

# Introduction to Intersectionality

## What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality refers to the way race, gender, class, sexuality, and other parts of who we are overlap and cross over. It is a part of the human experience that we do not fit into one category. An intersectional approach allows us to see consumers as a whole person, not by one category but as a complex and rich combination of many categories that can change. A consumer's diversity may not always be obvious to you, yet this does not stop it being a core part of our identity and everyday lives. Some examples of experiences, identities, and bodies that influence how we access and interact with health care services include:

- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Religion
- Sexuality
- Sex
- Intersex variation
- Culture
- Disability
- Income
- Geography
- Aboriginality
- Language
- Citizenship/Visa status
- Neurodiversity
- Body size



**This is not a full list**, but to start thinking about how most consumers will have intersecting identities that influence their health outcomes through barriers and marginalisation. You may also recognise your own intersecting identities in this list.

## What can it tell us about consumers?



Intersectionality is a useful framework for thinking about how a consumer's identity, characteristics, or experiences could lead to either easier access to care or further marginalisation.

Understanding the diversity of consumers can make it easier to see which barriers prevent consumers from seeking or receiving health care, and how service providers can help remove those barriers.

## How can services use this framework?

An intersectional approach can be used by services to better understand how discrimination occurs on multiple levels due to intersecting identities. To move towards inclusive, equitable health care and away from discrimination consider these two questions when providing care:

1

**Do your own experiences of marginalisation help you to provide better services for certain marginalised communities?**

2

**Does your level of privilege sometimes make it difficult for you to understand the needs of certain consumers?**

Inclusive health care isn't always about doing or saying the "right" thing. It is being open to improving your understanding about how consumers health is affected by our intersectionality.



### Where to learn more?

[Sociological Studies Sheffield – Intersectionality and Health Explained](#)

[National Association of Independent Schools – Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?](#)

[Health Care Consumers NSW – Intersections Project](#)

[Kimberle Crenshaw – Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex](#)

[Frontiers in Public Health – The Intersectionality Toolbox](#)

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