herzfroh 2.0

Questions and answers about the body, love and sexuality

Germany edition

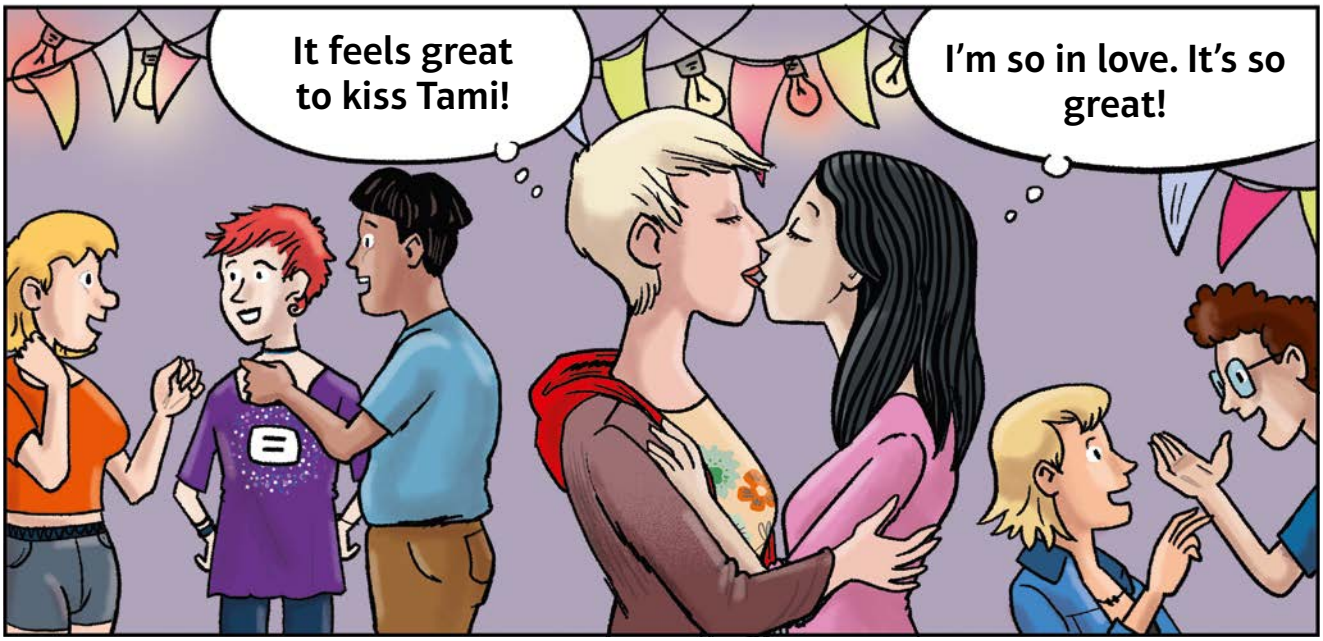
Diversity

This booklet begins with a **Comic**. In **Experiences**, 2 young people talk about their experiences. In **Learn more**, you can find more information about gender diversity and sexual orientation. And in **Question & answer**, we answer important questions.

A colorful party in the group home

It's Nic's birthday and they're having a party in the group home.
Nic has invited Tami, Hanna, Murat, Rosa, Sven and Marina.

Hanna's friend Tami is also there. Tami wishes Nic a happy birthday.



Hanna and Tami have recently become a couple and are very much in love.

Hanna explains to Tami that Nic doesn't feel as a woman or a man.
Nic wants to be addressed as a human being.

Sven hears about Nic's bad experiences. He thinks that's mean.

Nic is happy about the successful party!

Experiences

When I was born, my parents were told: “It’s a girl!” But **even as a child I felt like a boy**. My breasts started to grow during puberty. That was terrible for me. That didn’t work for me. I told my parents what was going on. We went to an advice center together. The advice helped me a lot. After that I knew: I am not the only person to feel this way.

Linus, 20

Chris, 16

I came out when I was 16. That means that I told other people that I am gay. **I thought my coming out was okay.** First, I told my best friend. It wasn’t a big issue for him. And my parents had already figured it out anyway. I was afraid that the kids at school would say mean things. Some insulted me because I’m gay. A teacher stood up for me. I thought that was great.

Learn more

Diversity

Every person is unique. Every body is different. Every person behaves differently. Everyone lives their life differently. All people are different and at the same time have things in common. A word for this is **diversity**.

