproductive and sexual health is fundamental for an individual's full participation in society
- reproductive and sexual health is a shared responsibility; however, women generally are expected to assume greater responsibility in preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmissible infections. Engaging all people, particularly young boys and men, in comprehensive sexuality education is essential to promote shared responsibility regarding sexual behaviour and reproductive and sexual health
- people with disability have the capacity and the right to form consensual relationships, to express their sexuality and gender, and to make informed decisions regarding their reproductive and sexual health⁶
- people who identify as sexuality and /or gender diverse including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ) community face greater barriers to accessing inclusive reproductive and sexual health care, information and education services

- adolescence is a period of significant personal development, including gender identity, emerging sexuality and sexual relationships⁷
- intersectionality is an important consideration regarding reproductive and sexual health experiences and outcomes. Intersectionality acknowledges the multidimensional aspects of identity and that a person's sexual orientation and gender identity are parts of that identity

Family Planning NSW believes that:

- sexuality is an important part of being human, including whether or not a person chooses to be sexually active. Being healthy and able to express one's sexuality freely is central to every person being able to develop and participate in the economic, social, cultural and political arenas⁸
- the basis of human rights protection, promotion and expression is non-discrimination. This means that no one should be treated differently or unequally because of their sexuality, sex, age or gender⁸
- people should be able to enjoy their sexuality and be free to choose whether or not they want to reproduce⁸
- individuals have the right to accurate and inclusive reproductive and sexual health care, information and education, and confidential service provision to enable them to make informed choices with respect to their sexuality, gender and reproductive and sexual health
- planning and delivery of reproductive and sexual health services, both clinical and educational, should take into account the constraints that some people experience in accessing reproductive and sexual health services, on the basis of age, social class, ethnicity, geographic location, gender, sexual orientation and decision making capacity

Family Planning NSW is committed to:

- advancing the sexual and reproductive health rights of all people by recognising the specific needs and customs of priority populations groups
- promoting equality by advancing gender equality in reproductive and sexual healthcare
- providing inclusive comprehensive sexuality education and resources which empower individuals and communities to make informed choices regarding their own reproductive and sexual health
- providing confidential, holistic and client-focused clinical services that use inclusive, client centred language and are respectful and welcoming of all people
- creating a visibly inclusive and welcoming environment for sexuality and /or gender diverse people through the display of 'welcoming signals' (for example, the LGBTIQ flag)
- providing training for service providers to develop their capacity to assist all clients to enhance their reproductive and sexual health
- conducting research which contributes to our understanding of sexuality and gender, and the promotion of reproductive and sexual health to all people
- advocating for the reproductive and sexual rights of all people, including priority populations, marginalised and vulnerable communities, and incorporates our work overseas in the Asia-Pacific

REFERENCE

1. Fish JN, Russell ST. *Sexual attraction, behaviour and identity*. In: Goldberg AE, editor. *The SAGE encyclopedia of LGBTQ studies*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.; 2016. p. 1037 – 1041.
2. World Health Organization 2006, *Defining sexual health: report of a technical consultation on sexual health, 28–31 January 2002*, Geneva, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.
3. Australian Human Rights Commissions 2015, *resilient individual: Sexual orientation, gender identity & intersex rights. National consultation report 2015*, Australian Human Rights Commission, Sydney, Australia.
4. The Gender Centre Inc. 2020, *Exploring gender*, The Gender Centre Inc., Annandale, Australia.
5. United Nations 1996, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995*, United Nations, New York.
6. Family Planning NSW, *Disability policy 2018*, Family Planning NSW, Ashfield, NSW.
7. Family Planning NSW 2019, *Young people's reproductive and sexual health policy*, Ashfield, NSW.
8. International Planned Parenthood Federation, *Sexual rights: an IPPF declaration abridged version*, International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2009, London, United Kingdom.