

Research on same-sex attracted young people in Australia indicates that while many same-sex attracted young people feel good about their sexuality, large percentages experience regular abuse and discrimination that has an adverse impact on health and well being. Those who suffer regular verbal and physical abuse fare worse on every indicator of health and well-being. Negative impacts range from stress and anxiety to isolation and depression, with many victims inclined to self-harming behaviours. Sport and school are reported as the main sites where abuse occurs. Many same-sex attracted youth avoid abuse because they keep their sexual identity hidden, but this requires close self-monitoring of public behaviour out of fear of being outed and subject to abuse.

While many state level sport policies outlaw discrimination of all types, there is still a long way to go to make local sporting clubs safe and inclusive for all.

This paper examines the impact of homophobia on same-sex attracted youth and adults in Australian sport, especially at the community sport level. The paper also introduces examples of policy, coach and parent education materials, effective intervention strategies, and case studies that aim to promote safe and inclusive sporting environments for not only gay and lesbian athletes, but all athletes.