- There are more than the two genders: girl and boy, woman and man. These two genders do not apply to all people. This is what **gender diversity** is all about.
- People also fall in love in very different ways. This is called **sexual orientation**. It means: Who does a person fall in love with? For example, a man can fall in love with a woman or a man.
- The **diversity of lifestyles** is also huge: People live as single people, as couples or in families. There are families with a father, mother and child. And there are families with one parent. There are rainbow families with 2 lesbian mothers or 2 gay fathers. Sometimes parents separate and fall in love again with other people. Several families can become one new family. This is called a patchwork family.

What exactly is gender?

Many people think that gender is simple. They think: There are girls and there are boys.

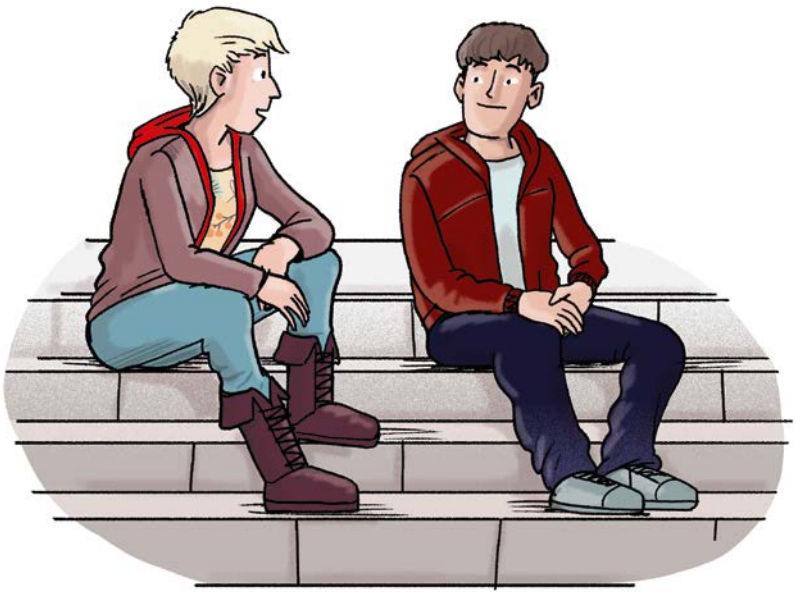
But it's not that simple: Today it is known that this division into 2 genders is not always correct. People are more diverse than that.

When you meet someone, it's not always that easy to say, "That's a girl" or "That's a boy."

Gender is made up of:

- Which **body** a person has: Does the person have female, male or both sexual characteristics?
- How a person **feels** about themselves: Does the person feel more like a woman or a man? Or do neither of these apply to the person?
- How that person **behaves**: How does a person move or dress?

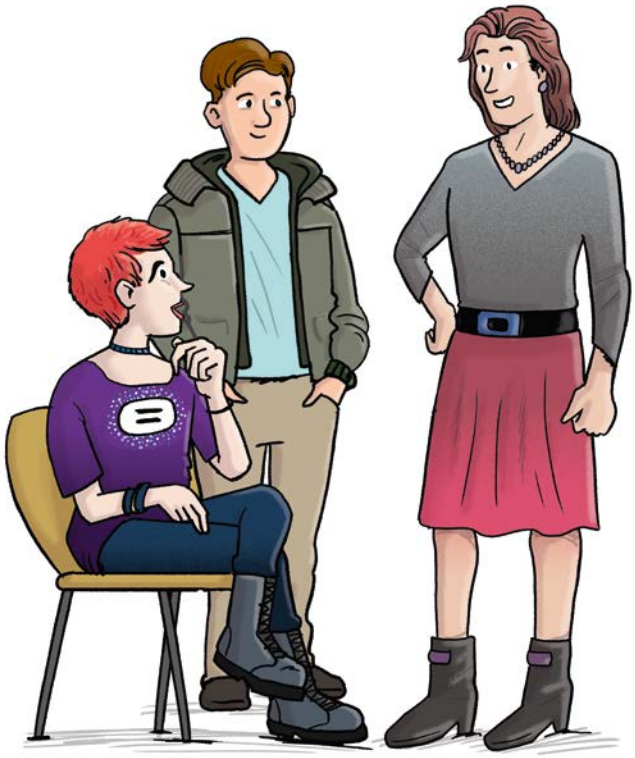
On the following pages you will learn more about body, feeling and behavior.



The body

Gender includes the **physical sexual characteristics:** for example, penis and testicles or vagina and ovaries.

- The **physical sexual characteristics** can often be clearly assigned to one gender: girl or boy. The girl or boy says later that this gender is right to them. This is called **cisgender**.
- However, the **physical sexual characteristics** cannot always be clearly assigned to a single gender. For example, some people have both a penis and a vagina. Or a vagina and testicles. This is called **intersex**.



You can find more information on physical sexual characteristics in the booklet **Body and puberty**.

