



**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

PROTECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE BORN WITH VARIATIONS IN SEX CHARACTERISTICS

ACCESSING SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Access to services and psychological and peer support is crucial for individuals to attain the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

People born with variations in sex characteristics may require access to different kinds of health services and supports, including access to medical services related to associated health needs and not just those related to variations in their sex characteristics.

Peer support is important for people born with variations in sex characteristics and their families to make informed decisions over their healthcare. It can help alleviate feelings of stigma and isolation and can expose individuals to further information, options and experiences.

The importance of peer support has been recognised in Australia by medical professionals and by advocates of people born with variations in sex characteristics. In practice, however, referrals to support groups are inconsistent.

Capacity and resource constraints also exist for peer support groups and organisations. Most support groups run in a voluntary capacity or with limited and short-term funding, restricting the ability of these groups to provide the support that is required.

Discussion questions:

- How can people born with variations in sex characteristics and their families and carers be more adequately supported?
- How can psychological and peer support be more integrated into decision making processes?
- What barriers exist to connecting individuals to support services?
- What barriers exist for individuals in accessing support services?
- How can peer support groups and organisations be adequately resourced and supported?



Australian Human Rights Commission

This sheet forms part of the Australian Human Rights Commission's inquiry into how best to protect the rights of people born with variations in sex characteristics in the context of medical interventions. These sheets are designed to prompt thoughts and considerations for written submissions. Submissions do not need to be limited to the issues raised in this sheet.

Writing a submission? Please complete a Participant Consent Form and attach it to your submission. Submissions should be sent by email to sogii@humanrights.gov.au or by post to GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Inquiry findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications. Submissions on behalf of organisations may be identifiable only where the organisation has given permission for the Commission to publish information attributable to that organisation.

For further information about the project, please email sogii@humanrights.gov.au or phone 02 9284 9650 or 1300 369 711.

Consultation for this project has been approved by an external, independent Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Any queries or concerns about ethics may be directed to the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee by email to human.ethics@sydney.edu.au, citing reference 2018/338.