

26 April 2026

International Lesbian Visibility Day

Health, Wellbeing, and the Many Ways of Being

International Lesbian Visibility Day is a moment to recognise, affirm, and celebrate lesbian women in all their diversity. Across cultures, communities, and contexts, lesbian women continue to shape families, relationships, knowledge, and movements for justice and care.

This year, Lesbian Visibility Day is marked within the global theme of **Health and Well-being**, inviting reflection on the psychological, social, and structural conditions that shape the lives of lesbian women. It calls attention not only to individual well-being but also to the broader systems that enable or constrain the ability to live safely, authentically, and with dignity.

Lesbian identity is not singular. It is lived and expressed across different races, cultures, languages, generations, and social locations. This day invites us to honour that diversity while affirming a shared right to visibility, respect, and belonging.

At the same time, visibility is not experienced equally.

For some, visibility can be affirming and life-giving. For others, it remains complex and, at times, unsafe, shaped by ongoing realities of stigma, discrimination, and violence. In the South African context, lesbian women, particularly Black lesbian women and those living in under-resourced and township communities, continue to face disproportionate levels of gender-based violence, social exclusion, and barriers to accessing affirming healthcare, including mental health services.

These realities have significant implications for mental health and well-being. Experiences of marginalisation may contribute to increased vulnerability to depression, anxiety, trauma-related distress, and difficulties with identity integration and belonging. At the same time, it is essential to recognise the strength, resilience, and community networks that lesbian women continue to cultivate in the face of these challenges.

For psychology professionals, the theme of **health and wellbeing** highlights the ethical responsibility to move beyond passive acceptance towards active, informed, and contextually responsive affirmation. This includes:

- Creating therapeutic spaces that affirm all lesbian identities and expressions
- Practising cultural humility and responsiveness to diverse lived realities
- Recognising the impact of structural inequality, violence, and stigma on mental health
- Supporting identity development, resilience, and meaningful connection
- Advocating for equitable access to safe, affirming, and competent mental health services

The **PsySSA Practice Guidelines for Psychology Professionals Working with Sexually and Gender Diverse People (2nd Edition, 2025)** provide an important framework for ethical and evidence-based affirmative practice grounded in human rights, dignity, and social justice.

Lesbian Visibility Day is not only about being seen. It is about being seen fully, within contexts that acknowledge both shared humanity and unequal realities. Intentional action in our clinical work, our institutions, and our broader societal engagement must therefore accompany meaningful visibility.

Health and well-being are not neutral. They are shaped by context. Visibility must be inclusive. Affirmations must be intentional. Justice must remain central.

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