The feeling

Not only are body and behavior important for gender. What someone feels on the inside is also important: A person can feel female or male. Or both, or neither. This inner feeling about one's own gender is also called **gender identity**.

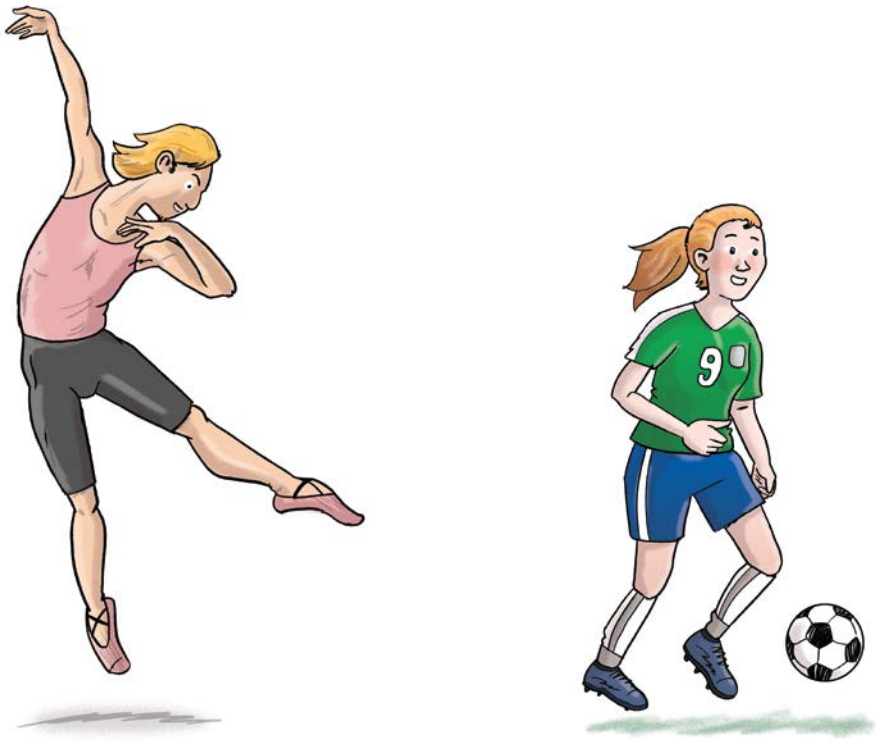
A person's inner feelings often match the gender they were assigned at birth. But not always.

- When babies are born, people usually say, "It's a girl" or "It's a boy." Later, however, the girl or boy says that this gender isn't right to them. "I feel like a different gender." This is called **transgender**.
- Some people say: "I feel neither female nor male." This is called **non-binary**.

Behavior

Typical girl! Typical boy! You've probably heard people say this too. Many people think, for example, that girls are quiet and boys are loud. Girls are interested in fashion and boys in technology. But is that true?

- Some behaviors are perceived as feminine or masculine. For example, how a person dresses or how they move. This is also called **gender roles**. These roles are learned already during childhood. But gender roles change over time and are diverse. Gender roles often do not apply to a person.
- In the past, the man went to work and the woman did the housework. Today, women and men often do both. Girls also play soccer and boys dance ballet. Nobody fits into a box. Each person can do and live what suits them best.



What does sexual orientation mean?

Now let's talk about **sexual orientation**. This means: Who does a person fall in love with? Who would a person like to kiss? And with whom do they like to cuddle and maybe have sex? There are many ways to fall in love.

- Women and men can fall in love with each other. That is called **heterosexual**.
- Women can also fall in love with women. And men with men. That is called **homosexual**. Another word for this is **gay**, or for women you can also say **lesbian**.
- When people fall in love with both women and men, they are called **bisexual**.
- For some people, gender is not so important when they fall in love. They fall in love with a person regardless of their gender. This is called **pansexual**.
- Some people do not want to experience sex with other people. That is called **asexual**.

Sexual orientation can also change over the course of a person's life. It happens all by itself. You can't change that. Nor can other people.

Diversity is part of life

Gender diversity is part of life. And sexual diversity is part of life. Different lifestyles are part of life. If all people were the same, it would be pretty boring. It can be difficult to find your own path and then live it. That's why some people ask themselves, for example:

- How do I feel: female or male? Both or neither?
- How can I like myself and my body?
- Who am I attracted to?
- How do I want to live?

You can find information on the internet. Or talk with people you know and trust. Or with people who are in a similar situation to you. They can be a great help. You can also get support from professionals.

