Am I part of the LGBTIQ*-community?

In Germany, the short form “LGBTIQ*” is used to describe anyone whose sexual orientation or gender identity differs from the cisgender and heteronormative social norm. This includes lesbian, gay and bisexual people as well as trans*, inter* and non-binary people. Even if you feel none of these terms describe you, you are part of the community if you want to be.

LGBTIQ* as a particularly vulnerable group in asylum procedure

As an LGBTIQ*- person, you are a part of a group that faces particular challenges in the asylum procedure and in the reception centre. That’s why we speak of vulnerable persons. This means that the state has a special duty to protect you. In addition to the rights to which all refugees are entitled, you also have other rights that are intended to protect you. We explain your most important rights in this brochure.

Talking about LGBTIQ* issues

Talking about LGBTIQ* issues is not a taboo in Germany. In the asylum procedure, it is especially important to talk about one’s experiences as a queer person. However, in the reception centre or in the accommodation, it may unfortunately still be the safer strategy not to talk about your identity. But of course, the decision to be open about your identity is still entirely up to you.

About the project:
The LSVD+-Project „Gewaltfrei ankommen“ (meaning violent-free arrival) offers trainings, advice and helps build networks on all topics regarding LGBTIQ*- refugees and protection against violence.

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Gewaltfrei Ankommen - Die Rechte von queeren Geflüchteten in Aufnahmeeinrichtungen

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Your rights as an LGBTIQ*-Person during your stay in the reception centre.

You are part of the LGBTIQ*-Community and have experienced violence? Find out here what you can do and where you can get help.

Accommodation during the asylum process

For the duration of the asylum application, which is a maximum of 18 Months (24 months in some federal states), you are obliged to live in a shared accommodation in the federal state responsible for you. Early departure from the shared accommodation can be possible but only in exceptional cases.

Violence in the reception centre

Regrettably, sometimes there are incidents of violence in the reception centres. These can be caused by all people that live or work in the reception centre. By violence, we mean both physical (e.g. hitting, kicking) and psychological assaults (e.g. threats, stalking or verbal insults) as well as forms of sexual or gender-based violence.

How can I protect myself from violence?

If there is someone you trust in your reception center (like a counsellor or social worker), it is always helpful to talk to them about your situation. Generally, it is also possible to be moved to a different part of the building, to a single room or an accommodation specifically for LGBTIQ* as a preventive measure to improve your personal safety.
However, if there is no one on-site that you trust, feel free to contact us. We will then try to find a consultation centre near you.

Which rights do I have once I have been the victim of violence?

The nature and intensity of the violence you have experienced will determine what rights you have. **It is important to know that asserting your rights will in no way have a negative impact on your asylum application.** Any staff at the accommodation centre who tell you otherwise are wrong!
In the event of violence of any kind, you can apply for early release from the shared accommodation at the responsible reception authorities. At the same time, you can complain to the management of the facility. In certain cases, you can also submit a complaint to the supervisory authorities.
Regarding physical or sexual violence, as well as verbal abuse, you can also report to the police. In some cases, a court can also order that the offender be ordered to leave the accommodation and be banned from coming close to you.

Who can I contact to assert my rights?

For support and to assert your rights, you can contact LGBTIQ* advisory or counselling centres, asylum consultation centres, as well as legal advisors.
Should you have difficulties finding support, feel free to contact us.

Should I talk about my sexual orientation and gender identity in the asylum application process?

Although it may be difficult for you and you may decide to deliberately not do this in your shared accommodation, it is extremely important to speak openly about your sexual orientation, gender identity as well as your experiences as a queer person during asylum procedure.
It is also advisable to talk to an asylum procedure counsellor about your reasons for fleeing beforehand, if you can. There are even specialized legal advice centres for queer refugees.

What rights do I have as an LGBTIQ* person in the asylum application process?

You have the right to have your interview at the BAMF conducted by a specially qualified person (also known as the “Sonderbeauftragte*r”). Alternatively, you can tell them that the interviewer and language mediator should be of a particular gender. If possible, you should inform the BAMF of this decision in advance. An advisory or consultation centre can help you with this. If you have not been interviewed by the “Sonderbeauftragte*r”, contact a counselling centre or legal adviser.