



Sydney Gay And Lesbian Mardi Gras And Protecting Your Mental Health

It's coming up to that time of year again - [Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras](#) time in Sydney.

That time of the year that Sydney has an even greater number of LGBTI community members visiting that place sometimes called "The Gay and Lesbian Capital of the South Pacific". (In other words there will be more than the usual 10% of the population, that LGBTI people are said to make up in the general population.)

For many young and not so young LGBTI people (particularly for "first-timers") going to this massive celebration of LGBTI culture and community can be; A "Rite of Passage"; A joyous event; An eye-opener to the diversity of our community; Possibly also a reminder of how "limiting" their life may be (if coming from a less "liberated" location, e.g. a small country town) and; Potentially quite confronting - particularly for those "early on" in the "coming out" journey or with a limited support network.

A few years ago (in March 2017) I wrote an article for the Perth LGBTI publication [Out In Perth](#) about "[Top Tips for Getting the Most out of Mardi Gras](#)". It is probably worth revisiting those tips from a few years ago.

They included;

1. Trying to not limit yourself to LGBTI specific events and activities - whether it is a trip to Taronga Park Zoo; The Sydney Botanic Gardens; A Sydney Harbour Bridge climb; A trip to the Blue Mountains; A Sydney Harbour Cruise. There is no shortage of options;
2. Remember that putting your Mardi Gras photo's on Social Media means they are there forever. So those pictures of you "off your face" or drunk or in some compromising or unflattering position or pose, can (potentially) be seen by not only your family (biological and or "chosen" LGBTI one) and partner (or partners) but also your current and or future employer and workmates. A case of less is best;
3. Be aware that being under the influence (of whatever, drugs or alcohol) can mean that you could return home with more than a headache or something that can be "fixed" with a course of antibiotics;
4. Plan to have some time to "chill out" and relax after the parade and or party (as per the suggestions above). There is probably nothing worse than returning to work looking like "Death Warmed Up" or having trouble keeping your eyes open, as a result of partying continuously for a few days;



5. Remember that even with PReP ([Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis](#)), you still need to engage in Safe Sex, the medication does not prevent the transmission of other STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections);
6. Try to plan for when you return home, to catch up with supportive friends;
7. Remember that going to Mardi Gras (particularly the first time) can be a life changing experience. Even Troy Sivan (Perth raised Singer, YouTuber and [actor](#)) described going to his first Perth Pride Parade as a "[Life-changing experience](#)". So as the ANZ bank put in an add a few years ago for Mardi Gras [#HoldTight](#) and enjoy!

In conclusion, if you feel the need to “process” what the experience meant for you, or what it’s like to return to a less “supportive” place, feel free to phone my booking service on **1300 50 67 68**, to make a booking, or have a look around my ColinLongworth.com.au webpage, in particular the [Gay and Lesbian Issues](#) webpage.

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