INFO: You can get advice for these

- **TrIQ – TransInterQueer e.V. – Specialist organization for transgender, intersex and non-binary persons**
  Website: www.transinterqueer.org
  Phone: 030 – 76 95 25 15

- **Liebelle – Advice center for self-determined sexuality for people with intellectual disabilities**
  Website: www.liebelle-mainz.de
  Phone: 06131 – 58 02 21 0

Everyone deserves respect

Everyone should be accepted for who they are. And how they live and love. And everyone must respect other people's boundaries.

But not everyone in society thinks diversity is good. Some people are of the opinion that there are only 2 genders: women and men. And that only women and men should love each other.

Real life is more colorful than that! You can live the way that you want. You are just fine the way you are. And others are also just fine the way they are. Everyone deserves respect.

No one may discriminate against another person

All people have the same rights. No one should be discriminated or treated worse than others, for example because of their sexual orientation. For example, some people don't get an apartment or a job because they are gay. Or because of their skin color. This is called **discrimination**.

Transgender or intersex people also often experience discrimination. People with disabilities also often experience discrimination.

Sometimes people experience several forms of discrimination at the same time. For example, because of their origin and their disability.

INFO: Discrimination is prohibited

The General Equal Treatment Act (AGG for short) protects people from discrimination. It says that all people have the same rights. The law prohibits discrimination. No one may discriminate against a person because of:

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Disability
- Origin
- Age
- Religion

You are not alone!

Being discriminated against can feel really bad.

You may get angry or sad. You may withdraw and feel helpless. You may think that there is something wrong with you or your body. But that's not true! You are just fine the way you are! And you are not alone.

Discrimination is prohibited. And you can do something about it.

You can find information, stand up for yourself and get support, for example from trusted persons or at advice centers. You can also call the Child and Youth Helpline or contact the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency.

INFO: You can get advice for these

- **Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency**
  Website: www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de
  Phone: 0800 – 546 546 5

- **Nummer gegen Kummer**
  The Child and Youth Helpline
  Website: www.nummergegenkummer.de
  Phone: 116 111

Question & answer

Deniz, 18, asks:

I wanted to go to a club. But the bouncer wouldn't let me in. He said: "The others can get in, but not you in the wheelchair." I was really angry. Can he do that?

herzfroh 2.0 answers:

No, he's not allowed to do that. That is discrimination and against the law. He can't exclude people because they have a disability. You can call the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and complain about the club. That is your right. You can also tell the club itself about the bouncer. Or you can write a bad review about the club on the internet.

Emma, 19, asks:

I love cars and my short hair. Am I still a woman?

herzfroh 2.0 answers:

If you feel like a woman, then you are a woman. Everyone likes different things. Whether you're a man or a woman. There is no such thing as a typical man and a typical woman. But there are many prejudices about what is masculine and what is feminine. But they are not true. Every person is unique. You can do what you like and what you feel comfortable with.

Who we are

Hanna lives in the group home and attends school.

Tami lives at home with her parents. She knows Hanna from school.

Nic lives in the group home and works in a restaurant.

Marina lives in the group home and works in a tailor's shop. She is Sven's girlfriend.

Sven lives in the group home and works in a wood workshop. He is Marina's boyfriend.

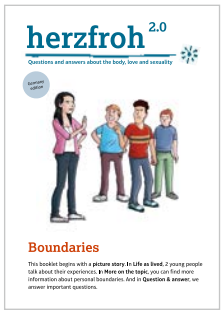
Murat is Sven's best friend and roommate. He works in a garden center.

Rosa works in the office and is friends with Marina.

Gregor is a care worker in the group home.

Laura is a care worker in the group home.

You can find out about more exciting topics in the other booklets.



Legal notice

herzfroh 2.0 is a publication from the Federal Institute of Public Health (BIÖG) and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – Social Work (HSLU). 2.0 means that this is a new version of herzfroh. herzfroh 2.0 is information material on the body, love and sexuality for teenagers and young adults with intellectual disabilities. There is also information material for professionals in education and care. Find out more at www.loveline.de/herzfroh.

Publisher of herzfroh 2.0 for Germany:
Federal Institute of Public Health (BIÖG),
Maarweg 149–161, 50825 Cologne, Germany, www.bioeg.de.
Acting Head: Dr. Johannes Nießen
Editorial office: Sabine Goette and Laura Retznik, BIÖG (Germany) and Daniel Kunz, HSLU (Switzerland)
Text: Anja Teufel inklusiv (author: Anja Teufel)
Design: Lengsfeld, designkonzepte GmbH, Basel

Illustrations: Diego Balli, Stans
Issue: 1.bf.02.26
This brochure is provided free of charge by BIÖG.
Order: BIÖG, 50819 Cologne, Germany
Email: bestellung@bioeg.de
Article number: 13200011
All rights reserved.

HSLU Hochschule Luzern

Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit